

# Norfolk Historic Buildings Group

Non members

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# Newsletter



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Autumn 2017

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# CHAIR

As we come to the end of another successful summer programme and publish this winter's lecture titles, some of next season's events are already set up - but this is not an easy task.

Despite fully booked summer visits and a well attended winter programmes, and thanks from participants on the day, feedback from members is rare. It is useful for the organisers to understand what works well and what is less successful. In addition, as the years progress, it is increasingly difficult to find new and interesting locations/speakers - your input would help. If there is something that you think other members would be interested in, please let Mary or Dominic know.

This is particularly important for the AGM. Good attendance ensures that more than a handful of our members play a part in the Group's running; so finding somewhere, or something, that is sufficiently interesting to encourage attendance (and is large enough and with the right facilities to cope) is important.

It doesn't have to be just the programme organisers or committee that determine our programmes. We would welcome your help and suggestions - to ensure that the Group covers everyone's interests.

**Ian Hinton**  
**Chair, Norfolk Historic Buildings Group**  
**August 2017**  
*ian.hinton222@btinternet.com*

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2 Vacancies

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## Administration

### AGM Report - Lynne Hodge

Forty-one members attended the AGM in Aylsham Town Hall after a guided tour of Aylsham by Roger Crouch and Susan & Michael Brown. Tea and committee-made cakes fortified everyone for the administrative rigours ahead.

There were 23 apologies for absence, recorded in the minutes, and last year's minutes were accepted as accurate.

The Chair thanked the members of the committee and everyone who has helped with events and publicity for making the last year such a success. Our membership continues to grow, attendances at meetings and events is increasing and research for future journal publications is ongoing.

The Treasurer reported that 2016/17 was another good year for our finances. Income was slightly down this year as the post-publication sales of Journal 6 were mostly in the last financial year. Good attendance at both winter and summer meetings has allowed a modest surplus for the 12 events held during the year and subscription income remains steady. Without journal printing costs, expenses were lower by some £2,000. The other expenses stayed at roughly the same level as the previous year. All this results in a growth in our reserves from £10,713 to £12,961 in the last year. A vote of thanks was proposed for the Treasurer.

There was only one nomination for the post of Membership Secretary and Hilary Newby Grant was duly elected. There were no new nominations for committee members and the current committee was re-elected by a show of hands.

It was suggested from the floor that the committee investigate whether the current AGM quorum requirement of 10% of the membership could be reduced. **Please let me know if you have any views on this subject.**

The Chair thanked everyone for attending and asked for suggestions for next year's AGM location.



*A sample plate of AGM cakes*

### Front Cover Photo:

*A Boulton & Paul boathouse of c1910, relocated on a Devon cliff-top, now owned by the Landmark Trust and operated as a self-catering holiday apartment - photo Ian Hinton*



# Winter Programme

## Winter Programme 2017/18

All meetings will be held in the INTO Building at UEA at 7.00 for 7.30pm.

The small fee at the door for winter lectures of £2 per member is to be continued. The rate for non-members will continue to be £4. The charges do not apply to members' night in January.

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**Jess Johnson**

### Doorways to the past: Diss' historic centre

Jess has been involved over the past two years with the conservation and restoration of Diss's Corn Hall and is now in charge of Arts and Heritage Outreach for the Corn Hall, which has become a community arts centre with Heritage Lottery Funding. She has been involved with the "Diss Heritage Triangle" project since the start.

Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018

**Members' evening**

A chance for members to introduce their own research or projects. If you would like to do so in the future, please contact Mary Ash - [mary.ash@ntlworld.com](mailto:mary.ash@ntlworld.com)

Brendan Chester-Kadwell - Boulton & Paul Project update  
Ian Hinton - Thorpe St Andrew church  
3rd speaker to be confirmed

Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017

**Maria Jordan**

### Historic fabric conservation

Maria is in charge of fabrics and furnishings for the National Trust. After an initial career in finance, she retrained in fabric conservation at the Courtauld Institute. She worked for Historic Royal Palaces for 16 years before being appointed to manage the studio for conservation for the National Trust.

Thursday 8<sup>rd</sup> February 2018

**Sarah Pearson**

### The big house and the church

Sarah has a PhD in Architectural History from Reading University. She teaches at Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education in the History of Building Design.

She is widely published, including books on the medieval houses of Kent and the rural houses of the Lancashire Pennines. She is currently researching the Riddlesworth estate in Norfolk.

Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017

**Adam Longcroft**

### Reflections on a career researching Norfolk vernacular architecture

As founding Chair of the NHBG, Adam needs no introduction. After his PhD on the vernacular buildings of Norfolk at UEA, Adam started teaching continuing education classes for fifteen years or so in Landscape History and Vernacular Architecture. They were attended by hundreds of people, starting an interest group that spawned the NHBG under Adam's guidance. The rest, as they say, is history!

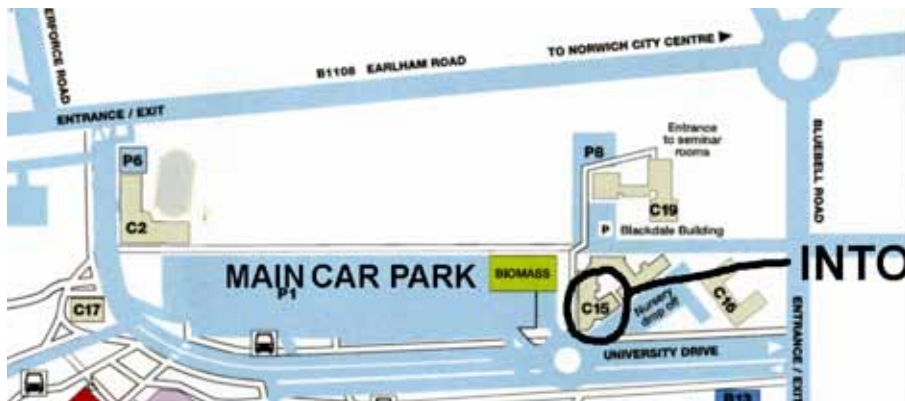
Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017

**Brendan Chester-Kadwell**

### Access and Thoroughfares for the Common Good

Brendan has a PhD in Landscape History from UEA and is a freelance landscape historian.

We take access to buildings and property for granted, but what happens if access is denied? Access to buildings and property, and their associated thoroughfares, has evolved for cultural and practical reasons. This talk explores some of these issues, taking examples from Norfolk, Huntingdonshire, and the Weald of Kent and Sussex.



**INTO is located at the Bluebell Road end of University Drive**

Parking (limited) is available in front of the building, otherwise park in the main carpark (for which there is normally a charge).

**SATNAV - NR4 7TJ**

## Walsingham (joint visit with RUBL) (20<sup>th</sup> May 2017)

Anne Woollett

This was an interesting variation on NHBG summer events. Members of the Group met up with members of RUBL (part of Lincolnshire Local History and Archaeology Group) to share ideas and experiences.

The day started with an introduction to Walsingham's landscape and development from a Saxon settlement to a major Pilgrimage centre with Priory, Friary, two markets and a substantial number of pilgrimage hostels, drawing on documentary material and recordings of the many buildings to which NHBG had access. Sue and Michael Brown pointed to some of the distinctive features of Walsingham's buildings, their high flint and brick ground floors and timber upper floors, including crown posts and truncated principal rafters, and they updated their account with new information from the Black Lion and Oxford Stores where there has been some recent work.

In the afternoon we split into groups for a walking tour of Walsingham to view from the exterior some of the buildings discussed in the morning session. It was a good reminder that what can be seen on the outside is not necessarily a good guide to what lies behind the façade. Behind what look like Georgian or Victorian buildings often lurk earlier buildings, wooden jetties, roof structures, staircases and in some cases wall paintings. Walking round Walsingham enabled us to position buildings in relation to the Priory and Friary so the long building in the High Street which hides behind – and extends well beyond – a Georgian frontage, is opposite the gate to the Priory – an excellent site for a large scale pilgrimage hostel. And as we found lunch spots and a coach dropped off pilgrims at the Catholic Church, we were reminded that Walsingham is once again a Pilgrimage Centre with all commerce and bustle that this brings.

the ground floor suggesting that it offered good hospitality as well as accommodation for pilgrims above. Colin had on display a colour version of his drawing of Friday Market and the Friary shown in the Walsingham Journal.



above:  
Colin King  
welcomes one  
of the groups  
before a trip  
round his house

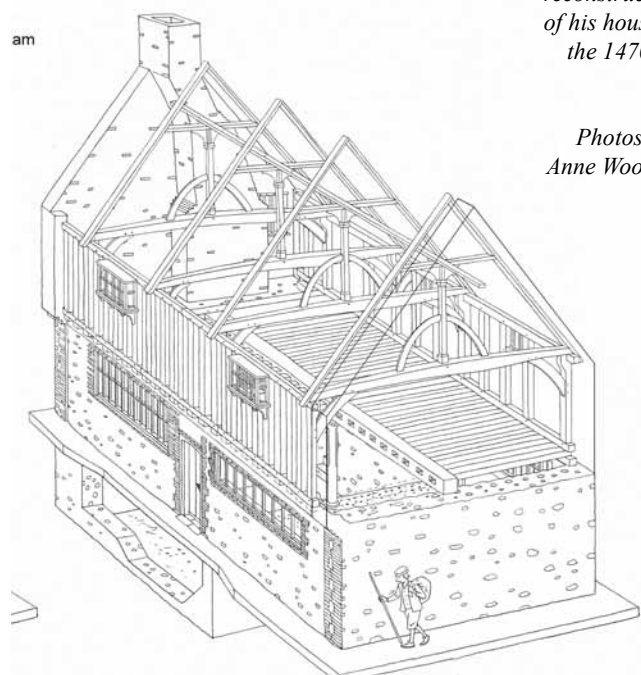


left:  
the painted  
vine decoration  
inside



Various Georgian frontages hide the largest medieval pilgrimage hostel in Walsingham - 110 feet long

Colin & Annie King, once again, kindly welcomed us to their house, enabling us to admire, amongst other things, its principal joist - a single great length of oak which stretched the length of the house. It would have been a great place to stay as a pilgrim, close to the Friary gate and the Friday market (good for picking up the obligatory souvenirs), with wonderful vine decoration on

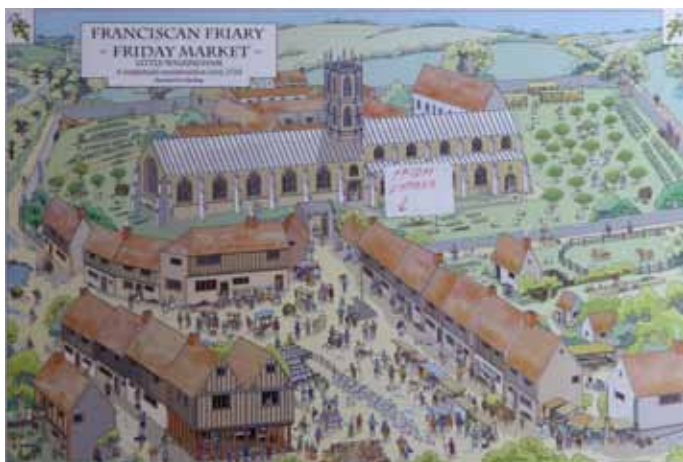


below:  
Colin's  
reconstruction  
of his house in  
the 1470s

Photos:  
Anne Woollett



## Summer Visit



Colin's reconstruction of the Friary and Friday Market before the Dissolution

David Stocker, Chair of the Lincolnshire Group, told us about the Team (part of Lincolnshire Local History and Archaeology Society), along with some of their current activities and the issues that they face. We decided that Lincolnshire did different to Norfolk. While they have stone for buildings - as their churches attest - there are fewer secular standing historic buildings and so their Group has tended to concentrate on a more detailed examination of fewer buildings, a reflection too of possibly a stronger archaeological perspective within the Team.

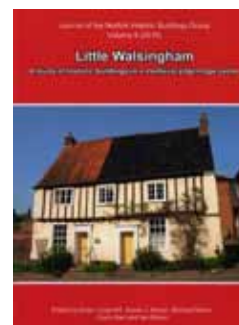
There was also a difference in focus - much wood in Lincolnshire buildings was thought to be re-used, and some is elm, raising questions about its source. They also had 'mud and stud' buildings which are not known in Norfolk. Lincoln has a number of excellent and well-recorded vernacular buildings but the Team are looking to work with local historians to examine historic buildings in Grantham, Boston and possibly Louth.

At the end of the meeting it became clear that one thing that some members of the two groups have in common is an interest in corrugated iron and corrugated-iron buildings.

It was generally agreed to continue to engage and exchange ideas. We hope David will come and give a lecture to NHBG in the 2018/19 winter lecture series and that a visit by NHBG to Lincolnshire can be arranged in the next couple of years.

Copies of the acclaimed Journal containing the complete study of the buildings of Walsingham are still available to members at £8 (plus £4 P&P) from:  
Ian Hinton, 134 Yarmouth Road,  
Norwich NR7 0SB

Copies of Colin's reconstruction of Friday Market should be available for sale at Winter Meetings



## NHBG Research

### The Fairbanks House, Dedham, Mass. USA:

A comparison of this house with the carpentry in and around New Buckenham

Susan & Michael Brown



A copy of Abbot Lowell Cummings' book "*The Fairbanks House, A History of the Oldest Timber-frame Building in New England*", was sent to Susan & Michael Brown, via Tony Bradstreet by a NAHRG correspondent in New England, who suspected that an ancestor of his, Tony Roper - a carpenter from New Buckenham - may have built the house.

#### The Response:

Given that this is the earliest surviving house in New England (dendro dated 1637 - 1641) and that one of the carpenters in the community at that time, John Roper, came from New Buckenham in Norfolk, England, to what extent does this house resemble those in New Buckenham of the same period?

New Buckenham is a tightly built up village, originally founded as a market town, still defined within its twelfth-century boundary ditch and the historic houses are adapted for these conditions, many with large ground floor shop or workshop areas. (See NHBG Journal No. 2 (New Buckenham) *passim*). As a result, these houses do not closely resemble the Fairbanks House in concept. However, in the more dispersed settlements in the area of South Norfolk around New Buckenham, the picture is different. (See NHBG Journal No. 4 (Tacolneston) *passim*).

If we look at the description of the Fairbanks House in Abbot Lowell Cummings' book, confining ourselves to the original structure and ignoring the later accretions, we find many similarities to houses in south Norfolk.

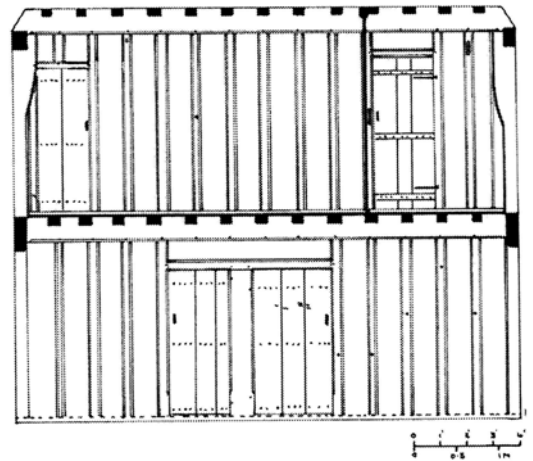
The plan of the Fairbanks House is typical of a two-cell lobby-entrance house of the first half of the seventeenth century. The floor plan of the house seems to give an original width of just over sixteen feet and a length of forty, i.e. one rod wide and two-and-a-half rods long. The rod, pole or perch of five-and-a-half yards is a unit found in the planning of many South Norfolk houses of the period. The principal similarities are detailed overleaf.

Details of similarity are seen in:

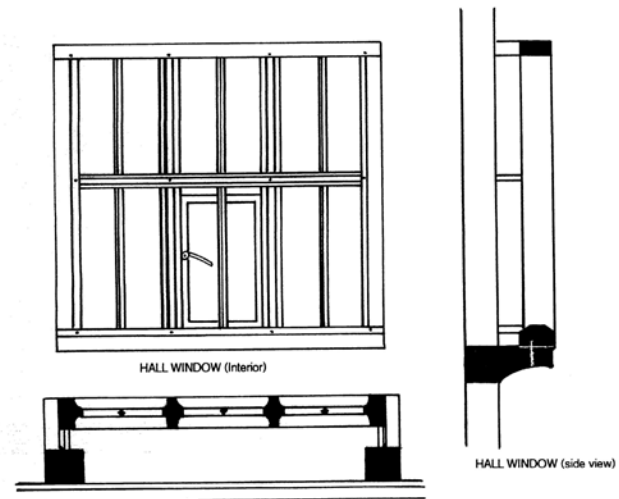
- 1 The front door head joint Fig.1. p.51 – (compare with photo from Blair House, New Buckenham -**A**)
- 2 The door post is placed against a major timber of the frame – - **B** see NHBG Newsletter No. 19 2010)
- 3 The absence of mullion mortices in the window frames and the presence of shallow peg holes for fixing pegs suggests the use of projecting shallow oriel windows as in the Manor House, Tacolneston - illustration **C**.
- 4 The shutter groove (unused) above the window indicates an original idea for sliding shutters like that in the illustration - **D**.
- 5 The attic is a feature of early seventeenth century houses in south Norfolk also. Medieval houses did not have attics.
- 6 The glazed ovolo mullioned windows in the attic are a shared feature.
- 7 The provision for later extension to the House, giving a tripartite final plan, is often seen in south Norfolk.
- 8 The use of cheaper timber to the rear reflects the front-rear hierarchy seen in houses in south Norfolk. (Glazed windows to the front, unglazed to the rear.)
- 9 A stair next to the stack reflects south Norfolk practice -**F**.
- 10 Chamfered and stopped timbers, particularly principal joists, are characteristic of south Norfolk. The fashionable chamfer stop for this period would be an ogee ('lamb's tongue') with a notch (picture **G**). This appears to be the case in Fig.52 in the Fairbanks House.
- 11 Common joists at this period in south Norfolk also are still 'flat-laid' in the medieval way. Later in the century they became 'square' and much later on are edge-laid in the modern way.
- 12 The method of supporting the principal joist on an inserted timber as in Fig.6. is characteristic of the poor practice of south Norfolk at this time. (In a medieval building in Essex, for example, the principal joist would be properly tenoned into a major timber of the frame. This ad hoc method of lodging the floor would only be resorted to if the floor were a later insertion in an open medieval hall (illustration **H**).
- 13 The view of the hall in Fig.14. could be in almost any south Norfolk house of this period (with some differences – see below)
- 14 Support of the frame on low walls of brick, or brick and flint, is normal practice.
- 15 The chimney stack is normally housed in its own bay of the frame at this period. (Is this the original chimney or was it preceded by a timber-framed stack? We found evidence of many timber-framed stacks in the area around New Buckenham where fire-prevention was less important than in the town where we only found one surviving smoke bay.)
- 16 Roof construction in the Fairbanks House (Fig.6. - illustration **H**) seems to be one tier of in-line tenoned purlins with raking queen studs in the gable with tenoned collars, not clasped by the purlins. This looks like a normal south Norfolk roof of the period, of which many survive.
- 17 The profiles of the jowls (expanded heads) of the posts conform exactly to normal south Norfolk practice of the period, and the post-head joint of tie-beam, post, wall-plate and rafter is the classic post-medieval form.
- 18 Fig.48. seems to show rebated floorboards in the attic, another common feature in south Norfolk.
- 19 The scarf joint in the front wall-plate (Fig.53) seems to be face-halved and counter-bladed, exactly right for south Norfolk at this time. Compare with the scarf joint from Burrage House, New Buckenham.



**A** - Doorhead - Fairbanks House - Blair House. New Buckenham



**B** - Door Frame against major frame timbers - Manor Farm, Pulham



**C** - Oriel window - Manor House, Tacolneston

**D** - shutter groove above the window at Tibenham Farm, Tibenham





# Fairbanks House (continued)

(Note the carpenter's mistaken first cut, a four-centuries-old mistake -see **J.**)

20 Fig.2 (south elevation) of the Fairbanks House may be compared with **K** to show the general similarity of styles.

Dissimilarities seem to be:

- 1 No rear wall fenestration in the Fairbanks House, no doubt from respect for the rigours of the winter climate.
- 2 Use of exterior clapboards (weather boarding). Not seen here until the late seventeenth or eighteenth century.
- 3 Interior clapboard panelling, little used here and only for small areas such as under-stair spaces.
- 4 Attic access by ladder. Here there is almost always a stair to an original attic.
- 5 Roofing with shingles is not seen here. Thatch (Norfolk reed) gets replaced with pan-tiles from the eighteenth century on.
- 6 Full-height studs, seen in the Fairbanks House (Fig.6.), had become too expensive for general use at this time. Sometimes used in one-and-a-half storey houses (no attic space) as in Riverside Farm, Forncett St. Mary, dendro dated 1648.

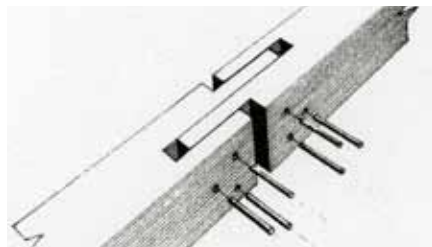
Other things to look for:

- 1 Apotropaic marks: these are ubiquitous here at this period. Are there any in Salem for instance?
- 2 Carpenter's assembly marks: numbering of timbers and use of conversion marks such as face-marks.
- 3 Floor framing detail: what are the common-to-principal joist joints? We would expect them to be soffit tenons with diminished haunch (Hewett, C., English Historic Carpentry Fig. 303. P.281)

## Conclusions

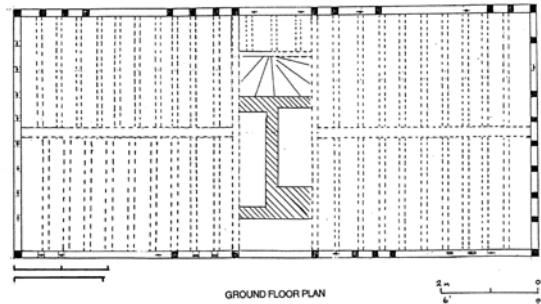
In summary, if we came across the Fairbanks House in the fields or villages around New Buckenham we would be quite unsurprised except for the dissimilarities mentioned above, which come from the more demanding Continental climate and the (presumably) more profuse supply of timber in America.

Someone has taken the quite local version of the technology of house building from south Norfolk and employed it largely unchanged in the completely new environment. There seems no reason it should not have been John Roper from New Buckenham.



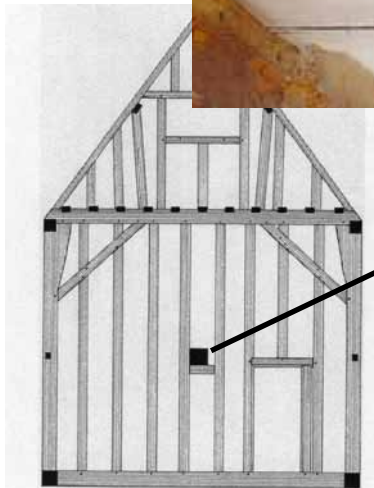
**J**- left  
Joint found in Redenhall Norfolk and Scots Boardman House, Saugus MASS (Hewett, C., English Historic Carpentry - fig 271)

**J** - right  
Face halved and bladed scarf joint with error, at Burrage House, New Buckenham

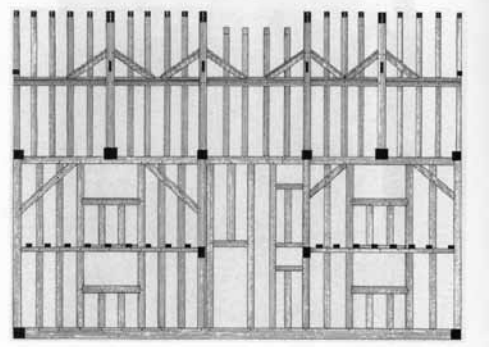


**F** - stack and stairs adjacent - Pinch Pot, New Buckenham

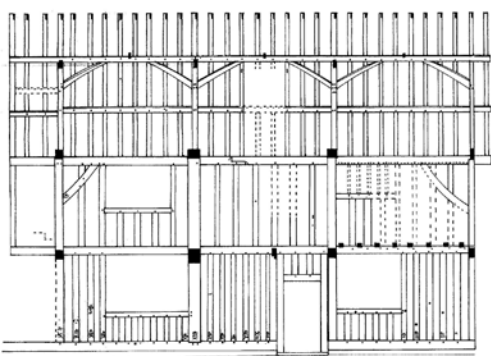
**G** -  
Lamb's-tongue stop and nick at Homestead Farm, Woodton



**H** -  
Fig 6 from Abbot Lowell Cummings' book - showing the principal joist as resting on an inserted timber, rather than moticed in.



**K** -  
Fairbanks House (above)  
Dower House, Tacolneston (below)



## Thetford Town Walk (31<sup>st</sup> May 2017) Roger Crouch

On a warm and sunny afternoon a group of 17 members of the NHBG were led on our walk by David Osborne, a Thetford local historian. He started by explaining the history of the Cluniac Priory site. The original monastery (founder Roger Bigod) was on the Suffolk side of the river where construction started in 1104 in the reign of Henry I on the site of the abandoned cathedral church of the East Anglian bishops. Because this site was restricted it was decided to move to a new site, a large open area was selected on the other side of the river on the Norfolk side and construction was completed in 1114.

Next was a building which was formerly the St. Nicholas Steam Engine Works of Charles Burrell and many of the adjoining buildings were also part his manufacturing empire, which at one time had 350 employees, but as the demand for steam traction declined, the business shrank and was finally closed in 1928. The former paint shop of this large works is now a museum.

We then passed through to White Hart Street and walked up the hill to the Ancient House Museum, a fine timber framed house an early 15<sup>th</sup> century Merchant. Prince Freddy, the son of Maharajah Duleep Singh of Elveden Hall was a great benefactor to Thetford by providing this facility for the town. The museum was well worth a visit just to explore the magnificent timber work alone, when entering the street door you are immediately faced by a fine cross passage with an elaborate hall on the right and two service doorways on the left and, at the end of the passage, a stair tower.



*Some of the party outside the Ancient House,  
a 15th-century merchant's house - now a Museum*

We then gathered in the car park of St. Peter's Church adjacent to the Kings House. The Kings House stands on a historic site, the current building with its Georgian facade was believed to have been built in 1763 but it was formerly King James Palace and was also occupies the site of the medieval manor house. In the garden of Kings House is the statue of Thomas Paine (The Rights of Man), born in Thetford in 1737, he emigrated to America and was involved in the American Revolution and is considered to be one of America's founding fathers, he moved to France in the 1790's and also was involved in the French Revolution.

We turned back again and walked to the Bell Inn (first mentioned in 1493) and turned left into Bridge Street and crossed the Little Ouse river over the Iron Bridge built in 1829. Just north of this bridge on the bank of the river was the former navigation and large quay which was serviced by lighters navigating the Little Ouse from Kings Lynn, this form of transportation declined dramatically both here and across the region with the arrival of the railways in the 1850s.



*The attractive cast-iron bridge of 1829 over the Little Ouse*

A little further down bridge street we came to the Thetford Grammar School, another historic site, here was once the church of St. Mary the Great which was, for a time, the cathedral church of East Anglia. Abandoned by the bishops, the site was used by the Cluniacs where they built their cloisters, but when they moved across the river to their bigger site they abandoned these cloisters and the site was not used again for 200 years when the King granted the site to the Dominicans and they continued to occupy it until 1538 when their house, church, hermitage and chapel were surrendered to the King (Henry VIII) and subsequently destroyed.

We then walked south along the bank of the Little Ouse until it's confluence with the Thet near the former site of the old Tannery, along past the watermill we entered Spring Walk, so called because of the spa which existed here in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The chalybeate waters were initially provided by a natural spring until a pump house was completed in 1820, the spa closed in 1838 and Spring House (housing the pump) became a private residence. Over the river Thet towards Ford Street, we passed Thetford Castle Mound as we made our way along Old Market Road. The Castle Mound is all that remains of the 12<sup>th</sup> century motte and bailey castle which was largely destroyed in 1173 by Henry II, the mound is the second largest man-made mound in the UK. We then gathered outside the Old Gaol which was rebuilt in 1796 replacing an earlier medieval gaol. It was further enlarged in 1816 and this forbidding building now consists of 3 storeys in 4 bays and has been converted to flats. Leaving the gaol and turning left via Nether Row we passed the Old Coffee Mill and headed back to King Street and the Bell Inn where a well deserved lunch and drink was waiting for us and our guide for the day left us with our thanks.



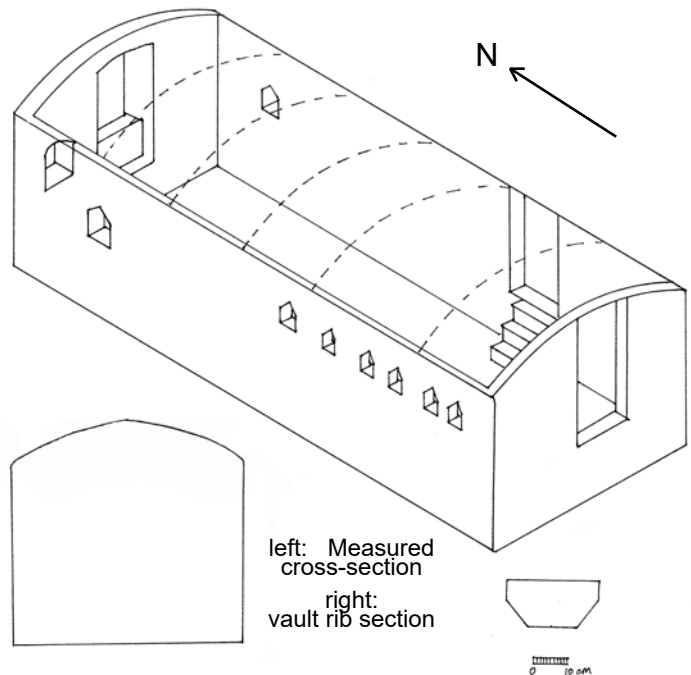
## Building Recording Training Session 3 (9<sup>th</sup> April 2017)

Ian Hinton

The third session of building recording took place in Tim Bliss' medieval undercroft in Aylsham in April. By far the most complicated session so far, it involved measuring in three dimensions and highlighted many of the practical difficulties involved, particularly the setting of a base line when the surfaces are all uneven and rarely horizontal or vertical. I have combined the resulting measurements into a three-dimensional approximation of the undercroft.

The five ribs are unevenly spaced and appear to be influenced by the side entrance from the hall of the house above (although this is thought by Edwin Rose to be later (see below)). The now-blocked openings at either end may have been entrances from the Market Place and Churchyard. The niches, presumably for lights, are unevenly spaced and biased towards the wall opposite the entrance. The wall thickness is unknown, but is shown in order to represent the depth of the niches

Below is a more detailed account of the undercroft itself.



drawing:  
Ian Hinton

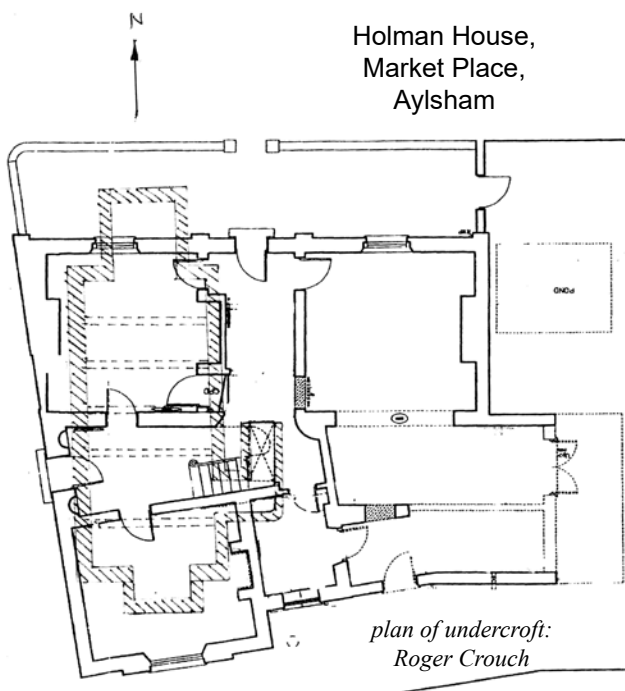
*Scales and panels have been omitted from the drawings for space reasons.*

photo:  
Lynne Hodge  
showing the mass  
of clay referred to  
below

*The measured section and projection are 3.17m wide internally, and the section through the brick vault rib is 27cm in width.*

## Holman House Undercroft

extract from Edwin Rose's report in Aylsham Local History Society Newsletter 1999



This is a medieval undercroft of considerable status. It pre-dates the present form of the house above and extends beneath both phases of its build, but the flintwork in the west wall and the report of footings found in 1955 suggest a medieval building of importance once stood here. The presence of the undercroft suggests that the medieval building was once a merchant's house. Nothing like it has been recorded in Aylsham; there are similarities to one excavated at Wymondham Bridewell, dated by Stephen Heywood to around 1300AD.

In medieval times the main route between Norwich and Cromer went through the churchyard, passed immediately to the west of the house, and through the Market Square into Hungate (the original road to Norwich (see map)). The undercroft runs north-south, parallel to the current alley to the church from the Market. It is barrel vaulted with walls of brick and flint, the floor and vault are of brick.

The vault ribs are roughly equally spaced apart from the first and second from the south. The second and third ribs have the second brick from the springing point replaced by a mass of soggy clay (circled above). This seems to indicate that these were originally "green" or unfired bricks, perhaps intended as some form of water control.

## Holman House undercroft (cont)

The north wall has a central chute leading to a smaller barrel vault, roughly hacked away (*this led right to the churchyard boundary - Ed*). Adjacent to this is a round-headed niche.

In the east and west walls are several smaller niches which have triangular heads, two larger ones, almost opposite each other at the north end, with six closely spaced, high in the west wall at the south end. The centre of the south wall has an opening blocked in more than one stage. The current access stairs through the east wall are a later insertion.

The following article is an account of the pre-AGM tour of Aylsham, which helps to put Holman House and its location into context.

*First-series OS map showing the continuation of the original major Norwich-Cromer route through the marketplace, past Holman House and through the churchyard*



## Undercrofts

Undercrofts were common in England throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Traditionally cellars, often brick lined and vaulted, they were used for storage or as showrooms. In general, the more ornate the undercroft, the more likely it was to have been used as a showroom. Norwich has the largest collection of medieval undercrofts in the country - with 69 surviving - almost all of them from the fifteenth century.

## Summer visit

### Aylsham Town Walk led by Roger Crouch (24<sup>th</sup> June 2017)

#### Anne Woollett

Roger focused on the ways in which the market place had changed and how it has shrunk drastically over the centuries.

We started at the church, a constant presence in the centre of the town which has seen many changes as befits the church of a prosperous market town. The nave dates from late C13 with impressively high tower and chancel arches, a C14 south porch and an interesting rood screen. There was substantial work in the Victorian period including the stained glass and the roof. In the churchyard we noted the monuments of ... Gill, hanged in Thetford for stealing two sheep, and that of Humphrey Repton the renowned landscape artist, whose family lived in Aylsham.

The market place originally covered the area between Hungate on the west and what is now Red Lion Street on the east. Hungate was the coaching road from Norwich which passed by the church and then headed north to Cromer (see map above). The buildings on west side of the market place are probably from the earliest days of the market, including The Black Boys, which was a coaching inn with access for coaches through the centre of the building and an assembly room on the first floor, although the current building dates from 1710.

On the east side, the oldest buildings in the market place are probably behind the current frontage on Red Lion Street. We saw two buildings with jetties facing towards the market

place that are now on the backs of the building facing Red Lion Street, one of which is now a computer shop with jetties on three sides and a dragon beam dating perhaps to 1650 (1 on map on following page). A number of the buildings along Red Lion Street have barrel vaulted cellars- there are stories of tunnels linking some of the buildings.



*Jetty and Dragon beam originally facing the marketplace, now above a narrow alleyway between buildings (photo Anne Woollett)*

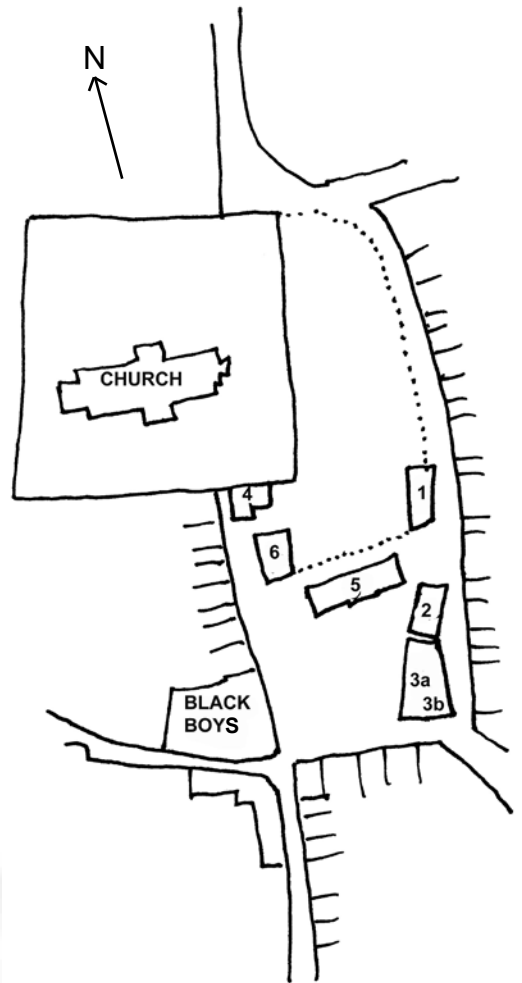


Buildings continued to encroach into the market area so the buildings with jetties that we saw earlier ceased to have frontages to the market. Two buildings which now face into the market are Clarke's building with a C17 steep pitched roof, now empty and looking for a buyer (2 on map). To the south is the four-bay Barnwell's building with a long and complex history. Inside are some impressive ogee carved beams which suggest it might have been a public space, possibly a market building??? (3a on map) It was extended to the south east and then in about 1650 there was a further building which now houses Santander Bank.



Roger Crouch and Michael & Susan Brown had viewed the inside previously but were not allowed to take photographs (3b on map).

3a - Barnwell's building - a possible Market Hall???



Photos and Map: Ian Hinton

Holman House is a fascinating building between the churchyard and market place (4 on the map). An elegant red brick building which according to Richard Harbord (Aylsham: Norfolk's Premier Market Town, 2014) dates from 1760 with a fine sweeping staircase and an undercroft probably from C14 (see earlier description).

It was probably originally a merchant's house - was the undercroft used to store wool, a valuable but potentially combustible substance? Roger was able to tell us about the house's more recent history as a doctor's house with a pharmacy in a wooden building in the garden.



4- Holman House from the churchyard (north)

Part of the research for the walk came from these books by NHBG members Maggie & William Vaughan-Lewis:-  
 Aylsham: Hungate 1622-1840, A Norfolk Streetscape -£10,  
 Aylsham: A Nest of Norfolk Lawyers - £25.  
 Both are available from Jarrolds in Cromer, Barnwells in Aylsham and Itteringham Community Association Shop.

Perhaps one of the largest and most recent infills of the market area was the Town Hall where we held our AGM (5 on the map). It started life as a Corn Hall in 1857 and was extended when an adjacent building was demolished. Together with the old post office and telephone exchange (now the Co-op shop) is the final stage of the infilling of the market area (6 on the map).

below left: 5- The Corn Hall with its grand pediment to the right, and Town Hall extension to the left.

below: 5&6- The building demolished for the Corn Hall on the right and the Post Office (now Co-op) in the centre, although the dormers have disappeared now.



## “Telling the Untold Story” - the Boulton & Paul Project Brendan Chester-Kadwell

The Boulton and Paul Prefabricated Buildings Project “Telling the Untold Story” was launched earlier this year. It has taken some time to organise the processes needed to get the project up and running, but now we are ready to make a start with some of the key tasks. Unlike other projects that the NHBG has undertaken, the whereabouts of the target buildings are generally unknown. This means that we have had to work out how best to design a method for finding them.

We have decided to form small groups of volunteers who, following pre-prepared guidelines, will explore local areas of interest in order to ‘spot’ prefabricated buildings of all types. Alongside that we are visiting, recording, and verifying the prefabricated buildings that have already been identified - only some of which usually turn out to be by Boulton and Paul!

Another issue that has taken some time to sort out has been the B&P archive. Most of this is located at the NRO (with some additional material at the Brideswell Museum) and it is very large and not yet fully catalogued. We now have an agreement with both the NRO and the Brideswell as to how to approach this. Both institutions are very supportive and we are grateful to them for their encouragement and co-operation.

We would also like to thank those of you who have previously volunteered to help, this has been very much appreciated. You should have already been contacted, but please let us know if this has not happened. However, we are now seeking additional volunteers in the following three areas:

1. To help Maggy Chatterley and Diane Barr to undertake research of the archives in either the NRO or the Brideswell. This is likely to be a lengthy business, but any help would be welcome and advice and guidance will be provided.
2. There is a need for an initial building survey on those buildings that we already know about but have not yet looked at. Where a building has been positively identified as being of B&P manufacture further survey work may also be required. Support will be provided for both levels of survey and training where required.
3. There is also a need for volunteers to become members of a ‘spotting’ group, looking for prefabricated buildings within the County. Again, guidance and support will be given on how to do this and a simple recording method provided.

We need volunteers for these three activities as soon as possible. We appreciate that the time that can be made available by individual volunteers will vary, but every little bit helps. But we also hope that this will be an interesting and enjoyable activity so would encourage you to have a go at one or more of the activities!



*Some examples of Boulton and Paul buildings*



If you would like to be involved, please contact  
Dr Brendan Chester-Kadwell  
by email at [boulton.paul@btinternet.com](mailto:boulton.paul@btinternet.com)  
or by phone on 01603 260307.



## Shropham Hall (3<sup>rd</sup> June 2017) Roger Crouch

On another glorious summer afternoon approximately 30 members congregated on the lawn of this early Georgian house to be met and briefed by hosts George and Angela Lynne and their son Charles. They purchased the property along with 10 acres of land, which provides the house with a stunning mature garden setting, as a family home in 1999. Charles has carried out some research



into the history of the house and he explained the former Hall on this site was called Breccles (Breckels) Hall, after the village that stood to the north of the current Hall. The current building was built on the site of the original house between 1718 and 1729 by John Barker.

The building consists of 2½ stories in five bays. At the front of the house, the side bays are recessed with large pilasters at the corners. An early nineteenth-century porch on Tuscan columns below a balustrade is reached by steps framed by curved wings. All the sash windows are probably of the late eighteenth century, all with glazing bars and most with shutters. There is a string course at the second floor level and a shouldered cross gable roof forming the half storey with three lower and one upper sash windows. Above the gable shoulders, the split-panelled chimney stacks can be seen, and on the parapet on each side lay blind panels. On the side of the eastern bay, a window bay and chimney stack are later additions and at the rear, a similar prospect to the front but without the porch and with no shutters. The addition of a window bay to each of the side bays (in 1756 indicated by the waterhead) this facade, like the rest of the brickwork (flemish bond on the facades and english bond on the plinth), has remnants of an earlier colourwash. On the west side, there are several later extensions including a kitchen extension of 1894.

Entering by the front porch we see an almost original oak panelled hall with pilasters and a Ketton stone floor, through this hall we enter the rear hall which has been encroached on from both sides. This accommodates the main staircase which has certainly been modified and moved from its original position. Next is the library, which was the former dining room, and retains its fine rococo plasterwork ceiling, leading into a Regency-style drawing room and then an early, c1800, panelled study and finally into the dining room, which has been enlarged resulting in the encroachment into the staircase hall.

While one group was exploring the ground floor of the house another group visited the gardens which form the backdrop to this house, the 10 acres has some fine specimen trees amongst its woodlands and to the west of the house a walled garden - the walls being brick on plinth with piers and pineapple finials - part of the walls are listed, along with the house.

A third group were invited upstairs to see Angela Lynne's collection of vintage and 19<sup>th</sup> & late 18<sup>th</sup> century children's clothes and prams - well worth a visit.

Following these explorations we were treated to an afternoon tea with a selection of mouth-watering cakes which a man of my girth cannot help but be tempted by, against his better judgment.

Thanks to the Lynne family for their welcome and providing an excellent and instructive visit.



*top:  
front elevation*



*above:  
eastern elevation with  
the later bay window  
and chimney stack*

*left:  
the entrance hall*



*Photos:  
Roger Crouch*

*left:  
the dining room*

## North Elmham and Brisley churches & North Elmham Bishop's Chapel (15<sup>th</sup> July 2017) Richard Ball (North Elmham) & Maggy Chatterley (Brisley)

### Bishop's Chapel

Until the 1980s this was considered to be the remains of the Anglo-Saxon Cathedral which was replaced after 1071 when the see was transferred to Thetford (eventually to Norwich 1094).

Stephen Heywood, in his study published 1982, came to the conclusion that, though it almost certainly was the site of the cathedral, that was probably of wooden construction and the surviving ruined building is most likely that of a private chapel constructed by the Bishop of Norwich who, after the removal of the see, maintained a large house and estate at North Elmham.

The design of the building, as it must have been, is unusual in several particulars: the 'armpit' towers, and the western tower the same width and built flush with the nave walls in particular. The essay by Stephen Heywood is well worth reading.

The large ditches and masonry additions to the building were added by Bishop Henry Despenser who turned the chapel into a castle during the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

According to Stephen Heywood the construction details of the church building are typically Norman – all the openings, door and window, were dressed with imported limestone with the distinctive diagonal tooling of Norman work. Fragments of this limestone remain, though most has been robbed out over the centuries. The sequence of event was probably as follows.

In 1071 the see was moved to Thetford and the timber cathedral building was probably used as the parish church. Around 1100 this church was demolished by Bishop Herbert Losinga who replaced it with a private chapel (the current ruins) next to his palace. He then founded a new parish church on its present site, just south of the old cathedral graveyard, as recorded in the First Register of Norwich Cathedral.

### The Anglo-Saxon cemetery

From about 680AD, North Elmham was a Saxon bishopric and, although unoccupied between the mid-9th to mid-10th centuries due to the Danish presence, continued until 1071, when it was abandoned in favour of Thetford.

Excavations took place in that part of the park closest to the cathedral and containing the most earthworks. A sequence of features was revealed which starts in the Middle-Saxon period, with buildings, boundary ditches and two timber-lined wells, and ends in the 19th century. Particularly important is the development of the Middle-, Late-Saxon and early medieval timber buildings. David Yaxley's reconstruction drawings show how this part of the settlement may have looked at different periods.

11th-century skeletal remains from the cathedral cemetery are described in detail and, together with literary sources, form the basis for a vivid picture of contemporary village life.

Excavation results and the documentary evidence are combined to trace the evolution of the village and its plan, from the late 7th century to the present day.

Quoted from: Peter Wade-Martins, 1980. 'Excavations in North Elmham Park 1967-72', East Anglian Archaeology 9, downloadable from:

<http://eaareports.org.uk/publication/report9/>



*The east end of the chapel/palace ruins taken from  
Despenser's earthwork bank photo: Maggy Chatterley*

### St Mary the Virgin, North Elmham

This is very large, probably built to provide a parish church for the village when the old Cathedral buildings were replaced by the Bishop's private chapel, presumably around 1097 onwards. There is a small portion of work in the style of this period surviving at the west end of the chancel, where the east most arcades of the original nave have been incorporated into an enlarged chancel.

The existing nave, with aisles, dates probably from the 12<sup>th</sup> century. An aisled parish church was very uncommon at this period. The stonework of this and the earlier period bear diagonal tooling.



*St Mary the Virgin, North Elmham from the north  
photo: Richard Ball*





*The Norman piers, extended upwards in the 14th C above the black line shown above  
photo: Richard Ball*

In the early 14<sup>th</sup> century the nave roof was raised: the then existing arched arcade being lifted up to sit on the piers which were heightened, extending the diagonally tooled piers upwards with much larger ashlar blocks but without diagonal tooling. The west end of the nave was replaced by the lower two stages of the tower containing a galilee porch.



*The seventeenth-century, locally-made tower screen  
photo: Richard Ball*

In the fifteenth century the tower was completed to its current height and the nave roof raised once more by inserting a clerestory. The lower roof line of the 14<sup>th</sup> century is still visible at the west end of the church.

The church retains interesting woodwork from the 17<sup>th</sup> century, pulpit, altar and the screen and gates separating the tower from the nave. These were made by the village carpenter and parish clerk, Francis Floyd.

When the church was restored in 1852 and the box pews removed, parts of at least two screens were found used as flooring while other screen parts were described in 1878 as being behind seats in the north transept and attached to the westernmost benches in the aisles. In 1882 a screen was constructed from these surviving pieces which contain some of the finest screen paintings in the country, probably East Anglian work of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

When the box pews were removed in the restoration of 1852 a wonderful collection of late medieval bench ends were uncovered and re-used for the newly constructed pews.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the exterior of the church (but not that of the tower) was encased in knapped flint and much other restoration carried out in 1852 and 1882.

The graveyard is unusual for Norfolk: both for the number of 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century gravestones and for the fact that they are still in situ.

Thanks to Peter Wade-Martins for an excellent introduction to the church, and to Susanna Wade-Martins and the other church wardens for their tea, cakes and welcome to a large group.

## Sources:

- The Ruined Church at North Elmham, by S. Heywood, in: *The Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 135, 1982
- The Site of the Anglo-Saxon Cathedral and Bishop's Chapel at North Elmham, by Stephen Heywood, North Elmham Parish Council, 1998.
- East Anglian Archaeology 9, 1980: Excavations in North Elmham Park 1967-72, by Peter Wade-Martins.
- A Guide to the Church St Mary the Virgin, North Elmham, by Peter and Susanna Wade-Martins, North Elmham Parochial Council, 2nd edition 1995.



*left and below left:  
the salvaged screen and bench ends found during the Victorian restoration  
photos:  
Richard Ball*

*below:  
tea and cake dispensed by the churchwardens  
photo:  
Ian Hinton*



## St Bartholomew, Brisley

St Bart's at Brisley provided an interesting counterpoint to the church at North Elmham. Almost as large, and presumably equally grand at its height in the early 15th century; the lack of Victorian restoration and reduced income now has meant that it presents a completely different image today. Whereas North Elmham felt vibrant and alive with enthusiastic church wardens and a well-maintained appearance, we were greeted at Brisley by a smell of dampness and a generally run-down feeling.

Medieval times must have seen huge investment in the church, particularly the grand tower with its overall design of a large west window, grand door, large bell openings, flint-flushwork plinth and buttresses (which have large image niches high on the third stage) and one of the tallest inside tower arches I have seen, which matches the height of the west window.

In the chancel, the sedilia and piscina are very fancy and well preserved and there is a door to a crypt beneath the chancel which still has its original hinges (of around 1300 according to Pevsner). A headless brass, dated 1531 of the Rector John Athowe, must have been one of the last before The Reformation.

In the nave a few very fine carved bench ends remain, with a couple of pierced pew backs and some early benches that have had softwood backs clumsily fixed to them. An early squire's box-pew, dated to 1590, is set where the altar for the chapel in the north aisle would have been before the Reformation, covering the nave altar piscina on the south wall. There are remnants of wall paintings remaining, including two St Christophers and a painting in the window splay that was the backing to an image niche. There are also the faint remains of a painted consecration cross.

Perhaps this church shows what many of the fine medieval churches of Norfolk would have looked like without a lot of Victorian intervention.



above: St Bartholomew, Brisley from the south-west  
below left: one of the two St Christopher wall paintings  
below right: the late (1531) brass of the Rector



photos:  
Maggy Chatterley



top: squire's pew, dated 1590  
above left: bench end, showing a dog with a goose in its mouth  
above right: the door to the crypt with its early hinges



Brisley's grand tower



## The Buildings of Yarmouth Road, Norwich: a history walk

(6<sup>th</sup> August 2017)

Ruth Pearson

For the last event in this year's Summer Programme - on a suitably fine, warm day - we were treated to an intriguing jigsaw puzzle along the old Norwich to Yarmouth road. Led by Nick Williams and Dale Wiseman from Thorpe History Group we tried to piece together life as it had been lived along a delightful mile-long stretch of the River Yare from Harvey Lane to Thunder Lane: designated a Conservation Area since the 1970s.

Still evident as a relaxing "playground" for residents and visitors, with people picnicking along the banks, enjoying the hostleries and messing about in boats, it needed a wild stretch of the imagination to take us back to the riotous and notorious "Water Frolics" of Thorpe in its heyday. Growing from a "village along a road" of 200 people hemmed in between a steeply wooded slope to the north and river to the south in 1700's to a popular, desirable resort and pleasure ground for wealthy Norwich businessmen from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century who built their grand homes away from the city, it's still a popular residential area but effectively a suburb of Norwich with over 14,000 people.

Unusually, we didn't see inside any properties but glimpses from the outside enabled us to gauge something of how life has changed for the people of Thorpe.

Starting at Thorpe Lodge, dating from 1600s, now part of offices for Broadland District Council, built by John Harvey, a banker and Mayor of Norwich (later truncated from a 3-storey building to 2 with a wing removed) we walked a little further east along the road to his summerhouse with camera obscura and tunnels still visible, leading under the road to the river. He was responsible for the annual water frolics and commissioned an oil painting by Joseph Stannard to depict scenes from these. "Thorpe Water frolic, Afternoon" is just one of many paintings by the Norwich School, showing life in the area, especially on the river. Imagine 20,000 people flocking to the Yare, filled with sailing boats, women and men entering races, with plenty of festive revelry by the gentry while the *hoi polloi* were only allowed to watch from the opposite bank.



*Thorpe Lodge, after "truncation"*

Among the many famous and well-patronised pubs with river views is the Rushcutters dating back to 1600, formerly The Three Tuns. The landlady Mary Cattermole was so horrified

when 7,000 people descended for one regatta causing untold vandalism that she soon put a stop to their frolics. It all makes our current society seem positively genteel and restrained.



*Modern use of the river - The Rushcutters in the background*

*Photos - Euan Pearson*

The most interesting historic building overlooking the river is Thorpe Hall on the site of a former 14<sup>th</sup> century Bishop's palace. The present house is part of a former, much larger house which was re-modelled, later vandalised and partially collapsed before it was bought by Henry Burke in 1985. He sadly died before his plans came to fruition, but the house has since been lovingly restored. NHBG member Anthony Rossi, who was involved in the restoration, was on hand to show us papers detailing some of the changes made.



*Thorpe Hall after the extensive renovations of the 1980s*



*Walk leader, Nick Williams showing photos and information from his copious files*

## Summer Visit

We passed the Church of St Andrew, a Victorian building with the ruins of a medieval church clearly visible, closer to the road, ruined in 19<sup>th</sup> century, after the new larger church was completed.

Traffic problems over the years have led to widening schemes which have altered some of the village character including demolition of 2 flint cottages in School Lane (3 now remaining), as part of the widening of Thorpe Narrows. Originally a gap of only a 14-foot between the houses, caused many a hold-up and Ted Carter, Landlord of The King's Head was known for prising vehicles apart so they could continue on their way, especially on Bank Holidays.



*The Victorian church tower seen behind the ruined medieval tower*



Our last-but-one stop was at the site of perhaps the most tragic accident for which Thorpe is famous. In 1874, a head-on rail disaster caused by human error killed 27 people, injuring many more.

Having fitted some pieces of the puzzle, it will be interesting to try and add more.

We strolled on to our final destination – Maggy and Ian's splendid new house and garden where we were refreshed with delicious and copious Summer Party drinks and eats. Many thanks to all who made it a truly memorable, entertaining walk and "last supper", particularly to Nick Williams and especially our hosts, Maggy and Ian.



*Thorpe Narrows in the 1960s - the two cottages on the left demolished a few years later for road widening, leaving the truncated terrace shown top right, now terminated in a brick gable end.*



## NHBG Research

### A Digest of Buildings Visited Since March 2017

*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.*

#### Prince of Wales House, Burnham Norton

Prince of Wales House is built of clunch and brick, with some infill from beach stones and flint, and has a pantile roof. It is of two storeys and three cells. The lower part of the east gable has brick quoins which are quite thin and irregular, possibly 17<sup>th</sup> century. There is also the stump of an off-centre axial stack and a small blocked first-floor window to the east. There is a series of blocked doors and windows to the north which probably faced the farmyard. The northern central upper opening runs from floor to ceiling, suggesting that goods or equipment were stored upstairs. The house was subsequently a pub in the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the bracket for the sign is still in the west gable.

Inside there is a large transverse principal joist and one of smaller section possibly marking the size of an earlier chimney bay. Upstairs, the eastern principal joist has flat-laid common joists with scratch mouldings running through a later partition and into the joist in the centre room. To the east of that joist the common joists are of inferior quality and edge-laid. This house appears to have been a lobby-entrance plan originally, and, together with the in-line butt-purlin roof, points to a seventeenth century origin.



Susan & Michael Brown and Lynne Hodge



## Saxon Lodge, Long Stratton

The main range of the house runs parallel to the A140, the Roman Road, close to the church of St Mary's at the southern end of the village. It has been divided into two, the whole being of 6 bays, rendered with ashlar scoring.



Dating is difficult as parts of the building appear to have been agricultural or service use at one time. The little timber-framing that survives has prominent gun-stock jowls and some appears to have primary bracing - generally an 18th or 19th C feature. There are some good-quality transverse joists probably of oak, chamfered with a lamb's-tongue stop. They may have been reused here from elsewhere, as they rest on a support bracket in the front wall.



Ian Hinton & Lynne Hodge

## Moor Farm, Reepham

Moor Farm is a six-bay house now walled in brick in two distinct phases. The western end is late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, built in English bond and the brickwork at the eastern



end is of late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century date in Flemish bond in red brick. The north wall contains two blocked doorways, one adjacent to the stack, complete with hood mould and chamfers and the other at the east end of the hall. The bricks used in the infilling of the first appear to be the same as those used at the eastern half of the house.

At the western end of the house, above the service partition downstairs is another timber partition with wide-spaced studs, between some of which are the remains of stencilled painted groups of flowers, surrounded by studs also painted on to the plaster. The principal joist is axial with lambs-tongue stops with nicks which match those in the transverse joists where they meet.

The double in-line butt-purlin roof has shaved tenons and is supported by nailed vertical and raking queen struts. The collars form an unequal arch and appear to clasp the upper purlin, but are laid alongside the principal rafter, rather than tenoned into it. They appear to be reused as they seem to have been cut down from larger arched braces.



The evidence for an earlier cross passage seems to confirm that the functions of the house were redesigned as part of the rebuilding of the western end. It means that the service rooms were moved from the eastern end, where they would have been adjacent to the cross passage, to the western end of the building, swapping the functions of 'hall' and parlour.

Ian Hinton & Lynne Hodge

## The Retreat, New Buckenham

The Retreat is located at the corner of Norwich Road and the Market Square. There are two rear extensions to the NE and SE and a range of outbuildings parallel to the Norwich Road. Externally the main range is in mid-nineteenth century red brick under a shallow pitched roof of tarred slate.



It seems that there was originally a front range of two or three cells (the south room may not have existed before the remodelling) presumably of timber-framing, perhaps seventeenth century. The NE extension was added to this, probably in the late seventeenth century, and the SE in the nineteenth century.

The present roof has side purlins, staggered and shaved, and there is a later dormer towards the west end. This would suggest an earlier date than the SE extension, possibly late seventeenth century.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the front range was given its Regency remodelling, with a new cell to the south and all being clad in brick with its roof raised to give lofty upstairs rooms, the whole internally decorated in the Regency style and with a handsome marble fireplace surround with volutes in the southern room. No evidence of the original frame is visible but the thickness of the walls suggests that it may survive inside.

Susan & Michael Brown

## Carters, Foulden

This is a three-celled house, of one and a half storeys set back from the road. It has three dormer windows in



the steeply-pitched, pantiled roof with an off-centre axial stack with four flues and another stack at the east gable end. The south-facing brick façade is built in Flemish bond with red headers and gault-clay stretchers above a flint plinth. The gable walls are of flint which reduce in thickness above first-floor level.

At various times a pub and a post-office, multiple doors have been blocked and the access appears to have reverted to its original position.

The upper floor is some 50cm below the level of the wall-plate and all the tie beams have been cut to allow corridor access. A face-halved scarf joint with single pegs is visible in the wall-plate above the staircase together with a dovetail mortice for another tiebeam.

The nineteenth-century façade of this house appears to have been added to an earlier structure. The lobby-entrance ground plan suggests seventeenth-century origins. However, there is no evidence of a timber frame now.

Lynne Hodge and Ian Hinton





# Door and Window Heads of Norfolk (mostly)

Walsingham

Aylsham

Forncett

Walsingham

Douglas (IoM)

photos:  
Ian Hinton

Aylsham

Reepham

Swaffham

Fakenham

St John, Hellington

