

Norfolk Historic Buildings Group

Non members

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Newsletter




Number forty-eight

Autumn 2023

www.nhbg.org.uk

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CHAIR

A successful full summer programme of visits is almost over, with (mostly) good weather...

Our winter talks will continue over Zoom as explained previously, enabling the NHBG to spread its audience outside the group, allowing NHBG members across the country to attend, also avoiding the need for winter travel after dark for Norfolk members, as well as saving the costs of hiring a venue.

The current method of registering for the "ticket" to attend the meeting (via emails to Jess) requires considerable time inputting email addresses and ensuring that all interested parties receive the email invite, especially as the number of applicants rose, so the committee has decided to trial the use of Eventbrite for ticket issue. This has several advantages.

- For meetings which have no charge, there is no cost to the NHBG for the service.
- It will handle the initial ticket - and the issuing of the meeting link to attendees
- Once you have booked a ticket, it will send you a reminder of the upcoming talk, by email

Sadly, it has been announced that Roger Crouch, stalwart long-term NHBG member and well-known bookseller of Aylsham has recently died in hospital, after a terminal diagnosis. His cheery presence and knowledge on summer visits and the many stories about books and booksellers will be missed. Funeral arrangements are not known at this time.

Ian Hinton
Chair, Norfolk Historic Buildings Group
August 2023
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Two vacancies

Paul Hodge (not on committee)

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Administration

AGM Report

Thirty-five members attended the AGM held after a picnic lunch following an interesting morning in Litcham (see pages 12-13).

Apologies were received from:

Chris and Mary Ash, Diane Barr, Jan & Lin Bensley, Penny Clarke, Chris Currie, Janet Eade, Jill Golzen, Adrian Hodge, Paul Hodge, Alice Leftly, Robert Michel, Naomi Milne, Susan Rowe, John Vigar, Laurel Walpole, Anne Woollett.

Following the usual administrative handling of the 2022 AGM, the Chairman addressed the past year, referring to the continued return to normal, with good attendance at Summer Events and an increase in the demand for house surveys and the increased participation in the Zoom winter talks. He described how the Boulton & Paul team were planning to finish the project as a documentary exercise only, and briefly mentioned possible future projects. He finished by thanking everyone for making the NHBG a success, especially those who have helped run the group.

The Treasurer introduced the Annual Account figures and described how our position has slightly improved despite spending a lot on timber dating, with more committed. She invited questions, but there were none. Thanks were given for her work.

The group 247 members at the year end, the same as 2021/2.

Elections - there were no other nominations, so Owen Warnock was re-elected as Deputy Chair with none against and the seven committee members who stood were also elected. The Chair asked if any members would be interested in joining, as we had lost one this year.

The committee recommendation that the annual subscriptions remain the same was accepted and passed none against, as was the proposal that Peter Milne remain as the Independent Examiner of the NHBG Accounts.

In previous years it has been suggested from the floor that the quorum for the AGM be reconsidered from its current 10% of fee-paying members. (this would mean 22 given current membership). The fact that 35 were present this year seems to show that if we find somewhere interesting to hold it, people will come. On that note, the Chair asked for suggestions for next year.

With thanks to everyone for attending, the Chair closed the meeting at 1:45.

Lynne Hodge

One new committee member volunteered after the meeting.

Front Cover photo: The Chimney piece in The Elizabethan House by Stuart Burgess - see pages 3&4

Winter Lecture Programme

All meetings will be held over ZOOM @ 7.20 for 7.30pm.

The new Eventbrite ticket-issuing process is set out below. It sounds complex, but once navigated, it is easy. If you register with Eventbrite, then each time you Login afterwards for another event, the process is easier as your details are pre-filled in stage 3

1. **Go to the event listing.** (Via the link in the email from Lynne) all the event details - the location, date, time, and description.
2. **Select "Tickets" and choose which tickets to register for.** After selecting tickets, **click Checkout.**
3. **Fill out registration information.** Every order requires the name and email address of the buyer.
4. **Agree to Eventbrite's policy terms.** Eventbrite requires acceptance of its Terms of Service, Community Guidelines, and Privacy Policy
5. **Click "Place order".** This completes the order and shows a confirmation message.
6. **Find your tickets.** After completing an order, attendees will be sent a confirmation email containing the link to the event.
On the night: click the link in the email, this takes you to the Event page
- 7 **To join the Zoom talk** on the attendee event page **click the "join now" button at the bottom of the page** and this will take you directly to the zoom meeting.

Thursday 19th October 2023

Lynsey McLaughlin

The Most Castley-Castle ever: Exploring the Impact of Medievalism at Castle Sites

Lynsey is a Cultural Heritage Curator with the National Trust. Her PhD at the University of Lincoln explored the original roles of castles, and the messages that they were intended to present at the time.

The focus has recently shifted from one heavily centred around a military interpretation, to placing them in a wider context, particularly considering their role as symbols of status. Organisations that open castles to the public have been accused of retaining the overtly military interpretation to lure visitors through the door. How does this affect visitors?

Thursday 18rd January 2024

Sarah Pearson

Norfolk Brutalism

Sarah is an architectural historian specialising in the European Renaissance, with an interest in Brutalism; she teaches at Cambridge University.

Brutalist buildings are characterised by minimalist constructions that display the bare building materials and structural elements rather than hide them with decorative design. The style emerged during the 1950s in the UK, as part of the reconstruction projects of urban areas in the post-war era. The University of East Anglia buildings and the Archant/EDP building are local examples.

Wednesday 15th November 2023

Nick Hill

An Almshouse establishment -
Browne's hospital, Stamford, Lincs

Nick is the Treasurer of the Vernacular Architecture Group and has spoken to the NHBG before about the preservation of a silversmiths workshop in his role as National Conservation Projects Manager with Historic England.

Browne's Hospital was founded in 1485 by a local wealthy wool merchant as a home and house of prayer for twelve poor men and two poor women. The building is listed Grade II* and still provides 13 flats for the poor.

Wednesday 14th February 2024

Members' evening

A chance for members to outline their own research:

Jess Johnston

Some houses of North Lopham

Jess and members of the NHBG have been surveying houses in the area, with the possibility of starting another project.

Mary Ash

The Plains of Norwich

A corruption of Plein (open), plains describe the many squares of urban areas in Norwich and the county's towns. Some developed names that reflected the businesses that surrounded them.

Tuesday 12th December 2023

Peter Wade Martins

The use of iron-bound conglomerate
and the re-use of Roman tiles and stone
in Norfolk's early churches

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

He has written and published extensively on Norfolk topics, including writing and editing many of the early volumes of the East Anglian Archaeology series.

His current research is about the use of the available stone, either from the ground or from earlier buildings, in Norfolk's early church buildings, in the absence of the readily-available freestone found in other parts of the country.

Ian Hinton

Why churches are built where they are

Churches are often isolated, some are built on unsuitable sites and others built around ancient monuments or other features. Do any of these locations indicate specific reasons or meanings?

Tuesday 19th March 2024

Alison Yardy

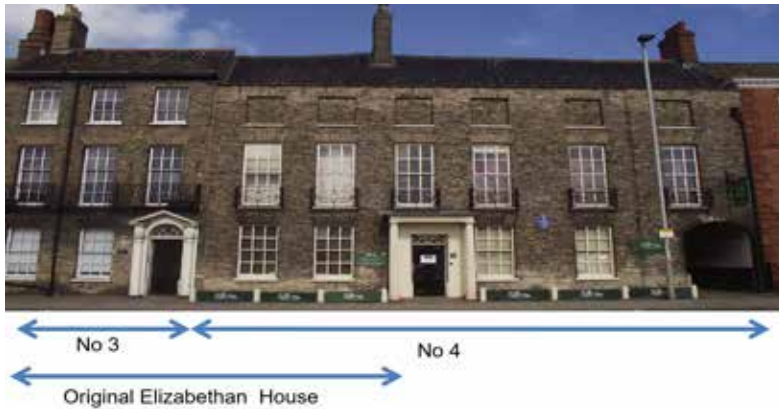
The Waterside heritage of The Broads

Alison is a Project Officer for the Norfolk Historic Environment Service and has been involved with waterside architecture and buildings for some years, particularly as part of the recent Broadland community project - Water, Mills and Marshes.

Elizabethan House – A New Perspective (April 13th 2023)

Stuart Burgess

The Elizabethan House at No. 4 South Quay, Great Yarmouth is a superb example of a merchant's property dating from the late 16th Century. Containing several finely-panelled rooms, three exceptional carved chimney mantles and an exquisite plastered ceiling, it epitomises the grandeur and opulence portrayed by the wealthy elite in Great Yarmouth.



1590s he had enhanced his father's property, building a range of rooms on the north side of his land.

In 1596 Cooper redeveloped two row houses abutting the quay – enlarging them eastwards to allow for the construction of a 3m-wide brick fireplace, which was decorated with wood panelling, as well as exquisite carvings in oak amongst fluted pilasters and a three-bay arcaded overmantel. A loggia, or

The story of the Mansion's development, however, is complicated, not least because it has been extended, divided, modernised and restored over the centuries by a number of owners. Combining archival research with architectural features, it is possible to ascertain the development of this fascinating building.

open walk way, was also erected linking the north range to the west range.

Early beginnings

Great Yarmouth was built on a narrow sand spit, serving as the port for Norwich as well as a major fishing hub, in its own right. A street pattern evolved resulting in a network of narrow lanes or rows, orientated East to West. Merchants quickly capitalised on the opportunities the Town had to offer, and slowly redeveloped the old row houses to suit their needs.



Row 83
HT Tinkler 1883 Today
(from Norfolk Picture Library no 722499)

17th Century

Seven years later, in 1603, Cooper, then Bailiff of the Town, extended his property to the south, and was given consent by Great Yarmouth Corporation to block the row between his house and the adjacent land of the former monastery of Greyfriars. This enabled Cooper to double the size of his property, creating a large 9m x 5m drawing room on the first floor that contained continuous arcaded panelling with fluted pilasters. To the north end was erected a sumptuous chimney-piece with 2 tiers of paired Corinthian columns, highly decorated with elaborate carvings. In the centre, the Arms of James I (see also front cover), and around the room busts of male and female figures.



1603 Chimney piece

However, most impressive of all is the plastered ceiling: (photo below) containing high-relief ribs in a pattern of squares with concave sides that twist around each other. The low relief consists of intertwined vines and pendants – all which demonstrate Cooper's wealth as a successful merchant.

Cooper also was able to build a fine staircase in the space to the east of this room, and incorporate the two other row houses to the east. The completed mansion thus subsumed 6 separate properties into one vast house, arranged around a central courtyard.

16th Century

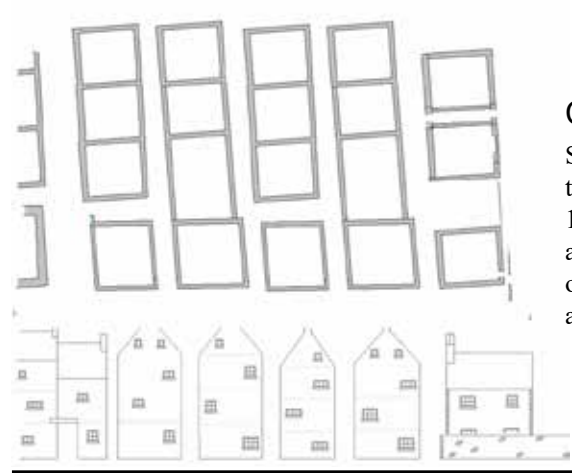
By the mid-16th century, one such Merchant, Thomas Cooper acquired property between Middlegate Street and the Quay. He built a modest house there, adjacent to the mansion of another Merchant, Nicholas Fenn. Dying young in 1578, he left his business and property to Benjamin, his 14-year-old son. Upon completing his apprenticeship with neighbour Nicholas Fenn, Benjamin very quickly expanded the business, later importing wines from Gascony and commodities from Europe. By the mid-



Extract from fadensmapofnorfolk.co.uk



Principal joist from the 1603 extension built by Cooper (arrowed on the "Today" floorplan). Exposed in 1757, when Mason removed the wall and fireplace. The right-hand face of the beam is moulded, demonstrating that it was meant to be visible, but the left is unchamfered.



Circa 1500
Suggested plan of the site of 1-4 South Quay and how the original rows were arranged

Cooper sold the Quayside Mansion to John Carter in 1635, whose grandson in 1722 bequeathed it to his cousin, John Duvall. Describing it in his will as:

"all the mansion or dwelling house...together with the stables, warehouses and chambers above them with the coal yard and garden on the south side of the rowe adjoining to my said dwellinghouse and also my shop belonging to my said dwellinghouse now in the occupation of Thomas Appleby barber..."¹

By now, the property extended further south beyond Row 83, and included the former lands of Grey Friars, that were previously leased to Cooper.

18th & 19th Centuries

In 1722 Duvall sold the premises to Joseph and Susanna Neech, however it was far too large for them, so was divided. The southern part was purchased by David Mason who made alterations to the property, notably removing the chimney and brick gable on the ground floor of the 1603 extension, and creating a new entrance passage, along the line of the blocked-in row. Evidence for this survives in the ceiling beam, that illustrates that half the beam was concealed in the wall, as it lacks any chamfer or moulding. Mason also added the water pump to the present scullery, adding his initials and date of 1757 to it.

In 1774 No. 4 South Quay was purchased by former Mayor, William Taylor for £650. He subsequently modernised it, adding rooms to the rear and a new façade to the west front. Six years later he sold it to John Ives for £950.

The Palmer family later acquired the house, and restored it internally, perhaps too, adding elements such as the medieval Aumbrey in the kitchen. They also installed blind windows to the second floor, a fashion developed in 1809.

Escaping any bomb damage during WWII, the house came under threat of being demolished to create a new one-way system in the town. It was Maud nad Blanche, the surviving daughters of the last owner, Samuel Aldred, who bequeathed No. 4 South Quay to the National Trust, who, as the seventeenth owner, now safeguards the building for future generations.



Circa 1580
Merchants, such as Nicholas Fenn (blue) and Thomas Cooper (orange) began redeveloping the quayside properties, subsuming the small houses into their larger properties.

| Date | Summary of Building Works |
|-------|--|
| c1500 | 7 Original row cottages and yards |
| c1570 | Henry Stanton builds Mansion N of site |
| c1580 | Thomas Cooper builds house to rear |
| c1590 | Cooper builds N range to link E and W properties |
| 1596 | Benjamin Cooper enlarges quay property |
| 1603 | Cooper extends house over row to south |
| 1725 | Neech, Mason and Taylor make improvements |
| 1867 | Samuel Aldred creates offices |

Drawings: Stuart Burgess
Other images taken from Stuart's PowerPoint presentation

Today

The present floor plan of Nos 1- 4 South Quay, showing the extent of building works over the centuries.



1 Will of Nathaniel Carter TNA PROB 11/588/357

Stuart has worked in the Visitor Services Team of the Norfolk Museums Service since 2012. He works predominantly at the three Great Yarmouth sites - The Time and Tide Museum, The Tolhouse and Elizabethan House

The Elizabethan House is open from April to September from 10 until 4, every day except Saturday

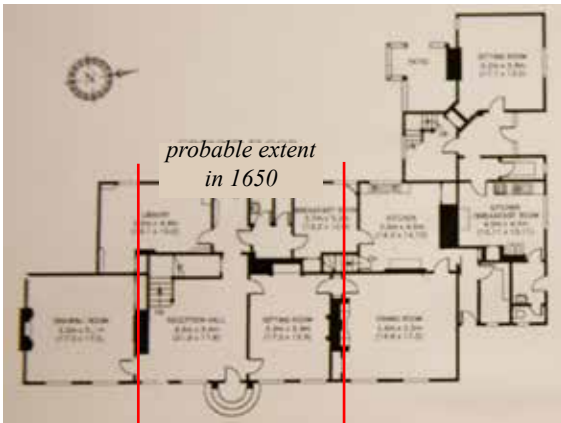
Cavick House, Wymondham May 14th 2023

Anne Woollett



Frontage of the house- central five bays with two later bays at each side. Renewed attic windows. Central door with engaged doric columns and pedimented hood.

Cavick House stands on higher ground to the south-west of Wymondham Abbey. The early life of the house is not known- was it perhaps the site of residence of William D'Aubigny who founded Wymondham Abbey and was later buried there? The current house probably began life in 1650s but was altered in 1715-1720s when it was purchased by John Drake, a successful weaver. The two central chimneys mark the end of the earliest five bay phase of the building.



It was then enlarged with two more bays to each side with a timber eaves cornice with egg-and-dart pattern, and a doorway (similar to ones on Colegate and Market Place, Norwich), creating a classic Norfolk Queen Anne frontage. The cedar and two limes planted in front of the house probably date from the alterations in 1720s.

In the 1780s William Papillon married into the Drake family and made further modifications. These include building the curtain walls with their rusticated doorways to the side of house creating an impressive frontage, the enlargement of the coach house (with his image above the main doorway), and moving the roadway so it no longer ran directly in front of Cavick House. In 1820 the dormer windows at the front of the house were removed but have been recently replaced, returning the frontage to its earlier form, making the attics habitable, and revealing carpenters marks. Further changes included re-siting the kitchen and reversing the direction of the staircase: remnants of the earlier windows can be seen on the back wall of the house.

At this stage Cavick House and adjacent early C18 farmhouse (now with a farmshop and café) were all one farming estate, with barns, dovecote, coachhouse, stables, and brewhouse. In C19 the house was sold to William Cann, brewer of Wymondham and later to Jane Bailey who died in 1993. The current owners bought the house in 1998.

Inside the house two rooms are of particular interest. The drawing room (part of John Drake's work) is decorated with high quality work: with ceiling moulding made of paper mache and six wall panels with high relief floral and fruit trails and a frieze including a bow and quiver of arrows- all in lime wood.



above: The drawing room ceiling with papier-mache moulding

left: one of the lime-wood carvings

The fireplace mantel is supported with scrolled consoles with a frieze with a scene of shepherd and dog chasing a wolf with a lamb and flanking panels with relief floral motifs. Another room is somewhat later and in a different style, probably part of William Papillon's changes: the main beam was covered in plaster and the walls were papered. The impressive fireplace had been removed but was found and replaced. The staircase, rising from the reception hall is panelled against the walls with barley-twist ballusters.



*above
the staircase ballusters*

*right
The re-established elaborate
fireplace*

Photos: Anne Woollett

While the house was the focus of our visit, the garden is amazing, especially on a sunny afternoon. The original garden was smaller and surrounded with C18 walls. Later the garden was extended, the wall heightened and a hood added to the north wall, as an architectural feature, probably taken from the Abbey. The garden was completed with a semi-circular ha-ha which gave views from the house over open countryside as well as towards the Abbey. The ha-ha had been filled over the years but has been cleared and its wall repaired. A loggia was added to the garden to celebrate the Queen's coronation in 1953.

Many thanks to Christopher and Judith Harwood-Lawrence for guiding us and explaining the history of their house and garden.



The rear of Cavick House with signs on the brickwork of a reversed staircase on the right of 1720s house. Late C18 kitchen extension on right. 1953 loggia at left.

NHBG Research

NHBG videos on YouTube

Type the underlined part of the address directly into your browser, OR type VAG or Norfolk Historic Buildings Group into the Youtube search box (other non-relevant videos will also appear on this list)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNjNIAHgRfl&t=93s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNjNIAHgRfl&t=147s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6SqwJwFqddY>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBQr4UWSd_s
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKt5LLEv4v8&t=891s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=frjjpgq-lbPw>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KGzcWgeyw1U>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOAWmWdjUdM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWFaJwx1xi4>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hg_FCXGhJwl
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AHJU-Is4IS8>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TI-GfgWzVrQ>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbxuNsmV70M>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8OLM8QnVpxE>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lxKZ3efzXh0>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5ODSdXcV70&t=669s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUCRTEIgw-l&t=73s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hGfmcBq9OU&t=179s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLG1TYeM5KM>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DyU0M-Kfvk&t=121s>

VAG videos of East Anglian subjects

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Stpiw6wbce0&t=9s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rlqEslEEww>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCd07Hos8Tg&list=PLP-ojFvaknzVgiSGfBTsVocEpg1Lu_JRd&index=3
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Por5-5UmEjo&list=PLP-ojFvaknzVgiSGfBTsVocEpg1Lu_JRd&index=4
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdzGN147Gi4&list=PLP-ojFvaknzVgiSGfBTsVocEpg1Lu_JRd&index=6
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9nM8dEMCYg>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2o-fux6Ggy0&t=261s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P-QMT0z5aMMLan>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qzv22yS3Ck8&t=19s>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_RBkWWRF4A

Gillian Gallacher - **River Crossings**
 Ian Hinton - **Pulham North Green and its farmhouses**
 Jane Chittenden - **Norwich Gas: its effect on local economy**
 Peter Goodrum - **Jarrolds 250 years**
 Ian Hinton - **The Development of church buildings in Norfolk**
 David Bussey - **George Skipper**
 Jan Bensley - **The Loddon parish study**
 Richard Matthew - **A Tour of Norwich Guildhall**
 Ian Hinton - **The Great rebuilding in Norfolk (VAG)**
 Anna Kettle - **The craft trade of pargetting**
 Tim Howson - **The Medieval houses of Maldon, Essex**
 Anne Woollett - **Some houses of Norwich Cathedral Close**
 Ian Hinton - **Krons Manor, Hempnall**
 Chris King - **Houses in early medieval Norwich**
 Mary Ash - **Burnt bricks: a different kind of building material**
 Ian Hinton - **Poachers and Lime Tree Cottages, Hempnall**
 Terry George - **The undercrofts of Norwich**
 Ian Hinton - **Three surprising houses in Hempnall**
 Stuart Burgess - **The Elizabethan House, Yarmouth**
 Sarah Pearson - **Riddlesworth- the development and decline of a Norfolk estate**

Edward Martin - **The Landscape Context for EA buildings**
 Tom Williamson - **Norfolks geology and Vernacular Architecture**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VCd07Hos8Tg&list=PLP-ojFvaknzVgiSGfBTsVocEpg1Lu_JRd&index=3
 Jess Johnson - **Some buildings of the S. Norfolk town of Diss**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Por5-5UmEjo&list=PLP-ojFvaknzVgiSGfBTsVocEpg1Lu_JRd&index=4
 Ian Hinton - **Two Norfolk churches that we would have visited on VAG Spring Conference**
 Chris King - **Houses of ancient form and fashion 17th C Norwich**
 Philip Aitkins - **Meadow cottage, Wetheringsett**
 Elphin & Brenda Watkin - **No-one looks at Harwich**
 Ian Hinton - **Two Norfolk Timber-framed houses**
 Imothy Easton - **Some buildings of Debenham**
 John Walker - **The aisled halls of East Anglia**

The Thatch, Attleborough June 11th 2023 Jess Johnston

On a beautiful summer afternoon we were treated to a lovely spread of cakes and drinks when Hannah and Ben Nairn welcomed NHBG members to their home; The Thatch in Attleborough. The Nairns have spent the past few years repairing and restoring the property. It has been a real labour of love, with much of the work undertaken by themselves, such as lime plastering, laying floors etc. Ben has developed his carpentry skills making many of the replacement windows with Hannah incorporating stained glass into many of them.

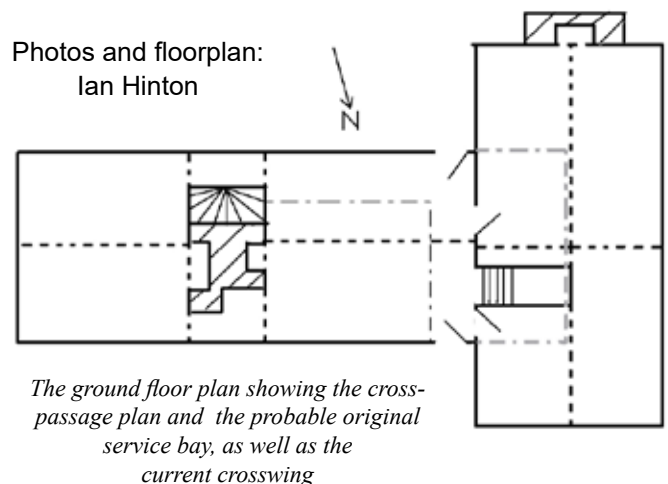
Ian and Lynne had visited the property in November 2022 and the summer visit group were able to review the report whilst looking at the building features first hand. The group was split into two with one visiting the inside first and the other taking the exterior. The lack of moulding or decoration on the principal joists in the ground floor of the main range was commented on, as well as the reasoning behind the later cross wing. Could it have been built as a dowager quarters? The current version of the external chimney blocks the upstairs window, this could mean that originally the two ground floor rooms were unheated either as a second, but unheated, parlour, or perhaps to accommodate a specific domestic or farm activity which required a large service room, or alternatively, was there an earlier chimney which avoided the windows. No firm conclusions were made.

Hannah and Ben had commissioned dendrochronology investigations for the property. Four samples from the crosswing provided a mid-seventeenth century date which is in line with previous examples of Norfolk crosswing dates. Four samples from the main range of the house suggested the same date, but stylistically the main range has features consistent with a date perhaps a century earlier, such as plain timbers and the crosspassage. However, the four samples that indicated this date were all taken from the roof structure. Ian and Lynn suggest that it is feasible that the roof of the main range was replaced when the cross wing was built, instead of having to extend it to meet that of the new cross wing. The roof bays do not match the bay widths of the structure below.

Further discussions ensued relating to the location of a farmhouse so near to the historic centre of a town and whether this was unique or there were other examples locally. It was suggested by Jane Doughty, Attleborough's Archivist, that the farm attached to the Thatch was probably around 70 acres and incorporated much of the land to the south of Connaught Road and the Town centre (see tithe map below). Certainly, a more detailed review of the Tithe map and any earlier documents may be worthwhile to understand the relationship between the property and the town.



Little has changed since the undated archive photo from Historic England (source below)



A few of the outbuildings of the farm survive. One of the barns is the subject of a short piece about its roof structure which follows. Presumably there were there more outbuildings than the one that survives today?

Historic England Archive [https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/card/424678?place=Attleborough%2c+NORFOLK+\(Parish\)&terms=Attleborough&searchtype=englandsplaces&i=2&wm=1&bc=0%7c9%7c10&g=12665](https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/photos/englands-places/card/424678?place=Attleborough%2c+NORFOLK+(Parish)&terms=Attleborough&searchtype=englandsplaces&i=2&wm=1&bc=0%7c9%7c10&g=12665)

Norfolk Historic Maps <https://norfolkcc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=b3536317056c428ab9e08fe674f31a43>

In conclusion, The Thatch is a very interesting property which prompted much discussion on the day and afterwards. We would like to extend our thanks once again to Hannah, Ben and their family.

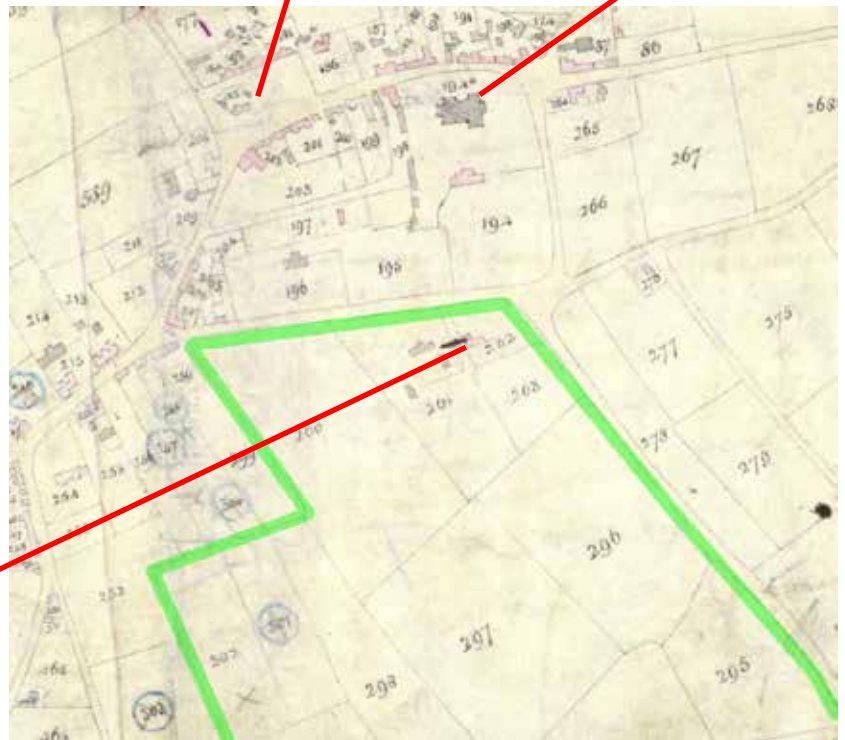


The external chimney on the south gable of the crosswing which covers a window on the second floor

The Thatch

Possible extent of its farmland

Attleborough Market Place, Town centre & Church



Attleborough Tithe Map (1840) - Source at foot of previous page

The Barn Roof at The Thatch Les Scott

During our summer visit to The Thatch, Les Scott studied the barn roof, above where tea and cakes had been served Ed

On a cursory inspection, the roof of the barn behind The Thatch appeared to be typical, with side-by-side, staggered, purlins and separate collars. On closer inspection, the ends of the two collars had been fitted into the principal rafters with single pegs and tightened with wedges which had been installed from the outside. The wedge position was scribed on to the side of the principal rafter, guiding the carpenter's cutting of the larger mortice.

The wedge allows for a big enough tenon to have clearance when pushed up (otherwise the tenon would be too small and would rely entirely on the peg to do its job)

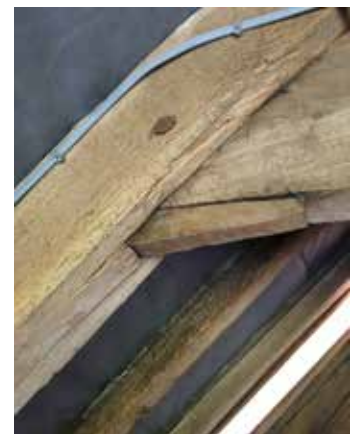
The question is why do it? Normally the truss would be positioned as a unit, with the collar in place.

- Does this mean that the collar has been designed to be fitted after the principal rafters have been put in place?
- Or was it a replacement collar that could be fitted without dismantling the entire roof?
- Could the carpenter have found a way to work on his own, assembling the parts as he went?

Has anyone else seen a similar arrangement?



North plane of the roof



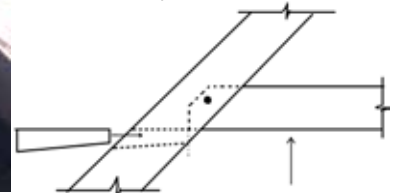
the wedge below the collar

below:
the scribed marks for the enlarged mortice



Photos and drawing Les Scott

below:
Possible arrangement for post-assembly fitting of the collar



Mardle Hall, Tivetshall July 22nd 2023 Introduction by Hannah & Ben Nairn



Mardle Hall, south face. The progress of the hempcrete infill (see sidebar) can be seen in the western half

Introduction

The introduction was written by Hannah & Ben Nairn, the owners and restorers of The Thatch in Attleborough, the house that we visited on June 11th - see page 8

A big thank you to Ian and Sandra for showing us round their ambitious restoration project.

There was a good turnout for the wettest July on record. Fortunately we enjoyed the luxury of a roof to shelter us from the rain making the absence of some of the walls and windows less critical.

Having entered Mardle Hall by climbing over the sole plate through the newly constructed timber frame front wall, immediately took me back to a couple of summers previous when our Tudor dining room at The Thatch was in much the same state.

It was fascinating to see such a familiar style building so architecturally exposed and to see the different types of materials and techniques being employed in its renovation. The use of hempcrete for the infill panels between the studs where the original wattle and daub was unuseable was an interesting twenty-first century innovation.

Much of the timber frame had been stripped back allowing glimpses into the evolution of the house over the centuries. The compacted earth floors still visible in parts of the house were an evocative reminder of historical living standards even in more affluent buildings. It was wonderful to see that so much of the old wooden floor boards remained, and in remarkably good condition, which will be a beautiful feature of the house when they are restored.

The scale of the project is all the more remarkable when you realise that Ian and Sandra are doing so much of it themselves.... whilst living on site.

From our own experience one really comes to appreciate the skills required and the physical and mental dedication of taking on and continuing to commit to such a project.

However, standing in their summer bedroom gazing out through the timber framing, the beautiful bucolic scene would be reward enough to keep them motivated in restoring such a precious piece of Norfolk's architectural history.

House Report

A brief report of the house was prepared in October last year at Ian & Sandra's request by Lynne Hodge and Ian Hinton.

Below is an extract:

The house has a typical tri-partite floorplan with an off-centre chimney stack. It is set back from the enclosure road, on a moated site, on the edge of Tivetshall Green.



In 1988, Edwin Rose found evidence of pegs for a spandrelled door head at one end of the crosspassage. Similar evidence has been uncovered for the opposing door to the north. To the west of the crosspassage is a timber-framed partition. There are peg holes and rebates for the service doors and evidence for a door to stairs at its northern end which formerly gave access to the service chamber. A joist has mortices for the former partition between the two service rooms. All the common joists are flat-laid and chamfered with run-out stops.

There is a modern partition to the east of the opposed doors which continues to the north giving access to the east room. The central room, the Hall, has a heavy transverse principal joist and flat-laid common joists all with stepped run-out chamfer stops. The transverse joist rests on brackets which are integral to the posts. There is a large chimney with a mantle beam with some apotropaic VV scratches.

In the eastern room, the parlour, some of the timber frame is exposed, showing that this room is a separate build with the corner posts for each frame being butted up against each other. The studs are continuous and the common joists rest on a form of mid rail which appears as a clamp which has been lapped into the studs. This clamp appears to be original as it is tenoned into the corner posts at either end. All joists have a chamfer and lamb's tongue stop. *(The clamp and studs have had to be replaced recently as the frame was still moving and the timber decaying, but the new work has retained the construction details).*

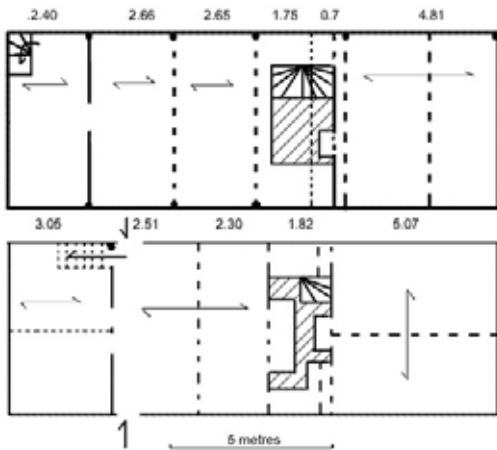


Side-by-side posts between the parlour and stack

A staircase winds beside the stack. The eastern room, the parlour chamber, has swag bracing internally trenched into the studs and a window in the north wall with ovolo moulding and rebate for glass. There is a step up into the rest of the house beside a post which has a mortice for a brace, running south from the post, now removed to allow access to the east room. The hall chamber is now divided by a corridor and a transverse wall. The south wall has a diamond-mullioned window, an edge-halved scarf joint and a shutter groove. The transverse partition is below a tie beam which has no peg holes, indicating that the room was formerly open between the service chamber partition and the

chimney. The eastern room, the service chamber, also has a diamond mullioned window and has a staircase, possibly in the original position, to the attic. From the position of the peg holes, there is no evidence of a door between the hall chamber and the service chamber. In the post by the current door is a mortice for a brace to the tie beam. All first floor rooms are floored with wide oak or elm boards.

The bay spacing in the first floor is different from that in the ground floor. The tie-beams are equally spaced and reflect the bay spacing of the roof.



First Floor

Change in bay spacing between ground and first floor

Ground Floor

The roof of the western two bays has two rows of in-line purlins with curved wind braces and collars clasping the upper rows of purlins. There was formerly a partition above the service chamber and there does not seem to have been a door into the rest of the attic.

The roof to the east has one row of shaved in-line purlins and straight wind-bracing, the braces have been cut, possibly to accommodate two dormer windows. There is an anomalous timber (*see photo*) running from, and pegged to, the collar, with three holes in it, all worn smooth. The timber is chamfered on all four corners and has run-out stops. Local tales suggest that this is a whipping post. Perhaps more likely is that it is a for a loom, although the attic would be a dark workplace? (*During the visit, Jan Bensley compared it to the need for such a support when a loom was operated at The Bridewell Museum in Norwich, causing considerable vibration*).

Both attic rooms are floored with old boards.



Is this timber a support for loom(s) in the attic? Modern cameras make it look much lighter than reality - normally more light would be needed for loom use

Or is the folk-explanation of a whipping post correct?

Or is there a third possibility?

Discussion

Although the plan of this house is ostensibly that of a common post-medieval tripartite type, the parlour, eastern, cell is a separate build, possibly a replacement for an earlier cell, although no evidence was found on the posts for an original third cell. The western section has a service bay, opposed entry and a hall typical of the mid 16th C. It was always floored and of two storeys with unglazed diamond mullioned windows with shutter rebates. The clasped purlins in the roof also suggest a pre-1600 date.

It is interesting that the service bay seems to have had no access to the rest of the house on the attic floors. This bay has a separate staircase, the rest of the house being served by the stair which winds up by the stack. Was it to separate male and female servants?

The eastern bay is problematic. It is again of two storeys but the studs are continuous with no mid-rail. The floor is fixed in an unusual way – the northern and southern ends are supported by what appears to be a clamp - but the clamp is lapped around the full-height studs and tenoned-in at both ends into the corner posts, so it may be a novel solution to supporting the floor joists when the studs run continuously from sill to wall plate. A dateable feature is a glazed ovolo mullioned window to the rear, suggesting a build of the second quarter of the seventeenth century. The roof appears not be of the same build as the walls, the shaved purlins being late seventeenth- or early eighteenth century.

- Was this bay built as an open hall with some particular, non-domestic function?
- Was it always of two storeys but the builders chose to support the floor in a non-standard way?
- Was it built to replace an earlier parlour or was the original house of only two bays?

More may be revealed as the restoration progresses.

Hempcrete (summary by Ian Hinton)

Hempcrete, or “hemp-lime”, is a medium density natural insulation material produced by wet-mixing hemp shiv (waste) with a lime binder, which has excellent thermal properties and sustainability credentials. A variety of finishes can be applied; the usual finish is a lime/clay plaster or a lime render.

Hempcrete has several advantages:

- It is highly insulating and airtight;
- It has high thermal mass, therefore hempcrete buildings change temperature more slowly and thus have reduced energy demands for heating and cooling.
- It is vapour permeable and hygroscopic, drawing moisture out of its surroundings thus protecting the building’s fabric.
- The hemp is locally grown.
- Hemp transforms CO² during its growth by capturing carbon and releasing oxygen. Using hemp in construction locks away carbon for the lifetime of the building. Research indicates that a net 110-165kg of CO² is sequestered per cubic metre of hempcrete.
- Hemp can be grown in rotation with food crops to improve the soil and reduce weeds; it does not require agrochemicals in its cultivation and there is no need for pesticides or insecticides.

It is usually applied between shutters, in a similar way to some cobb buildings.

Litcham, Manor Farmhouse & All Saints Church

August 12th 2023

Maggy Chatterley

I had not been to Litcham before and although it is described as a village, All Saints church seems too large and imposing for a village. The settlement was obviously prosperous in the Georgian period as so many of the buildings have red brick walls, or fronts, filled with sash windows.

Church Street seems to be the main street, with shop and post office as well as the village hall where we were to have the AGM later.

We were given a map of the town showing the main listed buildings - starting with the 17C pub on the crossroads at the north end to the 14C Priory converted to a house by the River Nar at the bottom of the hill. We also had notes on features to be looked out for in the church and an extract of the report prepared by the NHBG last year on Manor Farmhouse. It was built directly opposite the church and Diana Don, its owner, had kindly invited us to see inside.

Manor Farmhouse



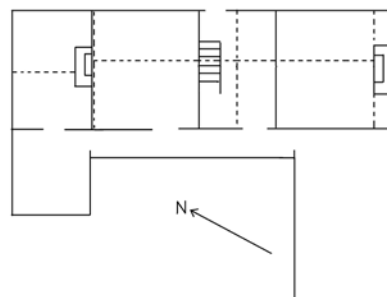
We were told that Manor Farmhouse was probably built as The Church House in the early 16C as a replacement for holding Church Ales and other fund-raisers in the church itself. It was originally built with a jetty which has been built up in brick on the ground floor which is 18 inches thick, so that the wall is almost flush.

The gable ends are both brick and the southern one is English Bond. The northern one and much of the rear wall is built in Flemish bond. A single storey lean to extension at the rear provides a corridor.

It was explained that the large ceiling beams that crossed in the hall inside the front door showed that the ground floor was probably once one large room. The long beams passed through the later walls and the centre of the original building was marked by where they crossed. The ceiling is quite high for a house of that period. The main beams are chamfered with simple stops and the common joists are chamfered too, the



The large crossed ceiling beams in the centre of the original building



gaps between them not much bigger than the joists themselves. The centre joist has been cut back in the hall to give headroom for the modern stairs. Since no other evidence of stairs was found, it was thought that the upstairs room may have had an external staircase (like the surviving Church Houses in Somerset and elsewhere)

The room at the northern end of the house is separate and was probably built in the 17C. It is built outside the original gable end, as was the chimney stack which projects into the room.

Upstairs, a corridor runs along the rear wall giving private room access. The front wall of the main part of the house has lots of studs and some of the windows have been moved as there are empty mortices for studs above the current window and some taper burns next to the location of the original window. The ceilings are all plastered. Where the northern cell was added, we were shown that the wallplate changes level.

In one of the central rooms there is one panel of wall painting which is being investigated by Andrea Kirkham - described as a sort of Moresque design.

With thanks to Diana for allowing the group to study her fascinating house with its lengthy history.

Photos: Maggy Chatterley



Litcham



All Saints Church (Ian Hinton)

Photos: Ian Hinton

All Saints was (re-) consecrated in 1412 with a tower rebuilt after a fire of 1636. The tower is built in brick in English Bond (Pevsner says Flemish) and is dated 1669, but the bricks seem to be considerably older - very narrow and variably fired, presumably reused.



The tower shows how far north of east that the church is aligned, as the 18C sundial that is placed on the tower had to be put on the corner of two faces to show the time.

Inside the church, there is a large 14C Y-tracery window on the west wall above the organ - does this mean that the tower was a later addition to the church.



Furniture

The screen is dated 1436 and has images of 22 Saints divided by gender, repainted in 1900. The Communion rails date from the Laudian period with their turned ballusters.

There is a considerable amount of graffiti on the piers, including several compass roses.

The pulpit was brought into the church by one of the Victorian Vicars - origin unknown.

The ornately carved parish chest is late 14C/early 15C, is of "clamped" construction and made of Baltic Oak¹. The face has trefoiled tracery surrounded by a four-leafed design. The quatrefoil carving on the lid is unusual as is the provision of only a single lock, unlike the typical three for the two churchwardens and Priest.

It is almost identical to one held at Gressenhall from St Margaret in Norwich and three others found in Kent (Faversham, Rainham and Canterbury) - collectively described as "Kentish Gothic". The Faversham chest was dendro dated to between 1390 and 1420.

The chest on its own makes a visit to the church worthwhile, but also take a look at the huge iron hinges on the back of the south door.



¹ "Kentish Gothic" or Imported? A group of tracery carved medieval chests in Kent and Norfolk - Christopher Pickvance found at <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/arch-cant/vol/138>

From the Listings



The Bull - listed 17C

The Bull is listed as 17C plus extensions with stables at the rear. The northern part is timber framed with brick and flint gables with large brick inglenooks and substantial ceiling joists. Supposedly the last horse-changing station on the Norwich-Lynn coaching route. Nicely-kept pint!



15 Church Street - listed 18C

15 Church Street next to the church is listed as 18C, but the off-centre position of the chimney and front door suggest strongly that this is a 17C house with a later brick front applied to it, along with the fashionable sash windows of the period, like other houses in the street.



The Priori listed 14-17C

Priori Farmhouse includes the remains of a 14C chapel and hermitage as shown by the flint wall and angled buttresses facing the street, as well as the front door with its fillets and rolls. 17C extensions, one with the curvilinear gables. Inside, the chapel has 2 crown-post trusses, one octagonal. Two queen-post trusses survive over the 17C part. Part of jettied timber frame survives on the north side.

Photos: Maggy Chatterley

Timber dating in Hempnall - Ian Hinton

In *Newsletter 46*, the results of the dendrochronological analysis of the timber samples taken from the houses in Hempnall were reported. Timbers in three of the buildings - The Chequers, Lime Tree Cottage and the remains of the house at Spring Mead produced definitive dates, along with the final phase of The Old Vicarage. Most of these were as expected from the typological analysis of the buildings themselves, but two were slightly unexpected. The earliest phases of four of the houses were all built in fast-grown timber with wide growth rings which does not usually result in a match to the known database of samples.

These four samples were sent to Swansea University for analysis by a new method using analysis of stable oxygen isotopes (¹⁸O). It is based on measuring oxygen isotope ratios in the tree ring samples and pattern-matching them against a master chronology which was developed from previously-dendro-dated samples of oak. It differs from conventional ring-width-based dendrochronology in that it can enable tree ring sequences from short-lived, fast grown timbers to be precisely and reliably dated.

Meadow Farm



Dendro

A possibly-relocated, non-residential building re-purposed as a house. Most of the smaller timbers and some of the main frame were of elm, the remainder was fast-grown oak. One sample from a tie beam did not date via dendro and was sent for ¹⁸O analysis

Oxygen Isotope



The Old Vicarage

Dendro

Four phases - 5 samples in all. Four from the inserted ceiling of the hall chamber dated **1649**. One sample from the hall ceiling did not date by dendro. One sample from the wallpost in the first phase did not date by dendro so was sent for ¹⁸O analysis

Oxygen Isotope



The Old Rectory, Fritton

Dendro

Two main phases - 2 samples in all as it was all wide-ringed. The two from the service end of the lower range did not date by dendro. One sample from was sent for ¹⁸O analysis

Oxygen Isotope



Krons Manor

Dendro

Three phases - 8 samples in all. Four from the crosswing cornerposts and principal rafters which did not date via dendro. Two from the frame of the first range wallpost and wallplate did not date by dendro so one was sent for ¹⁸O analysis

Oxygen Isotope

Had hoped to have the results by now, but the lab at Swansea University is still being upgraded

Two non-Hempnall samples sent for oxygen isotope analysis



Bishop Bonner's Cottage

Samples taken after a recent investigation by Susan & Michael Brown for the Trustees of the Museum did not date by dendro.

Oxygen Isotope



St Mary's Farmhouse Tacolneston

As part of The Tacolneston Project, the crosswing successfully dated to 1627, but the main range did not date.

Oxygen Isotope

Firm Dendro dates



The Chequers

Front Range 1617-1620

Rear Range 1553



Lime Tree Cottage

Whole house 1559



Spring Mead.....door

inserted floor 1693-1720

door 1545-63

“Interesting” Carpenters’ marks at Elm Tree Farm, Pulham

Ian Hinton & Lynne Hodge

The members’-night talk on Pulham Farms, and the mention of interesting carpenters’ marks, gained the attention of Bill Hardy who researches non-Roman-numeral marks (see *NHBG Newsletter 37*, p7). This entailed a revisit to Elm Tree Farm to document the marks properly. As so often happens, this has raised as many new questions as it has answered.



Elm Tree Farm is one of several farms located on the southern edge of North Green Common on a moated platform. The house is of two storeys with attics and the exterior is fully rendered. The render shows several episodes of repair, especially on the north wall. The brick plinth is of varying heights and is higher and more obvious at the eastern end of the house. The main range has two cells with an almost-central axial stack - hall to the west and parlour to the east - with a two-storey, offset extension at the west end housing the services. It has a crosspassage with a plank and muntin screen. In the northern end of the passage is a second winder stair, although the house has always been in single occupation. The south wall has seen a dramatic sinking requiring some repair and replacement of some of the timbers.

Roman-numeral marks

The hall chamber was originally unheated and it has been partitioned in the twentieth century to form a bathroom and passage in addition to the chamber. Where the staircase rises from the cross passage, a series of large traditional carpenters’ assembly marks can be seen, all approx. 50cm below the wallplate, but not repeated on the plate itself. They are numbered from I to IX, all with a tag which consists of a quarter circle, rather than the usual straight line. They are up to 12cm in size and cut with a race-knife. They continue into the present-day bathroom on the north wall. There are repairs to the south wall of the hall chamber, some of the studs being pine, but original studs numbered II, III and IIII match the sequence on the north wall, but the part assumed to contain 5-9 has been replaced.

The non-Roman-numeral marks

In addition to these marks, there are two other marks that do not use the typical Roman characters, but take the form of those described by other authors as Arabic Numerals¹. They are located on the transverse gable wall, one near the top of the first stud – 10 (Ø), and another on the midrail below consisting of one half of this symbol (presumably representing 5). These are similar to the marks found in Sussex and elsewhere by Bill Hardy, where they were parts of longer sequences of non-Roman numerals¹.

The radius of the circle in the Arabic marks here, and that of the curved tags of the Roman numerals, is the same – 1 inch - so could have been made by the same tool.

Outstanding Questions

- 1 Why is there a mixture of mark types?
- 2 Were the different types of mark made at the same time?
- 3 Why only 5 and 10 in Arabic marks, which do not constitute a sequence or make locational sense?

- 4 Why do the marks only appear upstairs at one end of the house. Neither type appears anywhere else on this wall or any other wall at the parlour end of the house?

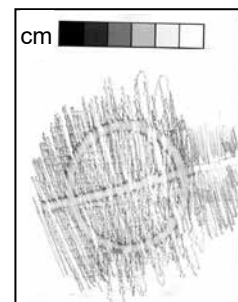
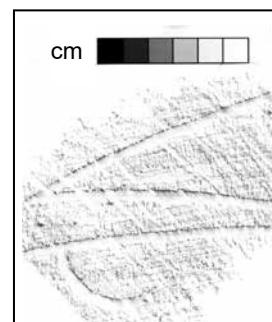
Arabic Marks elsewhere in Norfolk

Bill Hardy has found 25 examples in timber buildings in England, two of them so far in Norfolk (see reference below). The first of those is at neighbouring Manor Farm which incorporates an Arabic 4 in the Roman-numeral sequence I-IX on the planks of the upstairs screen. The second, a fuller set, mark the planks on the door of Irstead church some 40km to the north east.

These marks at Elm Tree Farm have added to the database.



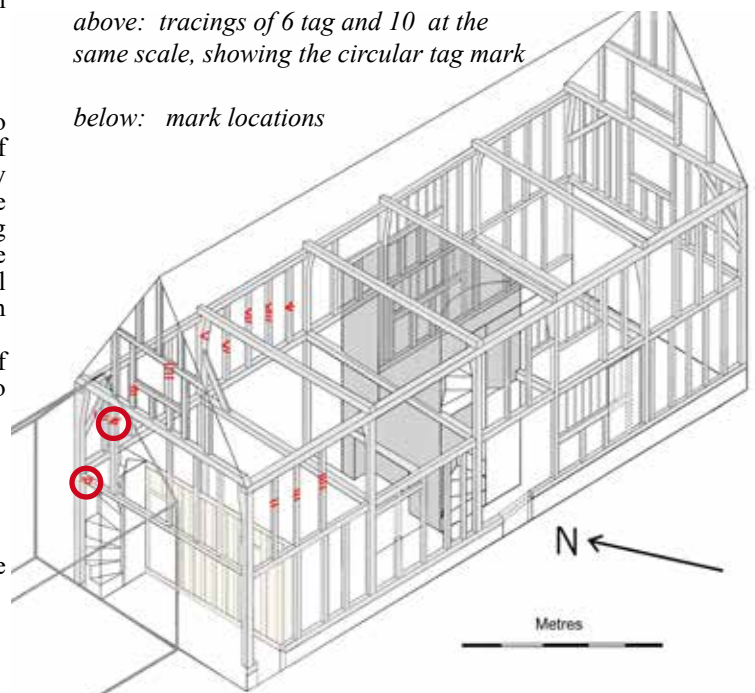
above: Arabic 10 and 5 (½ the 10 symbol)



Photos & Drawing - Ian Hinton

above: tracings of 6 tag and 10 at the same scale, showing the circular tag mark

below: mark locations



¹ Hardy W., <https://rakinglight.co.uk/uk/arabic-assembly-marks-in-medieval-timber-framed-buildings/>

Church building programmes cut short by The Reformation, including the last chancel screen built in Norfolk Ian Hinton

(part of the notes that will be provided for the NHBG Church Day visit on September 9th 2023)

St Andrew, North Burlingham

NOTES

Domesday (with St Peter) - 2 churches and 57 h/h (290 pop)
 Norwich taxation 1254 - St Andrew £5.00, St Peter £2/13/4
 1291 - £8.00 together

Rood screens

Divided off the chancel of the church (the clergy's domain) from the nave, where the congregation worshipped. The fashionable wider chancel arches of the later medieval period that replaced the earlier narrow Romanesque versions meant that any earlier screen or veil had to be replaced as well, in order to continue to protect the sacrament from children, non-believers and dogs, as decreed by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.

The fine timber screens found in Norfolk largely date from the middle of the fifteenth century and were being built and decorated right up until the Reformation. Simon Cotton records donations from parishioners for screens in around 200 East Anglian churches¹, right up until 1537, including several at Burlingham St Andrew between 1525 and 1537, with the screen itself dated 1536

Last recorded donations for screens in Norfolk:

- 1532 Wellingham,
- 1534 Bradfield; Gunthorpe; St Botolph's Norwich
- 1535 Shelton (gilding)
- 1537 North Burlingham St Andrew (gilding)
- 1538 Banham (roodloft)

Specific donations for the screen at Burlingham:-

- 1525 3s 4d to making new perke, Edward Lacy,
(perke - Hebrew - devoted to God; OE - a rod, rail or perch)
- 1525 5 marks to making the new perke, Robert Frenys,
- 1526 2 marks to making the new perke, Robert Howard,
- 1527 6s 8d to making new perke, Elisabeth Gonnor,
- 1531 40s to gild perke, John Benet,
- 1537 20s to gild perke,

Less well-known than some other local screens, Burlingham St Andrew was the last medieval roodscreen to be built in East Anglia, and one of the last in England. It is dated 1536, by which date it must already have been just a hope. In other churches, donations for all sorts of purposes of the period are often made on the basis of "if it shall be built".

*St Withburga
and St Benedict*



The images on the dado² are:-

St. Withburga, born at Holkham, Norfolk, daughter of King Anna (disputed by some) (640s CE). She is clothed in royal ermine robes with deer at her feet. In her left hand she carries an elaborate model of a cruciform church inscribed "Ecclesia de Est Dereham". She founded, and was Abbess at, Dereham.

St Benedict with a large tonsure and devils at his feet, one pierced by his pastoral staff

St Edward the Confessor, St Thomas a Beckett (the most obliterated), he championed European Catholicism

St John the Baptist, St Cecilia,

St Walstan (known as Norfolk's worker saint), with his emblem of the scythe; his legs are bare to the knee to show that he gave his shoes to a beggar.

St Catherine, A.N. Other

St Etheldreda. (Withburga's sister) was Abbess at Ely

Removal of faces

Was the damage to the images here as a result of the image removal decreed in 1549 by Edward VI (see below), or was it during the period of iconoclasm some 100 years later?

Marking or scarring faces was a common punishment for criminals in the mid-sixteenth century. The legislation only called for the images to be "put away". If this was done in 1549, was it seen as a further humiliation to the individuals concerned and to Catholicism generally?

Tower Arch Screen

There is another fine medieval screen set into the tower arch, which came from neighbouring North Burlingham St Peter - abandoned after damage in 1906 and declared redundant in 1935. On it, the angels carry shields with the keys of St Peter, with some well-carved medallion faces.

¹ Cotton, S., Medieval Rood Screens and their construction, 1987, Norfolk Arch vol 40 (1) pp 44-54

² Andre, J., Notes on Ritualistic Ecclesiology in North-East Norfolk, 1989, Archaeological Journal Vol 46, pp 136-155

Church of England - Reformation Timeline

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1517 Martin Luther states his 95 theses on the Catholic Church in Germany | 1537 Edward VI born | 1570s Dissenting grows |
| 1521 Pope rewards Henry VIII for his attacks on Luther's propositions | 1539 Dissolution of larger Monasteries | 1587-1605 Foreign and internal plots to overthrow parliament/religion |
| 1530 Some Clergy charged with <i>Praemunire</i> (asserting that the Pope has superior jurisdiction over the church) | 1547 Edward VI succeeds | 1603 James succeeds, |
| 1534 Henry negotiates with Pope Paul III | 1547 Poor Rate introduced | 1625 Charles I succeeds and marries a Catholic |
| 1534 Act of Supremacy, making Henry head of the Church (effectively banning donations to Monastic institutions, who then controlled approx. 40% of the parishes and owned 25% of the land in England) | 1548 Chantries suppressed, | 1630 Dissenting starts in earnest |
| 1536 Papal authority extinguished | 1549 Act of Uniformity - Protestant Doctrine in English | 1642 Civil War - partly because the church was still seen as too Catholic |
| 1536 Dissolution of smaller Monasteries begins | 1549 Putting Away of Books and Images Act | 1643/4 More images in parish churches removed - iconoclasm |
| | 1553 Mary succeeds - return to Catholicism | 1662 Uniformity Act - Book of Common Prayer |
| | 1554 Mary marries Philip of Spain | 1688 "Glorious Revolution" Protestant William and Mary from Holland take the throne |
| | 1554 Official return to the Catholic Church - many practices and artifacts returned | 1689 Toleration Act - allowing all Dissenters and Non-Conformists to worship publicly, though still not allowed into Public Office. |
| | 1558 Elizabeth succeeds - confirmed head of the English Church | |
| | 1558 Act required church attendance at services in English | |

Woodbastwick St Sebastian & St Fabian



Etching by Ladbrooke 1820s



St Fabian and St Sebastian is one of Norfolk's three nationally-unique dedications (the others are at St Wandregesilius, Bixley and St Gervase & St Protase, Little Plumstead) - all probably 19C.

NOTES

Domesday (1086) – 39 households – app 200 people (church not mentioned in Domesday, but mentioned in pre-Conquest papers of St Bene't's Abbey)

Norwich Church Taxation 1254 - £6/13/4d, 1291 - £8/0/0 (about average for the area)

Bequests

to mend tower - 1440 2/- to emend tower

For a porch - 1440 6/8 for porch

For a new tower

- 1505/1508 6/8d for new steeple
- 1515 40/- for third bell
- 1516 4d for reparation of steeple
- 1523 6/8d for broken bell
- 1531 comb of wheat & bushel of malt

Tower

The tower was either never completed or the original collapsed, as shown in Ladbrooke's 1820s drawing – a truncated tower with a tiled, wooden shed on top, presumably housing the bells, otherwise the remainder of the church is largely the same as it was then.

Woodbastwick was the home of the Cator family who were Anglo-Catholics in the mid-Victorian period, and in the 1870s they rebuilt the church with a £5,000 budget (app £1,000,000 today). They employed the office of George Gilbert Scott – one of his last projects – he died in 1878 before the build was finished. Scott was not a Catholic, but he was an early member of the Cambridge Camden Society and used their motto "A church as it should be".

The join between the remnants of the original tower and George Gilbert Scott's 1877 tower rebuilding can still be seen just above the west window. Other Scott features of the rebuild are the chancel east window – adhering to "True Principles" of the Cambridge Camden Society – with second-pointed (Decorated) tracery. The reredos in the chancel behind the altar and the Communion rails are also of Scott's restoration.

Stained Glass

The glass in the chancel was designed by Clayton and Bell, (Bell started in Gilbert-Scott's practice) and that in the nave by Lavers, another famous designer of the period.

Memorials

Striking 20th century memorials to the Cator family.

Elizabeth Cator married Michael Claude Bowes-Lyon - 16th Earl of Strathmore (Brother of Elizabeth - Queen mother)

Roof etc

Unusual crown-post roof on moulded and brattished canted tie beams (16C) – is there an earlier scissor-braced underneath?

Also unusually, the piscina is set into the corner of the sedillia, which is just a simple lowering of the window embrasure.

Door with fine metalwork and early 14C Decorated-period arched doorway - very similar to neighbouring Acle and Hemblington.

Salhouse, All Saints



NOTES

Domesday – not a separate entity – a hamlet - part of Wroxham
Taxed with Wroxham in 1254 and 1291

Bequests

– 1416 6/8 for new tower

– 1511 10/- for building tower

Another tower that was never finished. It was clearly intended to be taller, as the buttresses rise to the top of the current tower, rather than finishing at the foot of the top stage. Wills were recorded in the early 16th C for the tower building. Presumably the Reformation which stopped donations interrupted the funding for the work.

More noticeable is that the tower is not central to the nave, exposing the huge tower arch on the north side. This shows that a longer building campaign was planned, which would have included a new nave too.

Arcade

The arcade of the north aisle of the church is early, probably dating from the late 13th century – Early English period. Carved capitals are unusual in East Anglia, but there are several here, and the most westerly one has a ring of carved heads, mostly vandalised, including a devil, the remainder have rather crude foliage decoration. It is very wide for such an early aisle. Was it once the nave of the church, and the current larger nave built to the south?

At its west end, in the current vestry, is a large archway. Was the vestry part of the original tower and this the original tower arch? Outside there is an odd extra piece of taller wall at the west end. At the east end of the aisle is a huge squint to allow sight of the altar from the aisle.

Screen etc.

The plain screen is described as 16th C, but appears to be a Victorian replacement. It has a pivoted sacring, or sanctus, bell on top, which was rung when the Host was elevated while celebrating High Mass. One of only a few in the Country. Another example in Norfolk is at Scarning, Yelverton has one rehung in the roodloft stairs and Carleton Rode has one hung on the chancel west wall directly above the low-side window.

Pulpits came into the church as the centre of the service after the Reformation. The pulpit here, with its tracery panels, is said to be 16th C, which would make it the original one. The linen-fold panels seems later to me, but with earlier pierced and embossed panels – although it does have Tudor roses.

It has an unusual hourglass holder – used to time sermons. For many years it was converted into a lamp, but now contains a (modern) glass again.

Brass

On the north wall is a palimpsest brass, used twice - turned over and re-used for a new person. The reverse of the brass is inscribed in Latin to Richard Gardner, Chaplain, who died around 1500. The obverse (the visible face) is inscribed in Latin to Henry Tylis and dates to 1540. The brass was discovered in Swaffham by the NNAS and was donated to the church.

Stained glass

The 19th Century glass is a complete scheme installed over the last quarter of the 19th Century by Alex Booker, completed in 1899. British born, he worked from Bruges in Belgium, although he started in London.

Roof

Another crown-post roof, here on straighter tie-beams with a scissor-braced roof showing.

Summer Visit

Billingsford Mill July 8th 2023

Owen Warnock

On 8th July 12 members were shown around Billingsford Mill, near Scole, by Amanda Rix, Senior Project Officer (Mills and Community Engagement), and Andrew Tullett, Heritage Learning and Outreach Officer, at Norfolk County Council. The mill is owned by the Council and was restored by them and others over a period of several decades from the mid 1970s. Most recently, the current sails were made by Thompsons, the Alford millwrights and were installed in September 2020. The mill has a full set of vanes, and although not all of the vanes are fitted to the sails, the mill is now fully operational.

Billingsford Mill is a five-storey tower mill with a boat-shaped cap guided by a fantail. The tower is 11 metres (36feet) tall. It has four double Patent sails on a cast-iron windshaft. The upright shaft is also of cast iron, and is 115mm in diameter (4½ inches). The two pairs of millstones are driven from above. A third pair of stones was housed on the ground floor of the mill and could be driven by engine during a windless period.

A windmill was first marked on William Faden's map of Norfolk published in 1797. This was a post mill which was blown down on 22 September 1859. A new tower mill was built for William Chaplyn to replace the post mill. It cost £1,300 and was completed by March 1860. He died in 1881 and the mill was put up for sale by auction but it remained unsold and was later offered to let. By this time the additional steam engine had been added. By 1916, this had been replaced by a diesel engine.

After the Second World War, over £300 had to be spent repairing the mill to return it to working order and the mill reduced to two sails. It was worked by wind until 1956 and was the last windmill to work commercially in Norfolk. After this milling was done by engine power until 1959.



Billingsford Mill from the south
Photo: Julie Helsby

Restoration

The mill was purchased by Victor Valiant who intended to preserve it. Restoration was commenced in 1962 and an appeal was launched in March 1962 by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for £1,450. Grants were also given by the Historic Buildings Council and Norfolk County Council and the restoration finally cost £3,939. On 24 September 1965, Mr Valiant gave the mill to the Norfolk Windmills Trust. The machinery in the mill is about as sophisticated as windmill technology ever became and includes a fantail to automatically turn the sails into the wind – which we could observe in operation during our visit – and ‘patent’ sails which were invented by a Norfolkman George Cubitt in 1807. The patent was for a spring mechanism which automatically reefs the sails according to wind strength and so avoids the hazardous task of stopping the sails from turning, just as the wind strengthens, in order to manually reef the sails.

Whilst Billingsford Mill may contain the latest technology, the workings of the mill were pleasingly obvious and easy to understand as we were given a detailed tour taking us from the top floor down each storey to the ground floor. Most of the controls are combinations of wooden bars, pieces of leather and small iron fittings. Having said that, erecting a mill in the days before mobile powered cranes must have been very challenging, since in addition raising to the huge and heavy sails, the top of the brick tower is crowned by an enormous cog-toothed iron ring which the fantail mechanism uses to turn the sails into the wind.

There are regular open days at the mill and corn is ground on occasion.

NHBG Research

A Digest of Buildings Visited Since March 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

Park Farm, Pulham

A three-celled house built on the edge of North Green Common with a lobby entry. The stairs are in the lobby and the stack stretches to the north wall. A sizeable principal joist has broach stops with flat-laid common joists. The eaves have been raised by about 60cm and a break in the wallplate points to the chimney bay and parlour being a different build, as well as being slightly wider than the remainder of the house. The hall chamber is unheated with a heavily cranked tie-beam. Dated to around 1600, this house seems to be sited on a moat platform, so is probably a replacement.

Ian Hinton & Lynne Hodge



The Poplars, Tharston

Built parallel to the edge of Tharston Common, this house has three cells and a lobby entry, with stairs adjacent to the stack and what appears to be a coffin-lift in the ceiling. The eaves were raised by about 60cm reducing the pitch of the roof which is now of sawn-square pine. Some of the timber has been replaced and the walls partly skinned in brick. The remaining timbers are little decorated, but wide oak floorboards and large-section flat-laid joists probably date the house to around 1600.

Lynne Hodge and Ian Hinton



Home Farmhouse Briston

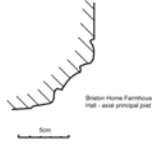
A follow-up visit was occasioned by the extensive renovations that were required by some structural faults, which uncovered all of the internal structure.

The house is of flint and brick with two storeys and attic, gable-end on to Briston Common. The gables are in English bond, the southern one containing three pedimented windows, now blocked. The house has three cells, but the service cell is very shallow. The hall crossed-principal joists and mantle beam have the same fancy chamfer moulding. The principal joists upstairs have plain chamfers with a form of stepped lambs-tongue stop with a large nick. The soffit of the principal in the hall chamber contains four shallow notches, possibly to support heavy loads in the attic. The stairs running to the attic had treads and risers set directly into the stack brickwork.

The conclusions from the initial visit were borne out - a grand farmhouse built around 1625.

Lynne Hodge and Ian Hinton

Initial visit by Susan and Michael Brown



Fletcher Cottage, Kenninghall

Located to the west of Kenninghall village, this is an eighteenth-century one-and-a-half storey house with gable-end stacks, previously divided into two cottages. It was brick-clad in the mid-twentieth century. This has disguised the probably position of the original central door, now replaced by a window. The two end rooms have substantial fireplaces with winder stairs beside them. The timber framing consists of slight studs with primary bracing. Substantial principal joists support common joists laid on edge. Does the name Fletcher Cottage reflect the fact that it is located on "The Butts"?

Jess Johnston and Ian Hinton



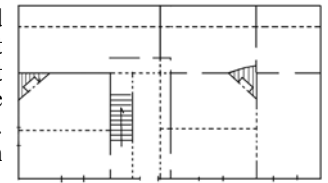
Braemar House, Kenninghall

Two doors to the east of Fletcher Cottage (above), this house is also timber-framed; with a red-brick-clad front wall in stretcher bond, interrupted by three vertical columns of bonded half bricks. The cell to the right appears to be an addition to what was a gable-end-stack house with an unheated central cell. Unusually, the small fireplaces in the end cells are located, angled, in their rear corners.

Most of the timber framing has primary bracing, making it eighteenth century, but three of the four corners have huge jowled corner posts with mortices for earlier braces, leaving the possibility that this was either an earlier house, with walls that were replaced, or that the cornerposts were reused from another building.

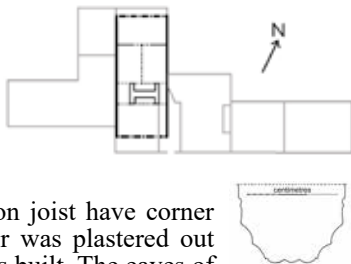
It was not possible to inspect the roof to follow this up.

Ian Hinton and Jess Johnston



Mayfield Farm Besthorpe

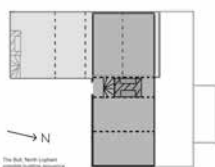
This house has a grand Georgian facade with wings, located south of Besthorpe Great Common, but the original house was timber-framed and built at right-angles. The original house was three-celled with an off-centre chimney. It has substantial timbers, the axial hall principal joist is roll-moulded and the common joist have corner rolls. Much of the remainder was plastered out when the Georgian house was built. The eaves of the original phase were raised by about 1 metre, the wallplates showing long single-pegged, edge-halved scarf joints. The original phase was probably mid-sixteenth century and the front range around 1800.



Ian Hinton & Tony Bradstreet

The Bull, North Lopham

Set back from the road on the northern neck of a large green at the north end of North Lopham, The Bull has an L-shaped plan with a rear extension with a cat-slide roof. The front was brick clad in the twentieth century. The east-west range retains some large-section seventeenth-century timber with flat-laid joists, whilst the primary bracing of the north-south crosswing is eighteenth century, perhaps built when it started to be used as a pub. Further alterations during its life as a pub have introduced much reused timber.



Jess Johnston and Ian Hinton

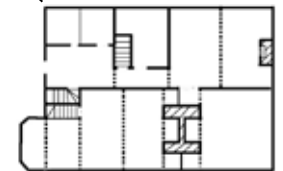
Chandlers, Newton Flotman

A two-storey-plus-attic house, originally timber framed with a tripartite plan, probably of around 1650, which was doubled in width during the 18th century, now under a single roof.

All four external walls have been built/rebuilt in brick. The brickwork of each of the four walls was built in more than one campaign with slightly different bricks, with conspicuous vertical joints in the centre of each wall.

The bricks in the opposite corners match. The soft Norfolk Reds of the NE and SW corners are in a mixed bond and the harder bricks of the NW and SE corners are in regular Flemish bond. The gable ends encompassing both ranges above eaves level are a further build and incorporate some gault-clay bricks. All further complicated by an eaves raise of 10 courses which is evident in the NE corner (and inside in the NW corner). A datestone in the apex of the gable, showing 1799, may date the reroofing of the whole - the roof is in pine.

Ian Hinton





Some Norfolk Chimneys

photos: Ian Hinton



Thorpeland Hall Elsing Hall Oxburgh Hall South Burlingham Hall

Great Snoring Rectory

Aylsham

Blickling Hall

Walpole St Peter

Lime Tree Cottage, Hempnall

The Old Manor, Burgh next Aylsham

Dysons Farm, Tibenham

!!!!

Costessey Hall

Park Farm, Hempnall

