

# Norfolk Historic Buildings Group



Non members  
£2.00

# Newsletter



Number forty-nine  
Spring 2024

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# CHAIR

The NHBG is beginning its twenty-fifth year in a very healthy state.

The winter lecture programme has just finished. Using Zoom has meant that we have increased our audience from the average of 20-25 when we used to meet in the Diamond Centre to an average this winter of just under 50 zoom connections per meeting, many of which are couples. Throwing our talks open to non-members has also encouraged some of them to join the group, and Paul's stewardship of the Facebook Page has encouraged others to join.

The summer programme on the opposite page has been set up by Owen with the aim of covering as wide a range of activities as possible, including four house visits.

Owners are increasingly taking up the NHBG's offer to survey their house and prepare a free report for them, thus increasing the group's collective knowledge of Norfolk buildings. To assist in this recording exercise, we have just completed a short training course in studying and interpreting houses for a small group of new members, which including measuring a house and drawing up the results, in order to test the training process. Another course is being offered to the wider membership (see page 13).

The redesigning of the NHBG website was completed last month (see page 15). It now presents a simplified face to the world as well as being written in such a way so that it is simpler to keep up to date for a non-IT professional. All the better to spread our message further.

We also have new email addresses which are fed through the website.

**Ian Hinton**  
**Chair, Norfolk Historic Buildings Group**  
**March 2024**  
editor@nhbg.org.uk

## Committee Contact Details

**Ian Hinton** *Chair & Editor*

134 Yarmouth Road, Norwich NR7 0SB

01603 431311 [h] *e.mail:* editor@nhbg.org.uk

**Owen Warnock** *Deputy Chair & Summer Events*

St Mary's Farm, Cheney's Lane, Tacolneston, Norwich NR16 1DB

01508 481822 (h) *email:* summerevents@nhbg.org.uk

**Lynne Hodge** *Committee Secretary and Buildings*

Long Acres, Saxlingham Road., Blakeney, Holt NR25 7PB

01263 741950 *e.mail:* buildings@nhbg.org.uk

**Maggy Chatterley** *Treasurer & Membership*

134 Yarmouth Road, Norwich NR7 0SB

01603 431311 [h] *e.mail:* membership@nhbg.org.uk

**Mary Ash** *Winter Programme*

107 St Leonards Road, Norwich, NR1 4JF

01603 616285 [h] *e.mail:* winterevents@nhbg.org.uk

**Jackie Simpson**

The Chestnuts, Church Road, Neatishead NR12 8BT

01692 630639(h)

**Diane Barr** *Documentary Research*

24 The Shrublands, Horsford, NR10 3EL

01603 898928 [h] *e.mail:* nhbgboultonandpaul@btinternet.com

**Anne Woollett**

The Cardinal's Hat, Back Street, Reepham NR10 4SJ

01603 870452 [h]

**Jess Johnson** *Twitter Feed & Zoom master*

Tin Barn, High Common Road, North Lopham IP22 2HS

01953 681408 (h)

**Dominic Summers**

3 Speke Street, Norwich, NR2 4HF

07709 028192[m]

**Francesca Robinson**

15 Sorrel Drive, Thetford IP24 2YJ

07939 222778[m]

Two vacancies

**Paul Hodge** (not on committee) *Facebook Group*

The Cardinal's Hat, Back Street, Reepham NR10 4SJ

01603 870452 [h]

## Administration

### New Members since September 2023

Glynn Burrows - Gressenhall

Moira Coleman - Attleborough

Heather English -Swainsthorpe

Dale Frary - Downham Market

Tony & Anne Jackson - Costessey

Susan James - Old Catton

Jasmine Philpott - Diss

Graham Sillett - Norwich

John Sprunt - Colchester

### Don't forget

For those members who don't pay their subscriptions by Standing Order - they are due at the end of March

- £15 single, £25 joint.

If you are unsure how you pay,  
email the Membership Secretary-  
**membership@nhbg.org.uk**

## Essex Historic Buildings Group Day School

- Sat 29th June 2024 9:25-17:00

at Maldon Town Hall, Market Hill CM9 4PZ

£35 non-EHBG members

Booking at <https://www.ehbg.co.uk/course.html>

**The Aisled Hall Tradition:  
our oldest timber-framed buildings  
(7 talks by nationally-known speakers)**

If anyone wants to share a car, I will be going from Norwich on Friday afternoon and staying in Maldon Ian Hinton

Cover photo by Ben Goodfellow: (see p18)

Rookery House, Tasburgh - palimpsest gable wall

[Early 17C brickwork, 3 blocked windows (2 of them twice), rebuilt parapets in 18/19C, rebuilt chimney in 18C & 19C]

# Summer Visit Programme

If booking by post, please use the forms provided to book, with a separate cheque for each event. IF YOU WANT TICKETS POSTED TO YOU, DON'T FORGET the SAE. The default will be to send them by email. **OR**

**You can reserve a place by email to [summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk) and pay by BACS, but NOT UNTIL ASKED TO DO SO** when places are confirmed - in case of overbooking. The Banks do not allow small groups like ours to access the accounts online so we can only return money via cheques, which gets very complicated if there is over booking.

We have tried to avoid having limits on numbers attending, but at some venues we have no choice. Booking is on a first come, first served basis, but if there is considerable over-demand we will try and run a similar event in the future. *Owen Warnock*

## Early Stone in Norfolk's Churches

Hemblington Hall Road NR13 4EF

Sunday 19th May

Time: 11:30-3:00

Meet: Melton Constable church

Cost: £10

Limit: 30 (members only)

Walking: Church yards

Lunch: *BYO picnic*

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

Peter Wade-Martins will be illustrating some of the reuse of Roman materials in Norfolk's early churches that he showed us in his winter talk, as well as discussing the use of the iron-bound breccia and conglomerate that was widely used.

A chance to have a close look at three of Norfolk's fascinating early churches - Melton Constable, Little Snoring and Great Ryburgh with Peter and Ian Hinton.

## Mardle Hall, Tivetshall NR15 2DD

Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July

Time: 2:00-4:00

Meet: Mardle Hall

Cost: £10

Limit: 30 (members only)

Walking: Stairs and building works

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

A unique chance to visit a late sixteenth-century timber framed house undergoing a complete refurbishment by the owners personally. Ian and Sandra are new members of the NHBG and are keen to have as many people as possible study the house. They have had to strip it back to the frame to undo all the incorrect and unsympathetic changes made to the house since its division into two cottages, probably in the eighteenth century.

Do not wear your best clothes!

## Some Houses of North Lopham and AGM

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August

Time: Visit starts at 11:00 am

Meet: Manor Farmhouse PE32 2NS

Parking: on street

Cost: none

Food: *BYO picnic for AGM*

Limit: none

Walking: Stairs and pavements

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

We will be visiting the jettied Manor Farmhouse, which was probably the late 15C Church House with a small surviving piece of wall painting. We will also visit the church directly opposite. A detailed map will be provided for a walk round the village after the AGM

## followed by the AGM @ The Jubilee Hall (adj to church)

Time: 1:00 pm - byo picnic

1:30 pm AGM

Please return ticket, or email Owen, so we have some idea of numbers

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

AGM Papers to follow nearer the date.

## 50 Mount Street, Diss IP22 4QG

day 8<sup>th</sup> A

Time: 1:00, 2:00, 3:00pm

Meet: The Mill

Parking: on street

Cost: £10

Limit: 24 (3 groups of 8) (memb only)

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

Grade II listed, this five-storey brick tower mill was built in 1860 and has recently been restored. It will be working if the weather co-operates. Space on the upper floors requires the groups to be small, so there will be three timed groups.

## The Elizabethan House & The Tolhouse, Great Yarmouth

date t.b.a

Time: 2:30 pm

Meet: Wangford Hall - details with ticket

Cost: £10

Limit: 30 (members only)

Walking: Stairs

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

A fourth chance to visit this 'high quality' timber framed house of which the earliest 'hall house' part is believed to date from the 15th century but with many subsequent additions. Many of its original features are still there such as the crown-post roof. Long on the 'at risk' register it is now in new ownership and we shall be privileged to see it with much of the internal timber framing exposed and in the process of restoration.

## St Mary's Farm, Tacolneston,

day<sup>h</sup>

Time: 2:00-4:00

Meet: St Mary's Farm

Cost: £10

Limit: 30 (members only)

Walking: Stairs and garden

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

Stunning gardens too.

## The Old Rectory, Fritton

Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> June

Time: 2:00-4:00

Meet: Cavick House

Cost: £10

Limit: 30 (members only)

Walking: Stairs and garden

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

Stunning gardens too.

## The Great Hospital

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> July

Time: 2:00-4:00

Meet: The Thatch

Cost: £10

Limit: 30 (members only)

Walking: Stairs

Contact: Owen Warnock 01508 481822  
[summerevents@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:summerevents@nhbg.org.uk)

## Wangford Hall (2<sup>nd</sup> September 2023)

Susan & Michael Brown



Wangford Hall from the south-east

photos this page  
:lan Hinton

After a couple of false starts during Covid the group eventually arrived on a glorious late summer's day at this interesting property, nestled against the perimeter fence of Lakenheath air base.

Externally the house has a symmetrical early nineteenth-century appearance with two cross wings, a central entrance porch and large windows with 'eyebrows' under a shiny black pantile roof with neat barge boards on the gables. This vaguely Regency effect is also seen in some interior features. However the clustered chimney stacks at the centre and above the left-hand (southern) cross wing hint at an earlier date.

The front door opens, lobby entry fashion, onto the side of the central stack and to the right is a room with the sort of massive flat laid joists (with diminished haunch soffit tenons) which are found throughout the house and a heavy principal joist (front to back) to match. As these earlier features are not found beyond this first, presumably service, room it appears that the right hand cross wing is of a different construction. There is the possibility that the chimney stack was inserted into the cross passage in the seventeenth century.

To the left of the central stack, in what is clearly the location of the former hall, the lofty ceiling is supported by a principal joist (front to back) with sunk quadrant mouldings, evidently of the seventeenth century. Beyond this in the parlour position, the ground floor room of the left hand cross wing has a similar principal joist with a slightly more elaborate chamfer stop, so apparently it appears that the ground floor rooms of the original house have been modernised in the seventeenth century.

This implies that the house is of an earlier date, and evidence of this is found in the ground floor room of the parlour cross wing where the corner post is exposed, showing the bracket for the former jetty above an engaged shaft with decorative capital which has been shaved back.



(above)

the left window jamb in the jettied room, showing the three pegholes that would have fixed the oriel window supports

In the first floor room of this cross wing, presumably the parlour chamber, triple peg holes below the front window position indicate the fixings for the support of a former oriel window projecting in front of the wall. On either side can be seen the flanking windows which went with the oriel to produce an impressive display.

The window position in the end wall is also evident with a groove in the wall plate for its sliding shutter. This wall plate also has a straight edge-halved scarf joint. The post next to this scarf joint has lost its brace to the tie beam which has been shaved back. The corresponding post has also lost its brace but retains

evidence of seventeenth-century green paint which can also be seen on parts of the tie beam. In this room, and throughout the house, the consistently massive size of the original timbers can be seen. In the rear corner is a seventeenth-century stair to the attic complete with its deep original hand rail.

To the rear of the hall can be seen the evidence for a window, with a shutter rebate, suggesting that the hall was always floored, but the brattished dais beam at the high end of the hall has been revealed just above the current floor level, showing traces of red paint, so it appears that if the hall was always floored, the level was lowered in the seventeenth century. The seventeenth-century alterations to the parlour wing seem to include the removal of the jetty and probably involved a complete new floor of common joists laid across the room with a new



(above)

Remains of red paint on the exposed brattished dais beam at the high end of the hall exposed above the current floor

(left)

Jetty post, with the arched bracket at the top facing to the right

principal joist laid front-to-back, as the jetty would have originally been formed by the overhang of the front-to-back common joists.

As part of the (presumably) early nineteenth-century refurbishment of the house, it was evidently decided not to do away with the original roof but rather to completely enclose it within a new one. This has the happy effect of preserving the crown post over the former hall. This post is octagonal with a moulded crown and chunky braces to the purlin and collar, probably dating from the second half of the fifteenth century. The bottom of the post rests immediately on the tie beam with no moulded base, unlike those in Walsingham. There is no evidence of soot, another indication that the hall was always floored, and the colour of the post is the natural 'golden' oak. Comparison might be made with the crown post in the Old Rectory, Long Stratton, and this general dating is supported by the decoration of the parlour wing and the edge-halved scarf joint.

This house has had a mixed history over the last five hundred or so years, not all of it very happy, but it is now in good hands and will no doubt come alive again. We emerged from our close inspection of the interior into the sunshine again for a sumptuous tea on the lawn with lashings of cake!

With many thanks to Philip.



(above)  
the decorative crown post above the hall



(right)  
the medieval roof to the left was oversailed by the later roof, thus preserving it

photos this page:  
Nigel Gilham

Susan & Michael have surveyed a good proportion of the buildings that the NHBG has been invited to, and wrote the building reports for most of NHBG Journals 2,4 and 6

## Summer Visit

### Church Day (9<sup>th</sup> September 2023)

Ian Hinton

A small group met on one of the hottest days of the year, making the church buildings we visited a sanctuary in several senses. A summary of the notes for the visit was published in the last newsletter, so a full write-up seemed unnecessary. The subject was investment in church buildings that was terminated by The Reformation. All three churches we visited were affected.

Burlingham St Andrew was in the process of finishing the last chancel screen to be built in Norfolk, with donations for it even recorded after the Dissolution of the Monasteries had begun in 1537. The back cover of this newsletter contains pictures of many of the carvings from the screen and roof corbels, as well as from the screen salvaged from Burlingham St Peter.

At Sallhouse, the halted, half-finished tower was not completed until several centuries later by George Gilbert-Scott. Our picnic was consumed in the cool of a shady grove around the war-memorial in the churchyard.

The unfinished tower at Woodbastwick seems to have been the first stage of a much larger building programme that never proceeded, leaving the tower, to this day, with a missing top stage and the tower offset from the intended wider new nave, exposing part of the massive tower arch.

Just three of many congregations that suffered through the upheavals of the mid-sixteenth century see-sawing between Protestantism and Catholicism.



The last chancel screen to be built in Norfolk, at Burlingham St Andrew - dated 1536

photos:  
Ian Hinton



One of the 13C pier capitals in Sallhouse church - images damaged

## YouTube links to Winter talks

There is now a direct link to the NHBG YouTube channel on the NEW NHBG website EVENTS page - [www.nhbg.org.uk](http://www.nhbg.org.uk)

Sarah's talk on Brutalism is only available for members via this link, and will not appear on the Youtube list

<https://youtu.be/KGOu96BHvZ0>

## The Most Castley-Castle Ever: exploring the impact of medievalism at castle sites

Lynsey McLaughlin (19<sup>th</sup> October 2023)

‘Ask anyone to visualise the Middle Ages and they will, almost invariably, conjure up the image of the castle’<sup>1</sup>

There has been a transition in the understanding of castles in the later part of the twentieth century in castle studies. The focus has shifted from one heavily centred around a military interpretation, to placing them in a wider context, particularly considering their role as symbols of status. This came about in part thanks to archaeology at Bodiam Castle in the 1990s which demonstrated that a castle previously considered an example of military architecture was in fact dangerously vulnerable to attack. This sparked an explosion of new studies into castles that looked again at the argument of castles as inherently military buildings. The features that have come to define the castle have been reviewed: the murder holes could have been supply hatches, staircases within towers were not always designed to give the benefit to the defender, and the battlements and crenellations could themselves be more representative of fashion than their ability to keep an enemy out.



*Bodiam Castle - “dangerously vulnerable to attack”*

Whilst this new approach has been largely unchallenged within academia, heritage organisations that open castles to the public have been accused of retaining the overtly military interpretation to lure visitors through the door. Whether that is through over-emphasising the military aspect of the castle through interpretation or having shops stocked full of knights’ and princesses’ fancy-dress costumes and cuddly dragons. Heritage organisations have been criticised for their approaches.

Events at castles have a similar leaning towards the military aspect of castle life, whether they are reconstructions of a siege at Warwick Castle or a joust at Bolsover Castle, all create what Marcus Bull refers to as ‘mock medieval’, for the ‘bemused and embarrassed tourists’<sup>2</sup>. Marc Morris suggests that the culmination of this presents a view of castles at odds with the academic understanding of them, ‘The word ‘castle’ tends to conjure up images of boiling oil, bows and arrows, catapults

and battering rams...None of the castles I’ve visited recently seem to be having an identity crisis, but some of the experts I’ve encountered have grave doubts’<sup>3</sup>.

### Are these assessments fair?

My PhD asks whether this reflection on castle sites is fair, if they really do capitalise on medievalist tropes, and then subsequently, what effect this has on the people that visit them. To do this I used six castles as case studies. Two of them are managed by the National Trust, Bodiam in East Sussex and Corfe in Dorset, two by English Heritage, Orford in Suffolk and Richmond in North Yorkshire and finally, two are managed either privately, in the case of Bolton in North Yorkshire or by a local authority, which is the case for Newark in Nottinghamshire. I then applied a three-strand methodology. The first strand looked at the nature of the castle site and involved a detailed site visit. The second aimed to find out from staff involved in the management of the castle what were the main challenges and priorities when it came to presentation decisions. I explored this by undertaking semi-structured interviews. Finally, I wanted to understand how visitors’ perceptions of castles is shaped by the previous two factors. I did this by conducting on site interviews with visitors, tracking their route around the castle, and looking at TripAdvisor reviews.

My results so far demonstrate that, whilst the castle and the people who manage them do utilise medievalist tropes, they are trying to do so much more. In cases of recent representations, particularly at Richmond and Orford Castle, considerable efforts are being made to present wider narratives. Previously, castles have been viewed as inherently masculine, ‘reeking of sweat, testosterone and horses’<sup>4</sup>, but now the role of women is increasingly being displayed. In addition to greater female representation are efforts to share the stories of all the individuals who made the castle their home, not just the Lords and knights, but the servants too.



*Hand Sanitizer at Corfe Castle*



*Sign for the womens’ toilets in 2019 - Tattershall Castle*

*Medievalist tropes?*

<sup>1</sup> Castles in Context: Power, Symbolism and Landscape, 1066 to 1500, Liddiard, R., Windgather, 2005, xi

<sup>2</sup> Thinking Medieval: An Introduction to the Study of the Middle Ages, Marcus Bull, 2005, MacMillan, p137

<sup>3</sup> Castle: A History of the Building that Shaped Medieval Britain, Marc Morris, Windmill Books, 2012, p2-3

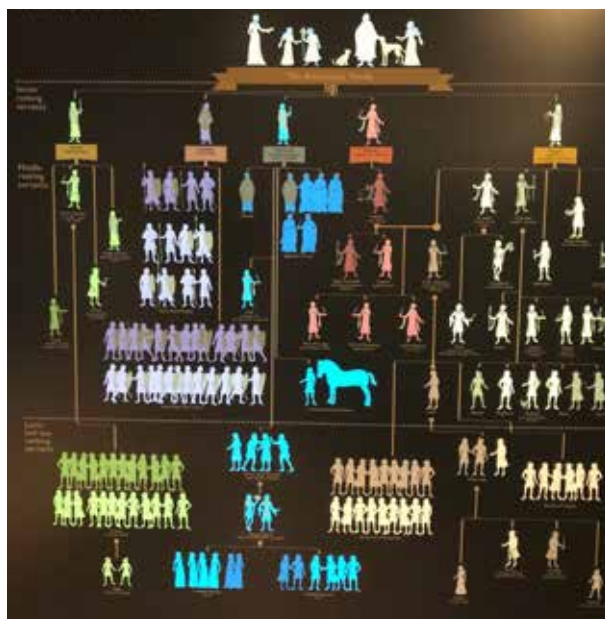
<sup>4</sup> Gender and Archaeology: Contesting the Past. Gilchrist, R., Routledge, 1999, p95

Lynsey is a Cultural Heritage Advisor for the National Trust.  
Her current PhD, at Lincoln University,  
is on the impact of medievalism on castles

Finally, the positioning of the castle as being part of a wider landscape is increasingly being shared, with gardens being recreated and hunting parks highlighted. Yet, despite this, when it comes to visitors' perceptions and understanding of the castle the impact of visit itself is complex. Not only do visitors come to the castle with often a clear preconceived idea of what to expect, but what meanings they will take from their visit are influenced by a multitude of both internal and external factors. For visitors, what makes a castle a castle is a culmination of many things, not only the remains that stand within the walls.

Images from  
Lynsey's  
Powerpoint

*Panel from the display at Richmond Castle explaining the roles of the many people, including the women, involved in the running and maintaining the castle and its household, not just the Lords and knights of earlier displays.*



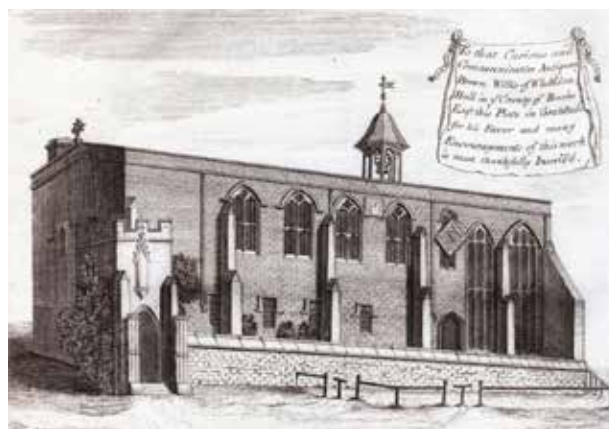
## Winter Lecture Synopsis

### An Almshouse establishment - Browne's Hospital in Stamford

Nick Hill (15<sup>th</sup> November 2023)



*Browne's Hospital from the south*



*Browne's Hospital in Rev. Frank Peck's History of Stamford (1727)*

'One of the best medieval hospitals in England' (Pevsner), Browne's Hospital was founded by William Browne in 1475. He was a Calais Stapler and, as Leland said, 'a merchant of a very wonderful riches'. The establishment of the hospital was completed after Browne's death in 1489 by his brother-in-law Thomas Stokes. It was an almshouse, with accommodation for ten poor men and two women, supervised by a warden and confrater. Recent research by Alan Rogers and Nick Hill <sup>1</sup> has shown that the first floor originally served as a guildhall for the guild of nearby All Saints church, of which Browne was Alderman. Major alterations were undertaken from 1870 by the architect James Fowler of Louth, including rebuilding of the rear courtyard, but the whole complex was recorded in detail by Dollman in 1858. The combination of sources of evidence

from the building fabric, documentary study and the Dollman drawings creates an unusual opportunity to build up a fuller understanding of this important building complex.

The original Statutes from 1494 survive, giving great insight into hospital life. It was very much intended for poor people – the ten poor men, two poor women were to be 'lowly, devout and poor, and not having any other way of getting a living'. Each was to receive 7d per week for their maintenance. If any of them came into a living of 4 marks per year, then they had to leave. The 'sick, weak and helpless poor' were to be 'diligently looked after ... by their fellows who are healthy and strong, and especially by the women'. But if anyone 'shall become leprous or infected by any other infirmity repulsively noisome to his or her fellows, he was 'to betake himself to some other place where he may be admitted' – though he would continue to receive his 7d per week.

But the major activity and the dominant character of the Hospital, emphasised strongly in the Statutes, is that it was

<sup>1</sup> *Guild, Hospital and Alderman: New Light on the Founding of Browne's Hospital, Stamford, 1475-1509*, Nick Hill & Alan Rogers, Abrams, 2013.

a house of prayer. Hospitals were of course often referred to as Maison Dieu or Domus Dei – God’s House. The warden and confrater were priests, and single. There was mass every morning at 7am in the chapel, and a daily service at 2pm with prayers for the souls of William and Margaret Browne and their families. Manual labour was also forbidden – no doubt it would have conflicted with the concentration on prayer. So it is clear that, as in many medieval hospitals, the institution acted not just as a house of prayer in general but as a chantry, for the benefit of the souls of the founders. Chantries were of course abolished at the Reformation, but Browne’s managed to survive.

On the ground floor, the hospital was of the ‘infirmiry hall’ type, with a common dormitory linked directly to a chapel. The dormitory hall was designed to have ten beds, each with its individual window. The cell partitions were removed in 1870, but their outlines have been retained in the floor.

Prior to 1870, there was no fireplace to provide heating for the dormitory.



Images from Nick’s Powerpoint



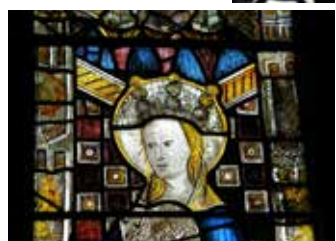
Above:  
Ground-floor plan - Dolman 1858

Left:  
The infirmiry hall with the cell partitions removed and fireplace installed

The double-height chapel has fine woodwork and stained glass of the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, with a carved screen and stalls.



left:  
the chapel stalls



A stained glass image of St. Mary, which also incorporated Browne’s merchant mark.



The screen between the chapel and infirmiry hall

At the foot of the stairs to the first floor, a brass plaque commemorates the completion of the building. In 1497, 3s 4d was paid ‘to the marbuler for the plate off laton’. On the first floor, the ‘Audit Room’ was originally the hall for the guild, with an entry passage at the head of the stair. The original fireplace here was replaced in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, but an ornate original timber cornice survives, which must have been intended to receive wall hangings.



First-floor plan - Dolman 1858



The first-floor Audit Room and the cornice for the wall hangings, seen on the right of the main image

The ‘Confrater’s Room’ to the west probably once formed the buttery and pantry to the guild’s hall, with a kitchen passage over the cloister arcade. A dispute arose between the hospital and guild in 1505, with the warden claiming that the guild ‘pretendeth unto the hall, kechyn and pantrie of your said Almshouse’.

The importance of Browne’s Hospital is further enhanced by the surviving evidence for the rest of the building complex. Although the rear courtyard was swept away in the 1870s, Dollman’s plans show the whole arrangement of both the ground and first floor as it survived in 1858. The west side was taken up by the entrance arcade, with a first-floor passage above. The east range formed the warden’s house, with entry passage, hall, service, parlour, kitchen and chambers. The southern chamber had a squint, with a view down to the altar of the chapel. In the north range, it seems there was a common hall for the bedesmen, with double-height window and a fireplace. The kitchen, the women’s accommodation and the confrater must originally all have been housed here. Beyond, though probably much rebuilt by 1858, was a series of supporting buildings. The early accounts note a stable, capon pen and well. There were separate gardens for the warden and the bedesmen, together with the privies.

Browne’s choice of a prominent town-centre site and the construction of an impressive two-storey elevation to the street ensured that his foundation took its place as an important and enduring piece of civic architecture in the town of Stamford.

Nick is National Conservation Projects Manager for Historic England and has overseen many major projects and research reports. He is also the Treasurer of the Vernacular Architecture Group

## In Search of Some of Norfolk's Early Churches

Peter Wade-Martins (12<sup>th</sup> December 2023)

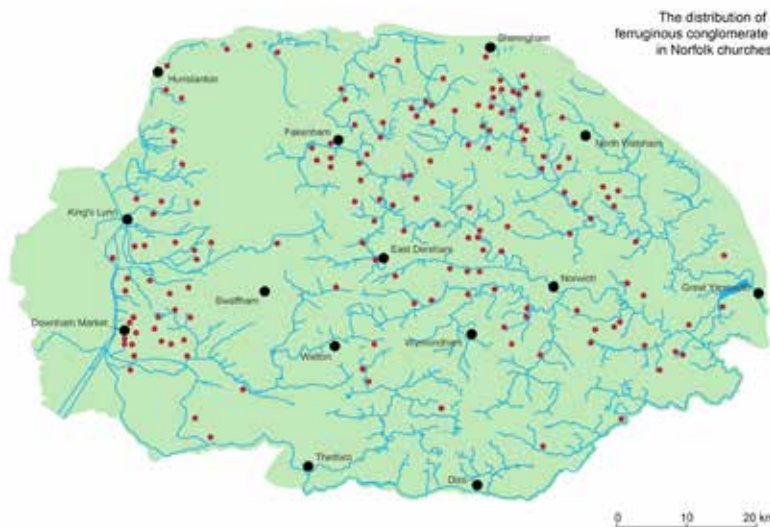
Following the publication of our *A History of Norfolk in 100 places* in 2022, a survey of all Norfolk churches to look for the use of iron-bound or ferruginous conglomerate seemed an obvious choice for the next project. This has involved driving all over the county with a steering wheel in one hand and a 1:25,000 map the other, and it has been fun. But once you start you realise that you also need to include the rubble from ruined Roman buildings which was still available at the time the first stone churches were being built.

The use of ferruginous conglomerate and Roman tiles and stone in Norfolk churches is usually an indicator of an early period of church building when little local stone, other than flint, was available. By 'early' here we mean the immediate post-Conquest period when the dominant Scandinavian tradition of building in timber was gradually replaced by stone in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.

The distribution of churches containing conglomerate indicates that it was dug from the local river gravels and was not carted far. In addition to flint, it was often used to form corners, doorways and windows until limestone ashlar from Barnack or Caen in Normandy became more readily available.

From the 650 or so Norfolk churches in use, disused or ruined which were examined for this project it was possible to identify some 172 (about 26%) with conglomerate either as originally used or re-used. Where conglomerate forms corners, windows or doorways there is a good chance that it represents a primary use of the stone. But, it is important to recognise there are also early churches without any conglomerate where only flint was locally available.

The map shows all churches in the county where the conglomerate has been identified in the fabric. The strongest concentration is in about 20 parishes to the north of Aylsham around the headwaters of the River Bure and in the Bure valley running down towards the Broads. There is another group in the Fakenham area around the upper reaches of the River Wensum and along the Wensum valley towards Norwich. There is a smaller group to the south of the Broads, while over the higher areas of West Norfolk and the clay lands to the south, there is little sign that conglomerate was available. It can also be found along the fen edge and in the river valleys which flow into the fens. From this distribution, it is clear that the river gravels were the main source of the material.



The Roman rubble came from villas, coastal forts and larger towns like Caistor and Brampton. With this rubble also came wall and roof tiles which are often quite distinctive, although there are occasions when it is difficult to recognise. Tile thickness and texture are the determining factors here. Identification was assisted by comparing tile thicknesses with the published measurements of almost 2,000 re-used Roman tiles from the upper filling of a Middle Saxon well I excavated during the 1967-71 North Elmham Park excavations.



Roman tiles forming a double-splayed nave window at West Barsham

Of the 172 churches with conglomerate, 29 (about 17%) also have certain or probable Roman tiles. That compares with 47% in the Thames Basin where there has been a similar survey. The difference was due to local availability. The density of surviving Roman stone



Yaxham - An impressive example of a tower arch made from a finer grained conglomerate, as well as the doorway above.



The belfry window with strip-work above it at Bessingham - below it is a bricked-up loop with a monolithic head carved from a block of conglomerate



left: window of conglomerate blocks in the tower at Beeston St Lawrence



right: Conglomerate quoins forming what looks like long-and-short work at Itteringham

buildings in Norfolk appears to have been lower than in areas further west within East Anglia and in regions further south.

Grey quartzite blocks, quarried from the Lower Cretaceous beds of the Sandringham Sands near Castle Rising (formed most likely in the Pleistocene) were quarried during the Roman period and used in the West Norfolk villas. It was also transported by sea to build the Shore Fort at Brancaster and a Roman building, possibly a fort, at Reedham. It was then re-used in West Norfolk churches and in a small number close to Brancaster and Reedham. The quartzite was quarried again from the eleventh century onwards for use in the Castle Rising area right up to the nineteenth century. Distinguishing the re-used Roman quartzite from the freshly quarried medieval stone in churches can be assisted by the presence or absence of Roman tiles and Roman mortar (*opus signinum*).

The lecture also featured a selection of examples where conglomerate, Roman tiles and grey



Grey quartzite in Appleton church from a nearby Roman villa.



Edgefield tower with conglomerate quoining

Photos: Peter Wade-Martins.

quartzite has been used. There are only two places where we can see for certain that the conglomerate dates from the original construction of the church later than the twelfth century. One is in the ruined fourteenth-century church with an octagonal tower at Edgefield. The other is at Little Snoring where the original church was demolished except for the tower and the conglomerate then built into the adjacent thirteenth-century church.



Little Snoring church

Conglomerate in the tower arch of the first church      The west wall of the nave of the later church showing a course of conglomerate at the base and the quoins

Little Snoring Photos: Ian Hinton.

Peter was County Archaeologist from 1973 to 1999, then Director of the Norfolk Archaeological Trust until 2014.

He has published widely on Norfolk History & Archaeology in the East Anglian Archaeology series and edited the two editions of Norfolk from the Air, and the first edition of the seminal Norfolk Atlas, as well as recent volumes about other aspects of Norfolk.

## Winter Lecture Synopsis

### Norfolk Brutalism (18<sup>th</sup> January 2024)

#### Sarah Pearson

The New Brutalism is a style particularly associated with the United Kingdom and one with strong links to the county of Norfolk. The term New Brutalism (as distinct from the wider Brutalist style) was coined by the British architects Alison and Peter Smithson and popularised by the Norwich-born architectural critic Rayner Banham in his 1955 article 'The New Brutalism' published in the Architectural Review. This style was characterised by the use of strong angular and geometric forms, exposed building functions and predominantly, although not exclusively, concrete construction with *in-situ* casting.

The very first New Brutalist building in the UK was constructed in the Norfolk town of Hunstanton when in 1950 the Smithsons won a competition to design a new Secondary Modern school. This building, listed Grade II in 1993, used a welded steel frame with direct glazing, steel ceilings and exposed plumbing. At the time of construction this building presented a clean and ultra modern appearance in comparison to the more common red brick Victorian Gothic of Board School architecture. Hunstanton School (now Smithdon High School) marks the beginning of a new and sometimes controversial building style.



Above:

Board-marked cast concrete at The South Bank Centre (Wikimedia Commons)

right:

the angular form of Horstead Water Tower

(cc-by-sa/2.0 Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk)



Alison & Peter Smithson (Anna Armstrong/Flickr) - Hunstanton (Smithdon) Secondary School - 1949-54

It is somewhat shocking to realise that despite its identification as a modern style, there are now Brutalist structures which are over 70 years old. Dislike of Brutalism and poor maintenance means that the number of surviving Brutalist structures is in constant decline, and it is increasingly important that examples of this architectural style are preserved as a part of our ongoing architectural history.

In the city of Norwich three examples of Brutalist design exemplify the possible outcomes for Brutalist construction. The University of East Anglia is the design of Denys Lasdun, designed from 1961 and opened in 1966. The original UEA site, constructed in reinforced concrete, was designed to create a '5-minute campus' in which students could access all the functions of the University within a 5-minute walk. Teaching was located in a spine of building named the teaching wall with student accommodation in the eye-catching ziggurats and all areas connected by elevated walkways.



*UEA Teaching Wall and elevated walkway* (Kaysgeog/Flickr)  
*UEA Ziggurat accomodation* (Kaysgeog/Flickr)



The site was listed as Grade II in 2003 and so is now protected from future demolition, but work continues to repair and place original sections of reinforced concrete which have not aged well.



In contrast, Westgate tower in the city centre, built in 1959 by WS Lusher and Son Ltd, was never listed. It was originally an office building occupied by several insurance companies and at the time of its design was described as a pencil of light within the city. By 2011 this glass and brick construction, decorated with heraldic shields, was called 'one of the ugliest buildings in Norwich' in the local press. Whilst demolition was certainly considered, ultimately Westgate was redeveloped as luxury apartments and the tower exterior was refaced to create a less uniform and more visually stimulating outward appearance with little trace remaining of its Brutalist origin



*Westgate Tower*  
 (cc-by-sa/2.0 Evelyn Simak - geograph.org.uk)

Finally, the urban project of Anglia Square continues to divide opinion. This collective of shopping centre, cinema, carpark and office buildings was under construction from 1966 to a design by Alan Cooke Associates. The flagship building on the site was Sovereign House; an office building constructed in glass, steel and reinforced concrete which for many years housed the HMSO. The architecture of Sovereign House exemplifies many qualities of the Brutalist style with exposed building functions at the roofline and a dramatic, deliberately anti-nostalgic appearance.



*Sovereign House - Anglia Square 1968* (Wikimedia Commons)

The fire stairs were constructed as spiral, set within a glazed shaft at the end of the building and are an instantly recognisable feature of the structure. Sovereign House was constructed at a time when environmental concerns such as heat efficiency and insulation were not a consideration and so the now dilapidated building, which has stood empty for some years, is out of synch with modern building needs.

*Sovereign House - Fire Stairs*

(Wikimedia Commons)



Nevertheless, it is a key piece of Brutalist design within the county of Norfolk. Permission has been granted to demolish all the buildings of Anglia Square and replace them with a new 'modern' alternative, with work expected to commence in 2024. This project demonstrates the difficulty of dealing with our Brutalist Heritage and raises interesting questions regarding what should be preserved, and at what cost.

Overall, examples of Brutalist design can still be found within the county, and some have been protected for posterity, but for others ongoing antipathy to the Brutalist style means that it is likely more will be lost.

Sarah is an architectural historian whose interests range from the architecture of the European Renaissance to Brutalism. She teaches art and architecture at the Institute of Continuing Education in Cambridge

## Some houses of North Lopham (members' night 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024) Jess Johnston

A number of houses in North Lopham have recently been investigated by the NHBG. This talk provided an introduction to some of the buildings in the village ahead of the NHBG AGM which is planned for 3rd August 2024 in North Lopham.

North Lopham is located in the southern claylands of Norfolk. Lopham comes from the Old English for 'Loppa's homestead' and the vill is mentioned in Domesday. It is sandwiched between two perhaps more widely known villages- Kenninghall to the North, which was the manor of the Duke of Norfolk in the medieval period. The site of the Duke's East Hall is the largest and highest status secular moat in Norfolk. It was demolished around 1530. Some of the earthworks of the moat and fishponds can be seen on the ground and on aerial photographs.<sup>1</sup>

To the South is South Lopham, St Andrew's church has the superb central tower dating to 1120, decorated with blind arcading.

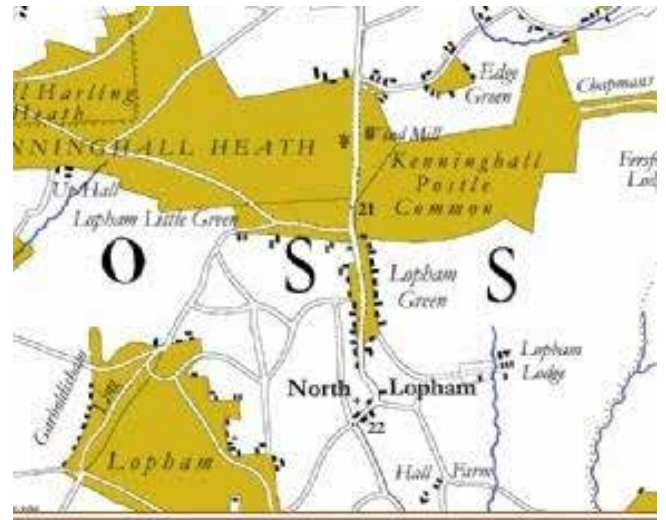
Fadens map pf 1797 (as redrawn map by Andrew Macnair<sup>2</sup>) shows the main village of North Lopham is aligned on a north-south axis, and likely to be a planned medieval, linear settlement with surrounding open field systems and commons on the parish boundaries. Many of the older village buildings are set back from the road, originally abutting a narrow central green, enclosed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Small hamlets are dotted away from the main village where piecemeal, gradual encroachment into the open field system and commons had occurred.

In the early 19th century the Lophams were bucking the trend in the decline in handloom weaving. The working conditions commissioners found that Lopham was "The one green oasis in the vast desert of discontent" There was a highly flourishing hempen cloth business just as others were declining. The 1845 Tithe map totals 60 acres of hemp, although by then much reduced.

Drone footage of the village taken by Harley McVitte provides a good illustration of the settlement pattern of the village; the site of open fields to the west, the Duke of Norfolk's medieval deer park to the East, the church towards the end of the village and the rest of the village sweeping away to the north, probably an example of Common Edge drift.



Drone footage by Harley McVitte taken of North Lopham from the south, shows the church as well as Church Cottages (to the right) and South Church Farmhouse - two of the older houses in the parish, ringed in the foreground



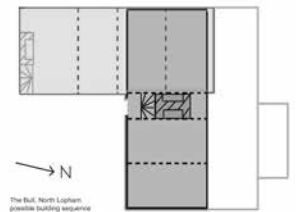
A summary of some of the buildings recently surveyed is shown on pages 18 and 19 of this newsletter.

Firstly, two 17th-century buildings used as pubs, set back from the spine road, built to the original common edge:

- The Bull, much altered during its time as a pub. Now a house - the earliest phase likely to be 17th century



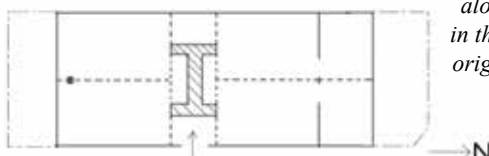
The probable original floorplan of the Bull with multiple extensions



- The Kings Head is a Grade II listed property, also early 17th century. There is an impressive bressummer above the ingle-nook fire place which has an unusual, elaborate ogee-shaped moulding along its edges, indicating that it was a high-status building when it was built.



The ogee-edged bressummer moulding along all four edges in the southern room - originally the parlour



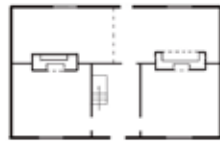
1 Norfolk Historic Environment Record  
2 <http://www.fadensmapofnorfolk.co.uk>

Secondly, two properties that were built close to the modern road, on the central green - either encroaching on it, or built after enclosure in 1815:

- The Laurels an early 19th-century property with Flemish bond brick exterior with moulded stone window heads with internal shutters and other early features.



*The Laurels - does it pre-date enclosure? Some high-quality features exist in the house.*



- Bay Trees - a early to mid-19th century brick property with a single storey clay-lump extension believed to have been part of the next-door undertakers/carpenters shop, where the bodies were laid out.



*Bay Trees - similar to, but smaller than, The Laurels with a single chimney and a clay-lump addition to the south.*



Other properties which were highlighted in the presentation were all situated on the edge of the parish outlying commons:

- The Rushes- Its earliest origins are likely to be a labourers/craftsman's cottage built on the medieval common edge, (Lopham Little Green) in the early 18th century.
- The White House- Located on the northern edge of High Common, early 18th century two celled, three bay, central stack, lobby entry.
- Common Farm- Located on the eastern edge of High Common, surveyed by Leigh Alston prior to redevelopment, "early-17th century timber-framed farmhouse of medium status, with a hall to the north and a parlour to the south of a central chimney which occupies its own dedicated bay."
- Tin Barn- Prior to redevelopment. Late 18th or early 19th century, 3 bay timber framed barn, pantiled with rear catslide roof and clay lump walls to north.

Areas for discussion and possible future research by the NHBG:

- Church cottages and Ivydene are medieval hall houses. Are there any other houses with medieval origins?
- The church tower was finished in 1526 and donors are dedicated in stone. Are there records that link them to properties in the village?
- From 1506/7 Lopham was inherited by the Howard family, the Dukes of Norfolk. Can any development be directly linked to them?
- Investigating properties along the common edges- High Common and Garboldisham Ling
- The influence on the built form of the hempen linen industry

Jess is an NHBG Committee member. She works for the National Trust and is also is a freelance heritage consultant with a specific interest in vernacular building, working and volunteering on several large projects. As a Lopham resident she has a particular interest in the buildings in her local area.

## NHBG Research

### Building-Recording Training Sessions

- Ian Hinton & Lynne Hodge

The short building reports on the pages 18 & 19 are summaries of the longer versions given to owners who ask the NHBG to study their house. The surveys usually take a couple of hours and the report has to be agreed between the surveyors before being issued to the owners.

The committee discussed the need to widen the number of members who are sufficiently trained or experienced to undertake these surveys. Recent membership applications were sorted for members who expressed an interest in learning the process of recording, and three training sessions were organised to test whether the processes that had been setup for training worked, before offering the same to the wider membership.

A beginners guide on how to approach a building was prepared and distributed and was part of the whole process to test whether this provided sufficient initial guidance.

Three houses were used. The first was a house of a long-standing member in Alington, the second, that of a new member who was one of the trainees, in Winfarthing and the last another trainee's house in Tacolneston, which involved

drawing up the results of a measured survey.

Each of the attendees prepared a report of the houses and these were compared and discussed to demonstrate that there will always be different views of the same house. The whole exercise was deemed a success, so will be offered to the wider membership in the spring.

If you are interested in taking part, contact Lynne at [buildings@nhbg.org.uk](mailto:buildings@nhbg.org.uk). It will be the first eight to apply, with preference given to people who can bring a house for the exercise. We will need two houses - it does not have to be your house, but one of interest and whose owner is happy to let 8 or 10 people analyse their house for 2-3 hours. They will receive a short report on the house for their trouble.



# Winter Lecture Synopsis

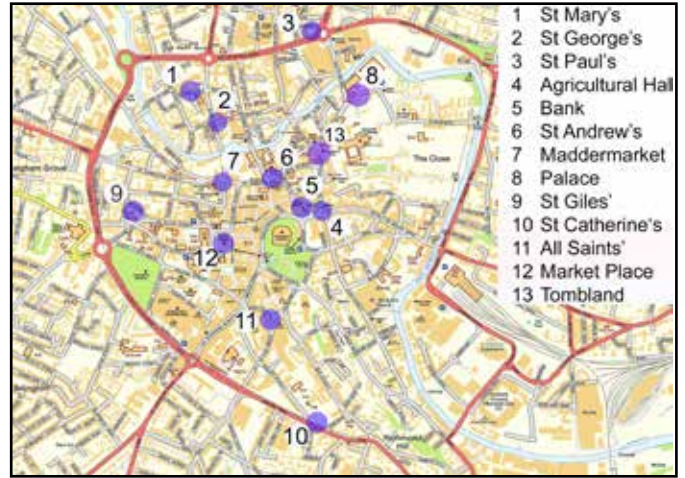
## The Plains of Norwich (members' night February 14<sup>th</sup> 2024)

### Mary Ash

The term 'Plains' which is used to describe open spaces where several roads meet in built-up areas of towns, is commonly found throughout East Anglia, though predominantly in Norwich. It is a borrowing of the Dutch 'Plein', arriving with immigrants and merchants in medieval times.

Many plains in Norwich are tied to a historic church; these open spaces (which might be the churchyard itself) were used as venues for small parish markets, local gatherings, religious festivals or political speeches. Several were the scene of battles during Kett's Rebellion in 1549. In Norwich we also have the great Victorian plains – Agricultural Hall Plain and Bank Plain – more associated with commerce than church.

In Over-the-Water Norwich, the oldest pre-Conquest part, there are three plains. St Mary's still has its nameplate, and its church, St Mary-at-Coslany, still has its Saxon tower. Other churches surround it; the enormous Central Baptist church, and the tiny Zoar Strict and Particular Baptist chapel. Here also is an enormous shoe factory awaiting redevelopment.



*St Mary's Plain surrounding St Mary's churchyard*

St George's Plain is a section of Colegate where once the rich merchants of the city lived. The fine perpendicular church of St George reflects the prosperity of the street. The large Norwich shoe factory designed by Boardman in 1876 stands opposite, now a comprehensive school.

St Paul's Plain is hardly noticeable now, hidden away by St Crispin's flyover. Once considered the most picturesque square in the city, its little round-towered church was swept away during the Anglia Square construction.

In the central area of the city, Agricultural Hall Plain reflects Norwich's past importance as a livestock market. The hall was built in 1882 to provide offices, animal pens and exhibition space. On the sloping plain outside, Christmas and Easter fairs used to be set up. Next door is the impressive colonnaded Hardwick House, built for Harvey & Hudson's bank, later becoming the Head Post Office. At the top of the plain is a memorial to the men who fell in the South African wars.



*Agricultural Hall Plain with Hardwick House*

Bank Plain joins Agricultural Hall Plain seamlessly, taking its name from the substantial neo-Georgian 1929 building by Boardman, occupied until 2003 by Barclay's Bank. Originally in the 18th century Gurney's Bank stood on this site. A Quaker

Gurney married into the Quaker Barclay family in 1779, and a dynasty was born. Opposite stands the Royal Hotel, also a Boardman building, designed to look like a French chateau.



*Bank Plain with The Royal Hotel*

St Andrew's Hall Plain is a large space as well as a meeting of the ways. St Andrew's church, the second largest in the city, is on the SW corner, containing many fine memorials, including one to the Suckling family, whose house is now Cinema City. St Andrew's and Blackfriars' Halls were saved from Henry VIII's destruction in 1539 by the intervention of lord mayor Augustine Steward, who persuaded the city corporation to buy them for £80 for the citizens' use. This plain saw a fierce and muddled battle during Kett's rebellion.



*St Andrews Plain with St Andrew's and Blackfriars Halls*

Maddermarket Plain opens onto St Andrew's Street. Here madder root was sold to make a deep red dye for the textile industry. St John's Maddermarket sits at the top of this small plain; in 1578 Queen Elizabeth visited the city and the walls of the churchyard were rebuilt to widen the route down which she would pass on her way from the marketplace to the cathedral.



Looking up Maddermarket towards St Johns



above: St Martin at Palace Plain - Bishop's Palace on the right  
below: All Saints' Green - newly pedestrianised

St Martin's at Palace Plain is perhaps the finest of our remaining plains. The Saxon St Martin at Palace and the great 15th century bishop's palace gateway form two aspects of the plain; the third side is the 16th century Wig and Pen pub (formerly the White Lion) with a row of Georgian houses adjacent, including Cotman House where John Sell Cotman once practised his art. This plain was also the scene of a fierce battle during Kett's rebellion in which the royal forces were routed.

A list of 'disappeared plains' includes St Giles' Plain with the highest church in Norwich; St Catherine's Plain, just a patch of grass near Notre Dame school on the ring road; All Saints' Plain, which remains as All Saints' Green and is perhaps the closest to an old 'plein' in function.

Photos: Mary Ash



Mary is an NHBG Committee member . She is a retired teacher and past Chair of the Norwich Society who has written widely on Norwich-based subjects, including social housing and other aspects of building in Norwich

## NHBG Website



Faced with a substantial cost to update the software to enable the contractors to maintain the original website, combined with its years-old design, the committee decided to spend this money instead on a redesign.

This has been completed by NHBG member Nick Stone of Starfish Ltd, who has also redesigned the NNAS website amongst others, and it presents a far simpler front screen to the world.

It has been designed to be viewed on a PC, but the essential information fits an iPad screen and it can also be viewed on a phone screen without losing information. The content has been simplified too, without sacrificing any information. You can now search for text in the earlier newsletters and download the ones that contain a match.

For those of you that have used the archive, you will notice a change. It was by far the most expensive element of the original website to maintain, as it was purpose-designed. This information has been backed up and saved, and has been replaced by copies of all 400 property reports that the NHBG has undertaken. These are also searchable for particular words or terms. Those that match will be listed and can be downloaded. You will need to be a member to do this and will have to request access again via the Archive Page.

The final benefit is that it has been designed using software that is far simpler to use and regular updates can be more easily managed by an NHBG member.

# Winter Lecture Synopsis

## A beginners guide to the science and design of roofs

Ian Hinton (members' night February 14<sup>th</sup> 2024)

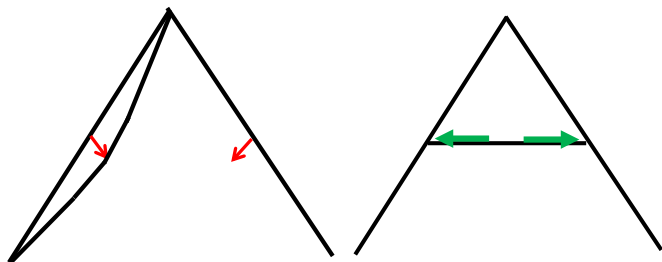
The roof is the first line of defence for a building, protecting the structure and interior. Medieval roofs also had to look good as internally they were on display, but all roofs have to be weatherproof, robust, not too heavy or expensive, and capable of dealing both with their internal loads and those they impose. Below is a simple study of the forces and solutions involved.

### Forces

These loads include their weight, which is simple to deal with, as are the deflections caused by the weight of the parts themselves. Considerably more complex are the forces of sideways spreading that roofs impart to the supporting walls and the methods of dealing with them in the rest of the structure.

#### Dealing with deflections

The weight of the individual rafters tends to make them deflect towards the centre of the roof. To prevent this, a collar is inserted to support one rafter with the one opposite – the collar is in compression. Historically, this was done in the Crown-post roof with a collar supporting each pair of rafters, in turn supported by the crown purlin. Collars in some form subsequently feature in every sort of roof (apart from scissor bracing).

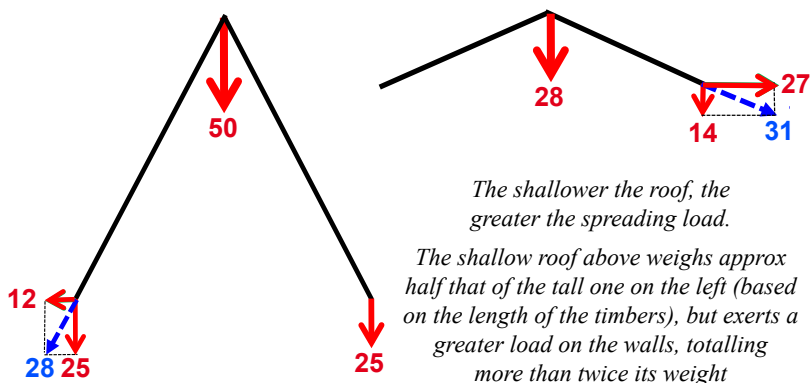


*A collar prevents deflection by supporting one rafter with the one opposite. The green arrows indicating that it is in compression*

#### Dealing with the spreading load

The spreading load is more difficult to manage. The weight of a simple unrestrained roof will try and push out the walls it rests on. This sideways force when combined with the downward component of its weight results in an angled force which can be calculated with reference to pitch and width (and Pythagoras). Diagrammatically, the resulting force needs to be contained within the supporting structure.

The resulting force is shown below in blue. Paradoxically the heaviest roof does not impart the largest combined force, which is dependant on the angle of the rafters; generally, the shallower the roof, the greater the sideways load (see below).



### Containing the spreading load within the structure



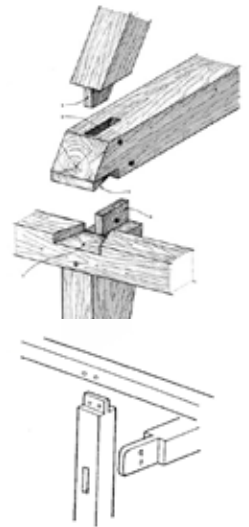
*Using the enormous buttresses at St. Mary, Conington (Cambridgeshire)*



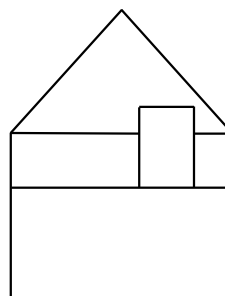
*At Freiburg Cathedral, the thin flying buttresses follow the direction of the combined force*

If the supporting walls cannot be made robust or thick enough to contain the forces, or other methods such as buttresses can't be used, then a tie beam is normally inserted. The tie beam is jointed to the bases of the principal rafters and, unlike the collar, is in tension countering the outward pressure.

In timber-framed buildings this was done via the complicated four-way joint between wallplate, wallpost, tie-beam and principal rafter, which was always vulnerable to splitting the post and separating the half dovetail. On the continent this function was more practically divided into two joints, the lower often taking the form of a tusk tenon with external pegs.



In one-and-a-half storey houses, the tie beam occurs at an inconvenient height for movement around the first floor, leading, in many instances, to its being cut through. Some of these are more successful than others by using dovetail joints to regain some of the strength of the tiebeam; in others we have seen houses become wider in the centre as the spreading loads wins.

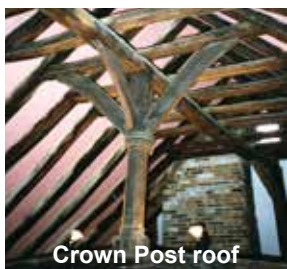


*dealing with restricted head height in 1½ storey houses*



## Change from common-rafter to principal-rafter roof

During the medieval period, every roof had rafters of the same size, known as common-rafter roofs. In these cases the deflection loads exerted on each rafter had to be dealt with. With crown-post roofs this involved a collar for every pair of rafters, all supported by the central crown purlin, in turn supported by the crown posts.



Later versions of the common-rafter roof utilised large side purlins which were supported by queen posts, with a collar between each pair of queen posts.



By the mid 16C, rafters were reduced in size, with a larger one (the principal) every fifth rafter or so, into which were jointed purlins which supported the smaller intermediate ones, saving considerable amounts of timber. This spread the loading to the principal rafters via the purlins. Collars were still used between each pair of principal rafters but either clasping the purlins or below them.

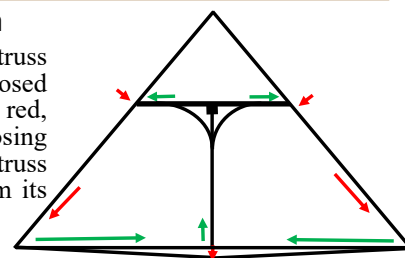


Photos: Ian Hinton

Ian is Chair of the NHBG. He sat Chartered Surveyors exams in the 1960s, but never worked as a surveyor. This is the first time he has been able to use the roof loading calculations which were considered so important by the tutors at the time.

## The Closed system

Once fully installed, the truss structure becomes a closed system, with the forces in red, cancelled out by opposing forces in other parts of the truss shown in green (apart from its weight).

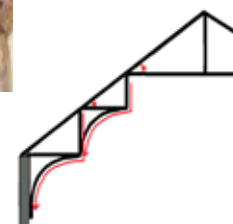


## The ultimate roof ? - the double hammerbeam



Four true double-hammer-beam roofs survive in Norfolk, such as the late-15C roof at Gissing St Mary above.

Designed more for display than constructional need - they dispose of the loading forces generated in and by the roof very successfully, by passing them through the hammer posts and arched braces to the walls, resulting in mostly vertical forces shown by the red arrows. For such a wide roof design this type does avoid having to find a 10m-long tie-beam. In Victorian times, however, after several hundred years, many of these roofs had to have a steel straining rod inserted to supplement the original structure's resistance of the spreading load.



## NHBG Research

### Some unusual sash windows in Lynn

#### Ian Hinton & Les Scott

During HODS week, Les Scott visited King's Lynn and noticed some oddities amongst the early sash windows in Nelson Street and St Margaret's Place and sent me the photographs.

At Burnham House, 13 Nelson Street, two of the upper sashes of the windows contained hinged opening lights in their central pane.

I asked Ian McKechnie, who spoke to the NHBG about sash windows in November 2018, whether he had ever seen their like?

He had not seen them before and thought "they were an amusing vernacular variation". He wondered whether the window was a standard two sash vertically sliding window with cords and weights etc., or was the top sash fixed from its beginning, with the bottom sash suspended or perhaps manually operated, which some of them were, supported open by a peg or a brick. If so, it probably was a means of providing draft free ventilation, which the proper sash window incorporates in the principle of its design. "If it was a fully developed sash window the opening casements are just crass additions."

This is an interesting point, as a few yards to the north in St Margaret's Place, similar opening lights were noticed, but here in a fixed window, but the framing of the opening light was much thinner and more difficult to spot. These opening lights were obviously providing the only ventilation.

Just above the opening light, which was top-hung, is a clip on the frame to fasten the light open - an interesting vernacular solution. It does not explain the need for a similar arrangement in the double-hung sash windows in Burnham House!

Has anyone else notice similar windows elsewhere? If so, please send me a photo.



Photos: Les Scott



Burnham House, 13, Nelson Street, Lynn. Opening lights set within the sash windows



2 St Margaret's Place. Opening light set within a fixed window with a clip above

## A Digest of Buildings Visited Since August 2023

*This is a digest of the Norfolk houses which the NHBG has been invited to look at and to prepare brief reports on. These are ALL private houses and NO contact may be made with the owners in any way except through the Committee.*

*These summaries of those reports are to inform members of the work undertaken on behalf of the Group.*

Lynne Hodge

### Town House, Hempton

This two-celled house is built at a cross-roads on the edge of a large common, alongside a terrace of similar-period houses. It is rendered with a central chimney stack and a pan-tiled roof. It has two single-storey lean-to extensions at the front. A two-storey extension parallel with the road at the rear was built in the 20th century, replacing two earlier cottages. There are two blocked windows and a blocked door in the gable end, possibly indicating a division into two units at some time. Research by the owner shows that it was used as a charitable house for the reception of the poor in the late 18th century. The internal features - particularly the slight timber-scantling - indicate that the house was built in the 18th century, so may have been built for that purpose.



*Ian Hinton*

### Hapton House, Hapton

A house of four cells that now has an almost-central doorway and symmetrically placed sash windows. The front wall is brick, the remainder timber framed. It has two stacks, the western one with three axial octagonal tops and the steep roof is now covered in plain tiles. The eastern (right) cell appears to be an addition to a typical tri-partite house, with the additional stack unusually inserted into the old service bay. Dating indicators are inconclusive. Each cell has nicked chamfer stops or sunk-quadrant mouldings which could be of a similar date in the second quarter of the 17th century. However, the front entrance forms an opposed entry in the original house and the entire roof has single purlins with clasping collars and diminished principal rafters, both of which are typical of the late 16th century. Several casement windows at the rear have iron opening lights with catches described by Linda Hall as "woodman" of the 17th century. An early 18th century makeover introduced the brick facade, the pillastered and pedimented doorway, and sash windows; inside, panelling and decorative cupboards.



*Lynne Hodge & Ian Hinton*

### 28 The Street, North Lopham

Built on the common after enclosure in 1816, but before the tithe map of 1834, No 28 is set amongst older houses which are set further back. It is a two-celled, two storey, brick building with glazed black pantiles and a single-flued stack at the northern end, heating only the ground-floor room. The bricks are of good quality with rubbed-brick skew-back arches above the windows. The single-storey room to the south is of clay lump. There was a single-storey extension at the rear, later raised to two storeys resulting in different angles for the two planes of the roof, as the ridge is in the centre of the front part of the house.



*Jess Johnston & Ian Hinton*

### Holly Farm, Winfarthing

Originally a three-celled lobby-entrance house of around 1600 with its entrance to the farmyard. It has close studding, some glazed windows some



possible oriel windows, two tudor-brick arched fireplaces and several fine two-plank doors. The roof has two rows of in-line butt purlins.

The cells to the north of the stack were rebuilt in the 18C with slighter studding and primary bracing with shaved purlins in the roof, but retaining the earlier layout. In the 19C this part was faced in brick and the main entrance moved to the street side with an almost symmetrical appearance.

*Lynne Hodge & Ian Hinton*

### Rookery House, Tasburgh

This large, three-celled, two storey plus attic, farmhouse was built on the edge of Tasburgh Common with a rendered timber frame with opposed entry doors.



The roof has two rows of purlins, the upper row with clasping collars, all pointing to a mid-late 16th century date. The front now has a pedimented door case with 6 thick-mullioned sash windows.

The building of the brick gable and chimney stack appears to coincide with an upgrade to the southern end of the house, with the replacement of the service rooms and the installation of decorative principal joists in around 1630.

The parlour end was rebuilt in the 18th century with slighter timbers and shaved purlins. A Rainthorpe estate map suggests that there was another (earlier?) phase at rightangles to this range at the northern end, was it that that was replaced? This appears to be at a similar time to one of two phases of Georgianisation, with new fireplaces, doors, windows and plastering out.

*Ian Hinton & Lynne Hodge*

### The Bull, North Lopham

The house is set back from the road. It has an L-shaped plan with the east-west range gable-end to the street and the north south range parallel to the street. The front elevation is thatched and the rear of the northern elevation is tiled with a cat-slide roof. There is a brick facade dating from the mid-20th century under the current render. Until 1963 it was the Bull public house.



The two-celled east-west range is of the early 17th century with a lobby entry and stairs by the stack, the northern end was replaced by the north-south range in the 18th century containing primary bracing with much reused timber, and a clay-lump extension was added in the 19th century. It has been considerably altered over the decades in its use as a pub.

*Jess Johnston & Ian Hinton*

### Rookery Cottage, Tasburgh

A one-and-a-half-storey cottage of three cells, but only the central cell is original, those at either end having been rebuilt in the 20th century. The off-centre stack was built within a smoke bay at the high end of the hall which still shows considerable smoke blackening. Evidence of a door frame with spandrels can be seen in the east wall, presumably the original entrance. Six queen posts, as part



of the roof of the central cell, are still in place, the southernmost pair defining the smoke bay. The central cell appears to date from around 1500, with the floor inserted perhaps 100 years later.

*Lynne Hodge & Ian Hinton*



## St Mary's Cottage, Tacolneston

Originally a thatched, two-celled timber-framed house that had a central smoke bay with the southern room as an open hall. A later extension was built to the north and appears always to have been tiled. Extensive repairs were underway to much of the house after the removal of a cement-render coat. This also revealed a small area of pargeting,



The narrow original smoke bay is defined by joints in the wall plates and a complete partition at its northern end, meaning that the northern two-storey end was unheated. A brick chimney stack was built later, mostly encroaching on the hall and a floor was inserted with notched chamfer stops that indicate a post 1620 date. The two ridged dormers at this end of the house display a date of 1726 so may indicate the actual date of the changes. The southern gable has been rebuilt as a wrap-round brick feature. The original house is difficult to date - the clasped purlin roof could indicate a mid to late 16th-century date, but open halls were going out of fashion at this time.

*Lynne Hodge, Ian Hinton & Ben Goodfellow*

## Shingham Farm, Shingham

An ornate mid-Victorian farmhouse with a facade of gault-clay bricks with fine, coursed-and-squared flints in a chequerboard pattern, skew-back rubbed-brick arches and corner pillasters. The projecting central bay has neo-gothic door and window features. The main windows are modern sashes.



*Shingham Farm barn and stables*

The main range has black glazed pantiles with red tiles on the two ranges at the rear, which form a square floorplan. Their ground floor walls, including the knapped flint panels, are contemporary with the main range, but the first floor walls are a later build with different bricks and mortar. The sale of this farm, which covered the whole parish, by the Sandringham Estate in 1851 would seem to be the trigger for this new building. The associated farm buildings - granary, barn and stables - are also highly decorative and present a grand overall image.

*Lynne Hodge & Ian Hinton*

## 10 The Street, North Lopham

Built on the common in a similar way to No 28. Three cells, the central one unheated, the chimneys are set behind the roof apex. It is similar in appearance to other houses built along The Street, some of which had claylump elements. The brick facing and composite lintels along with the elaborate front door, coupled with the internal shutters, seem to indicate a certain quality. How this fits in with the possibility of a core of clay-lump construction is unclear. It is possible that this method was prevalent in North Lopham at this time. The appearance of this house is more late-Georgian than Victorian, which is reinforced by some of the internal features such as the larger open fireplaces, although they may have been altered.

*Jess Johnston, Ian Hinton & Christine Shippam*



## Low Farm, Keswick

A two-storey with attic timber-framed house with a colourwashed part brick skin. An off-centre axial stack sits in a plain-tiled roof with two small ridged dormers on the south face, with later single storey extensions at either end.



Probably built after 1620, with features such as on-edge joists upstairs, some glazed windows and chamfer stops with nicks, the house also has earlier features such as opposed entry doors, several unglazed windows and a clasped purlin roof.

There several full sequences of carpenters marks, including the ground floor ceiling and a pair of circular marks upstairs.

*Lynne Hodge, Christine Shippam & Ian Hinton*



## King's Head, North Lopham

A full two-storey plus attic timber-framed building with a hipped single storey extension and others at the rear with catslide roofs. It is set back from the road on the old common edge. Used as a pub since 1792, it has undergone many changes. The current door is a lobby entrance position. The room west of the stack has an unusual moulded bressumer above the fireplace and the principal joists have sunk-quadrant moulding. The first floor ceilings in all but one room were inserted later, now supported by clamps. The roof has rustic rafters beneath the thatch, but the principals are diminished above the clasping collars, usually indicating a late 16th century date, but the timber decorations seem to point to the early 17th century.



*Bressumer*

*Jess Johnston, Ian Hinton & Christine Shippam*

## 9 King Street, King's Lynn

The street frontage is of the 1820s, but is only a brick skin. The use of the building is not clear - it may have been a non-domestic building, such as a Guildhall or an important house with commercial aspects as the plot reaches the quay on the River Ouse.



The rear range, glimpsed through the carriage way, is a brick and stone range of around 1360 which was either one large open hall, or more likely an open hall with a two storey element. The jambs of the original large hall window remain and the stone moulding can be dated from Paleys *Gothic Mouldings*. Adjacent to the window is the cusped and recurved arched opening for a *laver* (a basin for washing hands found in some elite houses) of similar date.

The building has undergone many changes since then. It had a central chimney inserted and the hall floored over in around 1600. In around 1680 an extension was built at the west end, the eaves were raised for part of the range, and many of the details were replaced, including the insertion of the sash windows and doorcasing. Inside, an ornamental stair, and considerable amounts of panelling were installed. Currently undergoing renovation, more may be revealed as work progresses.

*Lynne Hodge, Ian Hinton & Owen Warnock*





## Carvings at St Andrew's, Burlingham

Seen on the Churches-day  
visit last summer

The top pair are from the spandrels of  
the screen from the ruined St Peter's,  
Burlingham - hence the crossed keys.

The remainder from the screens and  
corbels at St Andrew The bottom centre is  
from the Victorian communion rail

photos: Ian Hinton

