

NHBG Newsletter



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Norfolk Historic Buildings Group



Members in the ruins of the east end of Binham Priory on a grey, wet day; but the welcome by the people of Binham was very warm.

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CHAIR

Summer 2008 probably won't go down as one of the great British summers in terms of the weather, but as far as Norfolk Historic Buildings Group is concerned, it has certainly been one of the busiest! A splendid programme of summer events, deftly organised by a small but perfectly formed team, resulted in one of the most ambitious and well-attended summer programmes since the Group's inception – a programme which culminated in one of the best turn-outs for an AGM I have ever seen! Many thanks to all of those who came along – we hope you enjoyed the jam and cream scones (which seems to be becoming a popular fixture of our AGMs)! Much of the success of the NHBG lies in its ability to organise an attractive series of summer events which give members (and even some non-members!) a chance not only to explore buildings which are not normally accessible to the public, but to do so in the company of authoritative, expert guides who know the buildings literally inside-out.

Many thanks to Dominic Summers for providing the crucial co-ordinating role in bringing the summer programme to such a successful conclusion – Dominic's warm, approachable personality really does work hugely to the Group's advantage, whilst his own expertise on high status buildings, (see the report on Wingfield Church and College, p.12) brings an added dimension to the Group's activities. Progress on the Tacolneston Project proceeds at an impressive pace, and we were able to update NHBG members and the local inhabitants at a packed meeting in the village hall on 6 June (see Karen Mackie's report on p.18). We expect to publish the results of the project, as Volume 4 of the Group's journal, in Spring 2009 as planned. Sue & Michael Brown continue to train members in recording techniques and to co-ordinate the recording of other buildings around the county which various owners have very kindly brought to our attention. A summary of the buildings visited by recording teams can be seen on p.16. Once again, the NHBG seems to be living up to its well-earned reputation for being one of the most active volunteer-led Groups of its kind in the UK.

This fact is reinforced by the super programme of winter lectures, organised largely by Mary Ash, which we can look forward to between September 2008 and March 2009. Do come along to as many as you can – you will be given a very warm welcome.

Dr Adam Longcroft
Chairman, Norfolk Historic Buildings Group
01603 592261
a.longcroft@uea.ac.uk



*Summer eating...
garden, quayside warehouse, pubs,
church, terrace...*



Binham Priory and Village 21 June 2008

(Note: The AGM will be reported in the general information section at the end of the Newsletter.)

Dominic Summers

Ian Hinton

Priory

David Frost, a local historian who gave much of his time in helping to organise the event, gave the members assembled in the nave a fascinating short talk on the history of Binham Priory and highlighted some of the architectural points of interest of the building.

The nave has lost its aisles and is now a single cell building, albeit a very large and tall one. The blocked arcade, tribune and clerestory show a curious architectural progression. At the east end of the nave the elevation is typical of Norman architecture of the early twelfth century, with muscular arches decorated with varied geometric patterns. From the fourth bay from the east wall this architectural unity vanishes and a curious progression of style from Norman to Early English can be seen diagonally across the walls of the nave. In other words, the arcade and tribune of the fifth bay from the east were built in the Norman style, whereas the clerestory is Early English. In the sixth bay, only the arcade is Norman, and in the seventh and final bay the whole elevation is Early English. There was clearly a major break in the building campaign sometime in the twelfth century, with the nave being completed in the first half of the thirteenth. It is interesting to note that the builders didn't complete bay elevations before progressing westwards, but built two or three bays of the arcade before moving onto the tribune and then the clerestory. It is also clear how once the liturgically important part of the building, the choir, was completed, less urgency was given to finishing the nave.

Moving outside into the rather bleak north Norfolk weather, David Frost showed us the impressive remains of the choir and transepts and the group had an idea of the massive scale of the Priory church. A tour of the conventual buildings revealed the splendour of the chapter house, the location of the parlour, refectory and dormitory, with evidence of the vaulting of the undercroft beneath, all grouped around the cloister on the south side of the church.



Above: The rain did not deter members from a wet afternoon walk with Adam Longcroft discussing the buildings of Binham Village.

Right: Binham Priory: the north side.

Village

A short presentation and digital slide-show by Adam Longcroft about the research undertaken so far on the houses of Binham provided a context for the guided tour in the afternoon (see Journal 4).

Lunch was another treat – excellent food and beer brewed on the premises in The Chequers in Binham.

In the afternoon, we walked round Binham, and were welcomed into several homes. This highlighted not only how much variation there is behind a brick and flint façade when you know what to look for, but also how understanding owners are in having to find sufficient space temporarily to store fifty pairs of shoes on a wet day. Each house visited revealed typical post-medieval house plans and decorated principal joists and chamfers familiar to those of us who are more used to timber-framed houses. Then back to the Priory for the traditional tea of scones, jam, cream and cakes.

Our thanks are due to everyone who helped make the day such a success, particularly the residents and house-owners in Binham.



Four Norfolk Roodscreens on 10 May 2008

David Holmes

We met at St Michael's Aylsham and went from there to All Saints Marsham. Then across country to St Michael and All Angels, Barton Turf and finally, about mid-afternoon, we reached splendid St Helen's, Ranworth.

Our guide was John Mitchell, Art Historian at University of East Anglia. He introduced the subject to us. Almost all roodscreens in East Anglia were constructed during the century before the Reformation when most churches were modernised, improved, refurnished and refitted. The screens separated the chancel from the nave and provided support for the rood loft and the rood (Fig. 1). They were blank on installation and panels were painted in situ as money became, from time to time, available. By 1530 our four screens would have had painted panels up to about waist level, then above an open space divided by decorated shafts headed by arches with delicate tracery decorations below the rood-beam. The beam would have supported the rood-loft, upon which religious services were sometimes conducted and, above all, the rood. Access to the loft was by a rood stair (two at Marsham), emphasising the importance of the screen in church furniture.



Fig. 1 St Helen's Church, Ranworth: rood screen separating nave from chancel.

The iconoclasm of the Reformation and the Commonwealth has left us with remnants varying from only a row of panels at Aylsham to Ranworth where the screen is preserved up to beautifully decorated half vaulting and coving below the rood-beam, with two side altars. The rows of panels have remained because of their practical function and the images could be painted over.

These have now been cleaned and have become the focus of study with art historians able to contribute substantially.

John Mitchell emphasised how little is documented. Donors could have been rich individuals giving a whole screen, groups, guilds or individuals contributing to a single pane. While the Apostles are represented more than any other saints (all twelve at Ranworth, eleven at Aylsham, and probably all twelve at Marsham though five cannot be recognised, having books rather than emblems – but none at Barton Turf) there are saints and others perhaps nominated by donors for a variety of possible reasons. Why, for example, are the Apostles interrupted at Aylsham: on the north side a prophet, St Thomas, a prophet, St

James the Less, Moses, St James the Great, St John the Baptist, St Peter, ? (Fig. 2); and St Faith's appearance among the Apostles at Marsham may be related to the shrine at Horsham St Faith but why St Apollonia and St Zita at Barton Turf? And why the Nine Orders of Angels at Barton Turf, their only appearance on a screen in Norfolk? And why not in orderly hierarchies?

There are no known bequests for the screen at Barton Turf but stylistic analysis supports a mid-fifteenth century date derived, John Mitchell thinks, from an International Gothic soft style present in 1420 Cologne, and probably by one painter. There are four later and charmingly naïve panels between the south aisle and south-east chapel showing the saintly Kings, Henry VI, Edmund, Edward the Confessor, and Olave of Denmark.



Fig. 2 Aylsham: on the north side a prophet, St Thomas, a prophet, St James the Less,

/continued on page 6



Fig. 3 *St Helen's Church, Ranworth: St George and the Dragon.*



Fig. 4 *Marsham: St Andrew and St Peter indicate later influences from the Low Countries.*

/continued from page 5

Barton Turf was the earliest of our screens. There is one recorded (1479) bequest for Ranworth and compositional similarities indicate that Ranworth was painted by three artists working from a shop responsible for six other East Anglian screens for which there are several bequests around 1480. The most striking images are on the parclose screens connecting the main screen with the one above the side altars, particularly St George and St Michael killing dragons (Fig. 3): these are animated, slightly zany and very engaging. On the north parclose screen St Stephen, with great grace and presence, is a wonderful example of the flowing grace and elegance of International Gothic. And the feet – or absence of feet – on the Apostles illustrates the difficulties of painting in situ.

Aylsham, dated 1507, Marsham and two other north-east Norfolk screens indicate later influences from the Low Countries: strong colours modulated by more folds in the drapery and heavier shading and more detailed work on face and hair (Fig. 4). Ten of the Apostles at Aylsham were painted on paper and then fixed to the panels of the screen and there are carved figures in the spandrels: angels, a winged bull, St George and Dragon above St Peter (Fig. 5). John Mitchell suggests that one of the two artists who painted at Marsham got his figure types from the Aylsham Master but was not quite his equal. A notice dated 1905 at Marsham concedes that the Aylsham screen may be better painted but points out that the floral and other decorations on the Marsham screen and on the shafts are lighter and more graceful.

We learned a lot and are much indebted to John Mitchell. Dominic Summers supported him and led us round the seven sacrament font at Marsham (Fig. 6). We enjoyed lunch in Jackie Simpson's charming garden at Barton Turf and were grateful for her hospitality. May 10th was warm and sunny so that it was a pleasure rather than a penance to enter cool churches. The light could not have been better and we had four virtually private views of small exhibitions with an expert guide.



Fig. 5 *Aylsham: St George and the dragon in the screen spandrels.*



Fig. 6 *Marsham: The Last Judgement panel of the font.*

Heydon Hall, Church and Village, 23 May 2008

Keith Reay



Fig 1 An early painting of the Hall before any additions.

It couldn't have been a better day for a visit to one of Britain's loveliest estates. The sun shone on us for the entire itinerary, which encompassed the Hall, gardens, stable/outbuildings, and grounds, then lunch at the pub on the village green, a church visit and last but not least, the Rectory. Our guide was Sarah Bulwer-Long who brought up her family in the Hall, which has a very 'lived-in' feel.

It was built in 1581 and is a bit of a sugar-coated confection; from the south a three-storey red-brick pile of pedimented windows set between polygonal shafts with finials and topped by four groups of five tall octagonal chimneys (Figs. 1, 2, 3). The scale and composition remind me of Barningham Hall which was reputedly built thirty years later.

The original house was five bays wide and two rooms deep, but was more than doubled in size by 1860. These alterations were visually disastrous and, happily, were mostly removed when the house was restored by the current generation of the Bulwer family (which has owned the Hall since 1762) in the early 1970s. The late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century service extensions to the east have now been reduced in height, allowing the original south front to regain its former prominence.

This was the first surprise, for all the apparent dressed stone round the windows, porch, the angle shafts, string courses and moulded corners is not ashlar but rendered brick, which must have looked much more austere than the warm red brick building we see today (Fig. 4). The next surprise was the west elevation where the original gables have been obliterated by two Victorian square bays flanking a three-storey tower of the oddest polyglot brickwork. This appeared to have been refaced at some time, for there is a straight joint where the tower meets the bays, hidden by a downpipe.

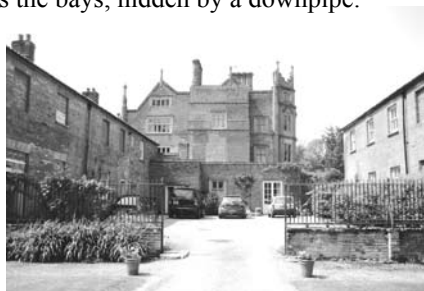


Fig. 3 Heydon Hall: east wing and service buildings.



Fig 2 NHBG members in front of Heydon Hall.

Fig.4 Apparent dressed stone round the windows, porch, the angle shafts, string courses and moulded corners is not ashlar but rendered brick.



After coffee in the eighteenth-century east room with its amazing ceiling (rescued courtesy of the fee paid by Sting when he rented the house for a picture shoot) round to the rear, north, elevation where we disagreed with Pevsner that it was all Victorian, for surely the replacements of the ground and first-floor mullioned and transomed windows were Regency style sashes? Much detail round the windows here has gone but the angled bays are again reminiscent of Barningham – could this be the work of Erasmus Earle, who acquired Heydon in 1640 and reputedly spent heavily on building during his tenure?



Fig 5 Heydon Hall: Farm Yard

Visit to Heydon (continued from page 4)

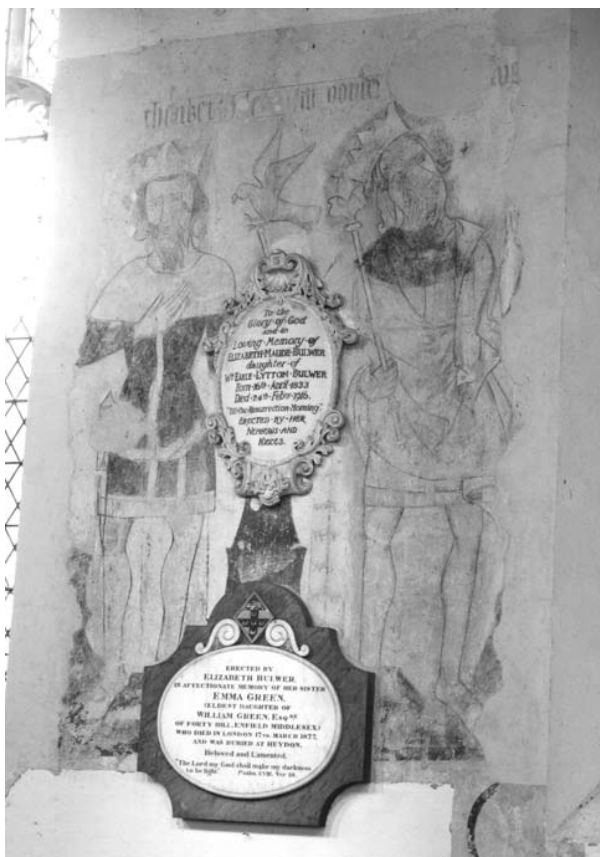


Fig. 6 St Peter & St Paul: later fourteenth Century wall painting with seventeenth Century monument.



Fig. 8 Discussions on diagonal bracing in The Old Rectory.

hall wing. On the ground floor we learned a lot about diagonal bracing in oak framed partitions (Fig. 8). An argument was raised that, apart from Walsingham, there is no real tradition of timber framed buildings in North Norfolk, which is true – however, leaving Heydon to head home, I took the road west and hadn't travelled more than half a mile when I came across a farmhouse with not one but two oak framed barns (Fig. 9)...

All told, the day was fascinating and I went home with my head spinning with images and questions, my thanks to our hostess, guide to the church and to the organisers of such an enjoyable day.

The walled garden was magnificent in its faded glory and the farm buildings featured some interesting brickwork (Fig. 5).

Our church visit was aided by a knowledgeable guide to the many delights, especially the wall paintings (Fig. 6).

Then on to the Old Rectory, an intriguing building (Fig. 7) set in an idyllic garden with a moat/water feature. The rambling house had features suggesting a timber-framed core with later additions, including a full Victorian Sunday School

Fig. 9 Timber-framed barn in North Norfolk. (Photos by Keith Reay and Rosemary Forrest)



Fig. 7 The Victorian Sunday School wing in the flint building.

Worstead Village, 2 July 2008

Naomi Milne

We met in the village of Worstead, near North Walsham, which was an important centre of the wool trade from the thirteenth century onwards. At first the wool was simply exported to Flanders for weaving by the Flemish but in the fourteenth century many Flemings emigrated to Worstead to live and the village became wealthy from the proceeds, with the church and the grander village buildings displaying that prosperity. Peter Brice, a local resident and historian, thinks worsted cloth takes its name from the village, although it is also possible that it is of Flemish origin, “ostade”. By the seventeenth century the cloth trade began to decline and, largely due to mechanisation, moved to Yorkshire.

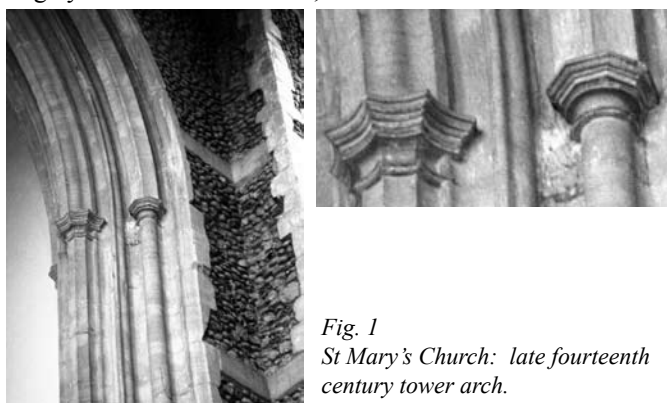


Fig. 1
St Mary's Church: late fourteenth century tower arch.

We began at the impressive perpendicular church of St. Mary where Ian Rendell, another resident, gave a brief introduction to the village and a tour of the church (Fig. 1). There had been an earlier church of St. Andrew on the site, but the present church was built in the fourteenth century. There is a striking boss of the Virgin Mary above the south porch, but inside the church is unusually plain with a hammerbeam roof. John Antell, who worked on Kings College Chapel Cambridge, rebuilt the chancel in the fifteenth century, heightened the nave and added the clerestory. There are eighteenth-century box pews, fragments of wall paintings, an exceptional carved gothic gallery under the tower and a modern tapestry by the Worstead Guild of Weavers, but the greatest treasures are the highly intricate rood and chapel



Fig. 2 Dyer House
(a) external stack on flint gable with two blocked windows.



(b) high ceilinged ground floor room with moulded axial joist.

screens, one dating from 1512, with the most beautiful painted panels of saints, including St. Wilgefortis who, to avoid marriage, miraculously grew a beard and was martyred by her father for her pains.

We then embarked upon a tour of the village and were given much local detail and colour by sprightly 93-year-old George Smith, who was born in the village, and his childhood friend Arthur, who had many amusing anecdotes and pointed out former shops and other features. Another local resident produced a seventeenth-century map of the village, showing that the market place had once been much larger but encroached upon. The last market was in 1912.

Dyer House, Honing Row, which is being restored, occupied a corner site opposite the Manor House and was once three weavers' cottages (Fig. 2). The cellar had been filled in. Ian Hinton suggested that the brickwork, the location and the impressive ceiling and main beam indicated that this had once been a high status building of perhaps the fifteenth century. Next we saw a more modest building, Haggar House, the old tailor's shop which again had once been two cottages, only one room deep. When the present owners moved in thirty years ago some of the weaving remains were given to Gressenhall. There were traces of a wide weaver's window but the house had been much altered in the nineteenth century. We then wandered round the village looking at other buildings, such as the Dame's School, an elegant Georgian three-bay house probably on the site of a much earlier building, and Laurels Farmhouse, another flat-fronted early Victorian home. Peter Brice kindly invited us into his house, White Cottage which has an impressive fireplace with a 1617 date (Fig. 3).

After lunch at the New Inn (1825) we viewed the extensive cellars. Apparently wool was collected and stored in cool cellars, then woven, and marketed in Aylsham and Norwich

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Fig. 3 White Cottage



(c) south facade: note two levels of string courses and blocked windows.



(d) east facade: diaper work.

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as well as Worstead, which is first mentioned in the rolls of Norwich Cathedral in 1301. Worsted was shipped via Yarmouth to the continent, or later travelled to London from Norwich. Chris Barringer added that Robert Toppes of Dragon Hall became a banker to the prosperous wool merchants and remembered these local villages in his will. Our final call was to the Manor House, a grand L-shaped Grade II* flint and brick house opposite the church. The main part is of c.1690 with traces of a fourteenth-century hall house. Beams in a first-floor

Fig. 4a Manor House, Worstead: south front and east side elevations. The oldest part of the house is thought to be to the left of the picture. The weavers' loft/eighteenth century saloon to the right in the area with no windows on the first floor.



store room indicated the position of the original hall. There had, of late, been a good deal of money spent on Georgianising it all with panelling. Another panelled room was said to be an old weaver's loft, but the general opinion was that it was unlikely; Chris Barringer thought the good brickwork might indicate that this room had once been an elegant eighteenth-century saloon.

Our thanks to our guides and to Jackie Simpson for a very interesting day.

Fig. 4b Manor House, Worstead: north garden and west garden elevations. The weavers' loft/eighteenth century saloon is to the left; the oldest part is behind the brick facade.



Nos. 33-43 Damgate, Wymondham Anne Hoare



*Fig. 1 (left)
Damgate in
1890*



*Fig. 2 (right)
Damgate in 2008*

Until the nineteenth century Damgate was the main route through the town from Cambridge and Thetford to Norwich, its name coming from the Scandinavian 'gata' or 'street' leading down to the abbey mill-dam on the river Tiffey.

Wymondham is rich in documentary sources: the Town Archive has a goodly store of house deeds dating back centuries and there are many skilled researchers investigating a wide range of documents. John Wilson's transcription of the Town Book (*see Newsletter No 3*) Brenda Garrard's research into the religious Gilds, John Ayton's work on the 1810 Enclosure and R. and M. Fowles' transcription of a Grishaugh manor rental c. 1550, have all contributed to the Damgate story. Nineteenth-century census returns reveal that

the inhabitants of the street were labourers, skilled workers, tradesmen and shopkeepers - the nuts and bolts of the local community.

House owners too are often very knowledgeable, having recorded their homes or had them surveyed. This is well illustrated by nos. 33-39 on the east side of Damgate, described in the Listed Buildings register as a terrace of eighteenth-century origins, reworked in the nineteenth century (figs. 1 in 1890 & 2 today). The row is on the old street line, its neighbour to the north, nos. 29-31, probably being the Gild Hall of All Saints, whose records tell of the pulling down of the old house and the building of a 'newe house' in 1512.

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Fig. 3 Nos. 33 and 35 Damgate



Fig. 4 No. 33 Damgate: stud wall.



Fig. 5 Apotropaic daisy wheel mark in No. 33 Damgate.

Sue and Michael Brown have surveyed no.33 (fig.3). It shares a continuous gabled roof with no.35 and has a flying freehold to the south, its bedroom being over the ground floor room of no. 35. Its front has been rebuilt in brick and its roof raised, but it was originally timber framed, (some timbering survives inside) and was of one and a half storeys with a thatched roof.

The west wall has a flint sill, remains of studwork (fig. 4) and the wallplate bears poker burns – as sigils, or apotropaic marks as protection against the danger of fire. There are also daisy wheel ‘witch marks’ inscribed on the wall plaster (fig. 5). The brick inglenook fireplace contains large pieces of dressed stone, probably from the Abbey, dissolved in 1539.

The Browns dated the chimney to the mid- sixteenth century. It was inserted into an earlier building which appears to have been a 24x12 feet open hall of the mid-fifteenth century. Other houses in Damgate are mentioned in manorial documents from 1419.

At the 1806 Enclosure, Robert and Anne Edwards claimed the cottage in their own occupation and another, probably no. 35. Robert was a glover, indeed Damgate was quite a centre for leather working and shoemaking in the nineteenth century. The current owner of no. 33 is a bookbinder!

No. 39 still has its flint façade (fig. 6) which is probably the height of the original roof line and was once the Half Moon Inn, kept by William Pudding in 1708. It was owned by the Wymondham brewer William McCann in 1810 and was still described as ‘the messuage called the Half Moon’ in 1885.

As for no. 41 (which has maintained its original height), behind the red brick exterior and plaque of Queen Victoria

are some surprises. An abstract of Title of 1768 describes it as ‘decayed’ and it was rebuilt in the late 1890s together with no. 43 to the south. Fig. 7, dating from the late nineteenth century, shows it before alterations. Sam Lemmon, a master shoemaker lived there in 1871 and used to take his pony through the house to the stable at the rear. Apparently his wife followed with a bucket and shovel! Certainly the door



Fig. 7 No. 41 Damgate: late nineteenth century.

from the living room to what was the stable is very wide – presumably to accommodate the pony. Inside, the house has a flint sill and in the wall between the kitchen and living room (originally the outside back wall) remains of wattle and daub and a window have been uncovered (fig. 8).

These glimpses into some of the Damgate houses are possible thanks to the generosity of the owners and the many researchers into the history of Wymondham.



Fig. 6 Nos 39 and 41 Damgate: flint facade which is probably the height of the original roof line.

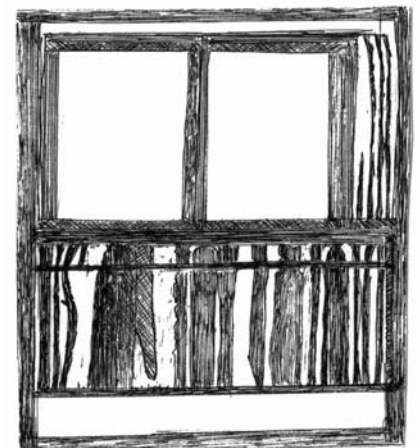


Fig. 8 No. 41 Damgate: exposed wattle and daub and window frame.

A King's Lynn Treat, 28 June 2008

Denis Argyle



*Figs. 1 & 2
Red Mount Chapel: exterior and interior of upper chapel.*

An eagerly awaited excursion which surpassed all expectations – with sunshine in plenty and excellent guides – David Pitcher and Mark Fuller in the morning and Paul Richards in the afternoon.

Our first stop was at Red Mount Chapel which David felt was unique in this country and probably in Europe. Set on a mound in splendid parkland the building (of 1485 and only 17 feet from west to east) is an octagon of red brick with buttresses at each corner and is crowned with a cruciform stone top – of 1505–6. It is divided into three parts – a lower chapel, a room above, known as the Priest's Room, and finally (reached by two staircases between the outer and inner walls) the upper chapel with lovely fan vaulting – probably created by the mason responsible for the vaulting at King's College Chapel, Cambridge, John Wastell.

We then looked at the recently restored hexagonal Greyfriars Tower – of brick with stone dressings and probably built in 1364 into the thirteenth-century Franciscan church. David and Mark had had a long struggle to obtain lottery funding for the work to be done and the publicity arising from the inclusion of the Tower in the television series 'Restoration' undoubtedly helped their case. At that time the Tower was surrounded by shrubbery but all this has now been cleared and the area landscaped to good effect.



Fig.3 Greyfriars Tower: brick with stone dressings of c. 1300.

After an excellent lunch – in a fourteenth-century warehouse – Paul Richards gave us a general outline of the

history of Lynn stressing its great importance as a trading port – largely as a result of its connection with the hinterland to the West and its association with the Hanseatic League.

Our next stop was in Nelson Street outside Hampton Court – one of the larger merchants' houses – a building with four wings around an inner courtyard: the south wing is of the fourteenth century, a Western range of the mid-fifteenth century, an Eastern range of about 1480, and a Northern range of about 1600. We looked into the courtyard through a segment headed archway with spandrels containing the arms of Richard Amfles who took possession in 1482. This Eastern part of the complex has a brick ground floor and a jettied and timber framed upper floor.

We then walked to St Margaret's Church – a long white limestone building with two magnificent towers at the West

*Fig. 4
Door
spandrel to
Hampton
Court.*



end. It was founded in 1106 by Herbert de Losinga, Bishop of Norwich, and was completely rebuilt in the thirteenth century although the Western towers still have their Norman arches to the nave. The Chancel crossings and transepts are all Early English but after the lead spire fell in 1741 the nave was restored by Matthew Brettingham – who also acted as the site architect at Holkham Hall under William Kent. The fourteenth-century stalls remain with a variety of misericords but, in the view of many, the glory of the church must lie in two of the finest and largest (10 feet long) brasses in the country. Flemish – and of the fourteenth century – the whole rectangular plate is engraved and not just the figures as in English brasses. These are of Adam de Walsokne and his wife (1349) and Robert Braunche and his two wives (1364) with below the Peacock Feast offered by him to Edward III in 1349.

From here we went on to Clifton House in Queen Street – now being restored by Simon Thurley, the Chief Executive of English Heritage. Originally an open hall house of the thirteenth century (with extremely rare Westminster floor tiles of that period) it has a fourteenth-century brick vaulted undercroft, an Elizabethan watchtower and warehouse range running down to the river, a staircase of 1708 and a classical front of the same date containing a recessed doorway with a pair of Baroque barley sugar columns.

Finally we visited St George's Guildhall (1410–20), the largest surviving medieval guildhall in the country. At one time a theatre where Shakespeare is said (erroneously perhaps) to have acted it is now a theatre again and the centre of the Lynn Festival. It is of brick and stone and has a fine scissor braced roof with 61 trusses, vaulted storage rooms and a long row of warehouses stretching down to the river.

Our thanks go to David, Mark and Paul for all their help and to Mary Ash for organising such a splendid day.

Wingfield Church and College, 12 July 2008

Peter Cranness

On Saturday 12th July NHGB members crossed the border to visit Wingfield, deep in the narrow lanes of Suffolk. We visited the church first, with Dominic Summers as our guide.

The building appears to date from the fourteenth century but was not finished until the next century. The exterior is not outstandingly impressive; the tower seems rather squat with the belfry forming the top floor and the clerestorey of a later date than the tower and nave. Inside it is rather different, the nave is indeed unspectacular, although there is a fine early 15th-century font of typical design, with bold lions on the stem and heraldry round the bowl. The tower and nave were probably built at the same time as the western arches of the arcades are consistent in width with the others.

The chancel however, built by William de la Pole in 1430, is a complete contrast; this is lavishly ornate and of exquisite workmanship. Three monuments occupy the sides of the chancel (not their original position perhaps.) The oldest is that of Sir John de Wingfield, who died in 1361, founder of the College, builder of the tower and nave and martial companion of the Black Prince. He lies under a crisply carved crocketed ogee gable. On the south side is the lavish chapel and tomb of Michael de la Pole, 2nd Earl of Suffolk and his wife Katherine de Stafford. He died before the siege of Harfleur in 1415, and on the north side are the lifelike alabaster effigies on the tomb of John de la Pole, 2nd Duke of Suffolk, brother-in-law to two kings (Edward IV and Richard III,) and his wife, Elizabeth Plantagenet. He died in 1491. The de la Pole chapel (now the vestry) on the north side has an upper chamber with two squints looking towards the altar.



Fig. 1 Tomb of John de la Pole, 2nd Duke of Suffolk and Elizaeth Plantagenet c. 1480–1491/2. (Drawing: Colin King)

After lunch in the timber-framed pub across the road, we visited Wingfield College next to the church with its owner, Peter Bloore, as our guide. The façade is impressive, even confusing Pevsner, who thought it was a Georgian building. In fact it has a false pedimented front, with seven false or partly false, windows, on a fourteenth century timber-framed chantry-house, with domestic quarters, great hall and cloister range. All this was discovered and restored by a new owner in the 1960s and restoration continues.

There is one room inside the front door which can be described as Georgian with original panelling painted in

authentic eighteenth-century colours. There had to be some modification to the earlier windows which were moved out to fit up to the outside of the Georgian front. This meant the inside shutters had to be moved as well, and wood fillets were used to fill the resulting gaps in the reveals. The remains of other original windows can also be seen in other rooms and in the cloister.

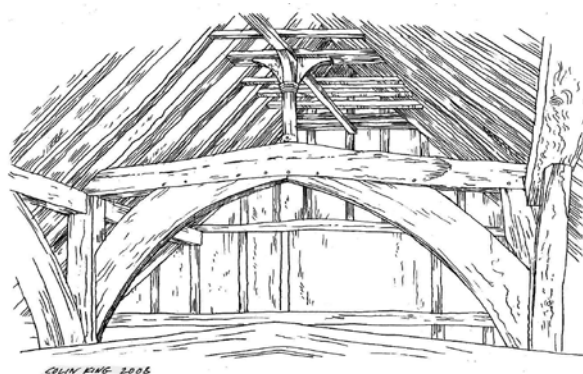


Fig. 2 Crown Post Roof in the Great Hall. (Drawing by Colin King)

The most impressive room in the house is the Great Hall which has a raised-aisle roof and was probably once twice as long. We finished with tea and delicious cakes and a wander round the moated gardens – a very enjoyable way to end an enlightening and fascinating day.

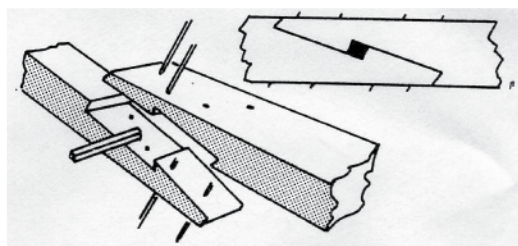


Fig. 3 A stop-splayed and tabled scarf with under-squinted abutments, transverse key and four face pegs; this scarf is capable of resisting every known stress: hog, sag, torque or winding and flexure. In use from c. 1250. A similar joint (below) is to be found in Wingfield College. (Cecil A. Hewett, *English Historic Carpentry*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd, 1980)

Note: Dendrochronology for Wingfield College gives a felling date between 1379–83 (*Vernacular Architecture*, 1999, Vol 30 p 88).

Barnham Broom Old Hall, 4 July 2008

Alice Leftley

Anna Kettle



On the promise of viewing an early sixteenth century brick house with a three storey porch with polygonal angle turrets, a fine plasterwork ceiling and a dog gate, a large group gathered on the lawn in front

of the hall on a summer Friday evening.

We were addressed by Mr Hartley Booth who told us they had bought the hall off the Buildings at Risk list and he gave us the potted history as he knew it. The Romans may have camped there but the first structures were flint gatehouses in 1440, built by an ambitious Chamberlin who overstepped the mark and was executed for treason. His son seemed to survive better and also built another house in Richmond and there is a flavour of Richmond Palace about the front elevation. 1608 was a good year for the house as money from marrying a barrister's daughter paid for extensive remodelling, including the wondrous plaster ceiling of 1614. A bad year was 1954 when a Mr Hawker brought the ruins and bungalowed them!

Alan Eade walked round the exterior with us and gave us great pointers as to the mis-match of brickwork, showing evidence of stitching and repair work where bits had fallen out, and changes in fashions. These are most easily recognised where the diaper work is missing and the mortars changed. Early workers rubbed the mortar joints with sacking and the later enthusiastically shaped with their trowels, to the detriment of the bricks. The early Tudor brick mullioned and transomed windows would have been plastered and painted to look like stone, and the glass would have been small lozenges. The 'New' end, with its posh very Norfolk brick gable, showed off the big bold seventeenth century moulded bricks and heavy plaster and stone bolection.

We entered the house through the well carved linenfold 1515/18 timber door and entered the hall with its very simple oak diamond ceiling, possibly later than its partner in the library.

Upstairs was the fabulous plaster ceiling. Anna Kettle explained that there would be a strong oak frame inside it to suspend the plaster shape and that lime plaster moved around with the house, a wonderful thought. There was more plaster work in the end bedrooms which Anna felt she had seen elsewhere. (For more details of the ceilings, see Anna's report.)

The roof, as always, explained a lot about the history of the use of the building, with the height of collars, and positioning of the chimney, and the substantial staircase all pointing to the new space being inhabited as against only storage in the old. To do it justice it requires an article for itself.

The evening ended with a casual questions and answers accompanied by drinks and nibbles on the terrace, and I learnt that it was the strong encouragement of Peter Codling that inspired the current owners to take on the mammoth task of restoration and we should be grateful to their vision.

The crowning glory of the house is the ornamental plaster ceiling in the first floor sitting room (Fig. 1). Intricate thin ribs over the ceiling terminate in pendant ornaments with a hollow pendant in the centre. Hollow pendants are a high status feature and usually the hollow appears between the ribs as they descend from the ceiling. This hollow pendant is unique in my experience in having two horizontal plates one above the other and connected by bulging ribs. The men and boars around the pendant are also unusual (Fig. 2).

Between the ceiling ribs are ornaments which have been moulded on a bench and planted on the ceiling once they have set. One ornament in particular is unusual, perhaps with Moorish influences (Fig. 3). It would be interesting to look in some old pattern books to try and find the original plasterer's inspiration.

There are ceilings in two Yarmouth museums (Tudor House and the Merchant's House) which at first glance seem very similar to this one with distinctively curvy single rib designs. It would be interesting to compare the ornaments on all three ceilings to see if there are any which match. If so, we can probably assume that the same family of plasterers worked on them all.

In the adjacent room is a plaster frieze and during the visit I was convinced that I had seen it elsewhere but once I arrived home and compared my photos with my reference books I discovered that I was mistaken and also that it is a more interesting frieze than I had previously thought - with at least one beast modelled into it.

Downstairs are two rooms with thin rib moulding on the ceiling. These mouldings are of wood, not plaster so I will not speculate further about them other than to say that if they had been in plaster then the earliest date for a thin rib ceiling is about 1530 and that thin ribs were very fashionable from 1590 to 1640, while an arts and crafts revival ceiling would be 1860 to 1925.

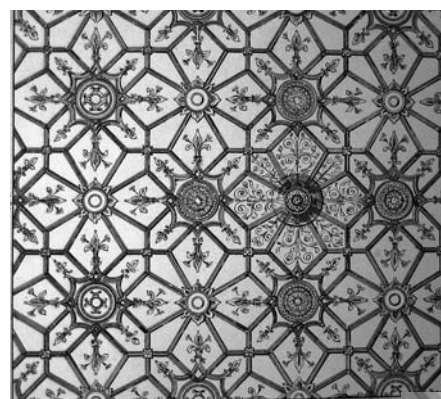
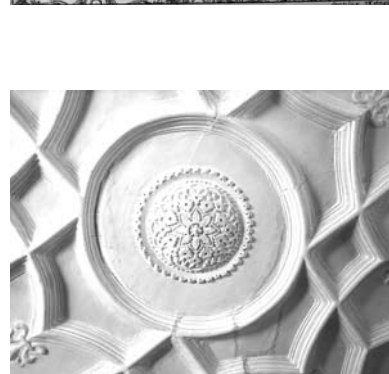


Fig. 1
Drawing of ceiling in the State Room, date 1614. From: *Some of the Old Halls and Manor Houses of Norfolk* Edwin P. Willins.

Fig. 2
Hollow pendant with boar and men.

Fig. 3 (Below left)
Moorish influence.



EDITOR

Once again the Group has had a busy and successful summer with all events well attended and greatly enjoyed. Of those I went to, particular moments stand out in my memory – the glorious rood screens in May, (I like to think that the St. Apollonia panel was a thankyou for curing the donor’s toothache!) the rectory garden at Heydon – could it have been the site of the original Hall? – and the particular pleasure to me of the Wingfield day. We saw it back in the ‘60s when the new owner was beginning to uncover its secrets. Quite astonishing. My thanks to all our contributors who responded to our requests so well that we’ve had to hold over some reports for the next issue, when I hope that recollections of this summer will provide a lift to the heart in the chilly winter.

Alayne Fenner, Newsletter Editor
01603 620690
e.mail: alaynefenner@btinternet.com

Letter received by Adam Longcroft

“...I just wanted to say thank you for the very interesting talks and explanations you gave today at Binham regarding some of the local houses. ...

It was my first outing with the NHBG (I joined this month) and I will certainly try and come to others. I learnt more than I expected to and enjoyed it all very much.”

Insurance Cover— all members should be aware of the following:

When involved in an NHBG activity, members are covered by the NHBG Insurance. This covers liability to third parties for damage to third party property, i.e. the legal liability of the NHBG for any amounts it becomes liable to pay as damages for Bodily Injury or Damage caused accidentally, including legal costs. The excess is £250. The insurance DOES NOT cover “member to member” liability. That is, if one member accidentally injures another. Most members will have cover on their household insurance.

If a member feels the cover is insufficient for their needs, then it is their personal responsibility to obtain adequate cover. It is worth pointing out that members have a “duty of care” in looking after themselves and others.

Report on the Annual General Meeting at Binham Priory, Saturday 21 June 2008

More than 50 people attended the AGM which was kindly hosted for the Group by the fundraisers associated with Binham Priory who welcomed us all with coffee. They are attempting to secure its future by making it a more attractive and useful place for the village and for worship.

The business of the Meeting was speedily conducted. Adam Longcroft was re-elected as Chairman, the remaining officers were not due for re-election; one member of the Committee had resigned and has been replaced by Alice Leftley who will be looking after the Group’s publicity. The Treasurer’s report stated that as at the 31 March 2008: the Current Account was £10,013.80; Income was £8,290.20; Expenditure was £8,656.81. The excess of expenditure over income was accounted for by the increasing costs of Journal Three and postage. The dendrochronology account, the Lottery Grant, was £8,000.00 and expenditure £3,996.00. The Chairman expressed his thanks to members of the Committee for their support and house owners who so kindly opened their homes to the Group.

The main lesson we learned is that to get members to attend the AGM requires an interesting and stimulating visit to package it, so we must try and maintain this standard for future years – ANY suggestions for a venue for next summer’s AGM will be gratefully received by the Committee (before Christmas please!).

Vernacular Architecture Group Memorial Essay

A prize of £250 will be awarded annually for the best essay on a subject related to vernacular architecture. The emphasis may be historical, structural, stylistic or archaeological, and the winning essay will be considered for publication in Vernacular Architecture.

The essays will be judged by a panel appointed by the committee of the Vernacular Architecture Group, and the judges will be looking for evidence of originality of thought, quality of research, and clarity of expression. The decision of the judges is final, and the Group reserves the right not to award the prize if there are no suitable entries.

There is no age limit for entrants, but entry is restricted to those who have not previously had their work published in national, rather than in local or county, journals.

The closing date for entries is 30 September each year, and the award will be announced the following January.

For more details see Newsletter No. 15. Please send any initial queries, and completed entries with your name and address (including email address if you have one) to:

Dr Martin Cherry

66 Moorcroft Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 8LU

Email: martincherry@btinternet.com

Tel: 0121449 8569

If you would like to discuss your ideas prior to submission, please do not hesitate to contact Martin.

Proposed survey of Norfolk's rural schools—a plea to Members of NHBG

Susanna Wade-Martins

Primary school education in England is on the verge of revolution. The early years of the 21st century will see the rolling out of a 'virtual learning environment' based on computers, the internet and learning programmes designed to suit individual needs. School buildings, some well over 100 years old, will disappear. Of the 464 primary schools in Norfolk in 1947, 405 had been built before 1907, 200 of which dated from before 1870. 170 had been closed by 1990 and closures are continuing at an increasing rate. A major source of information about the history of the school, its size, its development over time, and the type of educational system adopted is the evidence of the building itself, frequently much altered, given over to other uses, or simply standing empty and neglected. The time is right for a survey of Norfolk's rural schools. Discussions are in progress with various partners, including Gressenhall Rural Life Museum and Norfolk Record Office (NRO) and which could include the NHBG, with a view of putting together a Lottery bid for funding a project on the History of Rural Education in Norfolk. This would include running a short introductory course for volunteers and the covering of travel costs for those involved. I would like to see the project getting off the ground early in 2009.

There is a large number of written sources both in the NRO and in parliamentary reports on education. There are also, for example, the censuses 1842-1901, school log books, reports on the availability of books, medical records, attendance registers, and County Council Education Committee records.

There is a large collection of photographs and of material from schools, including school text books, held at Gressenhall and of course there is oral history, interviewing people who went to school between the wars. It is the possibility of combining documentary, oral, and museum sources with building research that makes the potential of this project so exciting.

I would envisage that the building research would involve the locating of school sites on the first editions of the 2 1/2 inch Ordnance Survey maps and then visiting them with a simple check list. Photographs would also be taken. The final report would be deposited both with the Landscape and Environment Section at County Hall, who have already expressed interest and support for the project, and the HERS record at Gressenhall.

The aspect of the project that involves looking at buildings could only be carried out on a county-wide basis with the help of members of NHBG. I hope it would appeal to members who are not involved in detailed building recording in Tacolneston and whose main interests lie in more recent buildings.

Any member interested in joining Susanna in this venture should contact her on: 01362 668435 or e.mail : scwmartins@hotmail.com



Fig. 1

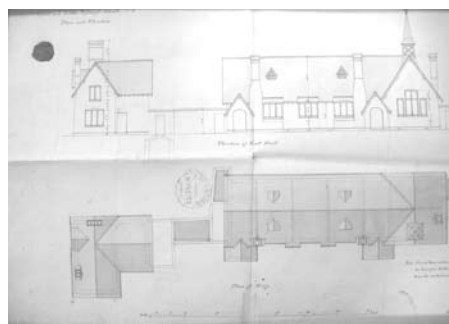


Fig. 2

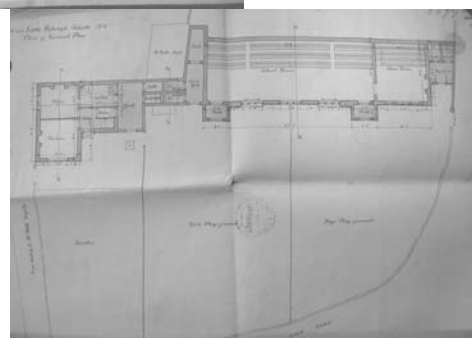


Fig. 3



Fig. 1 *Gt. & Little Ryburgh National School is for sale for conversion.*

Fig. 2 *Plans for it were approved in 1872 (BRO P/BG 103) (Courtesy of Norfolk Record Office).*

Fig. 3 *War memorials on schools are unusual as are tablets commemorating the Boer War.*

A Digest of Buildings Visited Since March 2008

This is a digest of all the Norfolk houses (excluding New Buckenham) which the NHBG has been invited to look at and prepare brief reports. These are ALL private houses and NO contact may be made with the owners in any way except through the Committee. This list is to inform members of the work undertaken on behalf of the Group, and will not be printed on the Internet.

Correction: In the last Digest the correct address for “The Manor House, Tibenham” should have read “The Manor Farmhouse, Tibenham”.

St Mary’s Farmhouse, Forncett St Mary

Report by Karen Mackie

A tripartite house with a rebuilt or new parlour cross-wind (1628 on chimney). Over the hall two studs are rebated for a vertical sliding shutter.

Hill Cottage, Tacolneston

Report by Mary Ash

An early sixteenth century two-cell house with an intact timber-framed chimney still in use.

Old Manor House, Tacolneston

Report by Karen Mackie

An experimental plan with cross-wing and stair. Elaborate mouldings and chamfer stops. Apotropaic daisy wheel in plaster next to the window.

Tacolneston Hall, Tacolneston

Report by Rosemary Forrest

Remains of a sixteenth century tripartite timber-framed house with an early seventeenth century cross-wing and stairs. Later alterations in 1714 and late nineteenth century ‘Arts & Crafts’.

Rowan Cottage, Langham

Report by Sue Brown

1.5 storey brick and flint single cell early seventeenth century cottage. Extended with another cell in later seventeenth century. Marian mark on sofwood purlin next to a dormer window.

6 The Poplars, Bentley Road, Forncett End

Report by Sue Brown

Begun in the sixteenth century as a two-cell dwelling with a timber-framed chimney. Later extended when seventeenth-century brick stack was inserted in the cross-passage.



The Poplars, Forncett End: the initial survey.

The Ash, Bentley Road, Forncett End (see Walnut Tree House)

Report by Sue Brown

Originally a 1.5 storey tripartite house, probably with a timber-framed chimney. Later extended and subdivided. Brick wings added in the eighteenth century. Documentary evidence of multiple tenancies.

18 Bentley Road, Forncett St Peter

Report by Mary Ash

A tripartite house of the sixteenth century with backhouse.



64 Norwich Road, Tacolneston

64 Norwich Road, Tacolneston

Report by Rosemary Forrest

A two-cell house with a later seventeenth-century parlour and contemporary roof. Possible timber-framed chimney bay. Storey posts in parlour identical to the Manor House and the Dower House.

44 The Close, Norwich

Report by Mary Ash

A brick building running closely parallel to an older flint wall. Two shaped Dutch gables with the date 1730 in metal ties. Principal joists have lamb’s tongue and small notch chamfer stops.

Old School House, Norwich Road, Tacolneston

Report by Karen Mackie

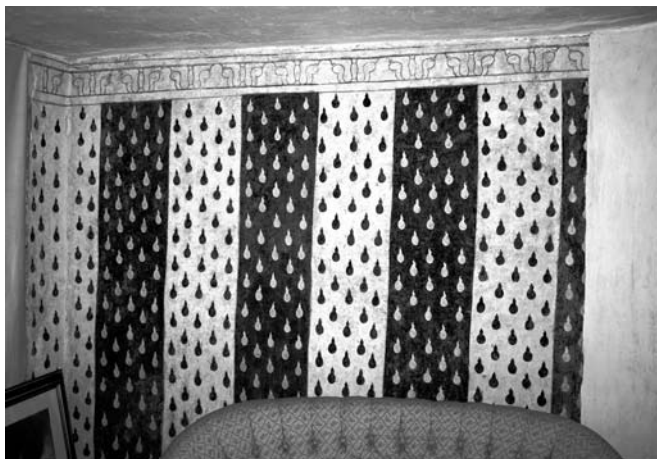
Seventeenth-century ceiling encased in a later Victorian brick shell.

Newsletter Request

Please do not forget that we are always looking for articles, items of interest, queries, photographs, or anything which has taken your interest to include in newsletters.

Alayne Fenner: 01603 620690

Rosemary Forrest: 01603 742315



Above: Barnham Broom Old Hall wall painting in first floor porch room.

Book Recommendations

Burford: Buildings and People in a Cotswold town. By ANTONIA CATCHPOLE, DAVID CLARK and ROBERT PEBERDY. Phillimore and Victoria County History: England's Past for Everyone (2008). xi+244pp ISBN 978-1-86077-488-1 £14.99 pb

The Shapwick Project, Somerset. A Rural Landscape Explored. Compiled by CHRISTOPHER GERARD with MICK ASTON and 53 other contributors. Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 25 (2007). 1047 pp., 1122 ills. including 4 colour pls., and a CD. ISBN 978 1 905981 86 1. £45.00. Available from Maney Publishing.

Welsh Furniture, 1250-1950. A Cultural History of Craftsmanship and Design. By RICHARD BEBB. 2 casebound volumes in slipcase, 825 pages with 1,500 ills. £150.00. ISBN 978-0-9553773-1-0. Available from Kidwelly: Saer Books. 01554 890328, www.welshfurniture.com

Medieval Architectural Drawing. By ARNOLD PACEY. Tempus (2007). £25.00. Available from The History Press, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Glos, GL5 2QG. www.thehistorypress.co.uk

Jean-Rene Trochet, Les Maisons, Paysannes en France et leur Environnement (XV-XX siecles). Published by Editions Creaphis, Paris, (2006).

Artisan Art: Vernacular wall paintings in the Welsh Marches 1550-1650. By KATHRYN DAVIES with a preface by Ron Brunskill. Logaston Press (2008). 230 pp. ISBN (hb) 978 1904396 93 2 (pb) 978 1904396 92 5. £17.50 pb, £24.00 hb. Available from Logaston Press, Little Logaston, Wootton, Almeley, Herefordshire, HR3 6QH www.logastonpress.co.uk

NHBG Committee

Adam Longcroft *Chairman/Journal Editor*
Centre for Continuing Education, UEA, Norwich,
NR4 7TJ

01603 592 261 [w] e.mail: a.longcroft@uea.ac.uk

Alayne Fenner *Deputy Chairman/Newsletter Editor*
13 Heigham Grove, Norwich NR2 3DQ
01603 620 690 e.mail: alayne.fenner@btinternet.com

Lynne Hodge *Committee Secretary*
Tannery House Worthing, Dereham NR20 5RH
01362 668847 e.mail: lynne@walknorfolk.co.uk

Sue Shand *Treasurer*
Tibenham Farm, Long Row, Tibenham, Norwich NR16 1PD
01379 677677 e.mail: sushand@hotmail.co.uk

Ian Hinton *Membership Secretary*
The Old Rectory, Barnby, Beccles, NR34 7QN
01502 475 287 [h] e.mail: ian.hinton@tesco.net

Michael and Sue Brown *Buildings*
Woodlands, Bylaugh Park, Dereham NR20 4RL
01362 688 362 [h]

Mary Ash *Winter Programme/Publications*
107 St Leonards Road, Norwich, NR1 4JF
01603 616285 [h] e.mail: mary.ash@ntlworld.com

Dominic Summers *Summer Events*
1a, 39 Middleton's Lane, Hellesdon, NR6 5NQ
01603 788374 e.mail: d.summers1@btinternet.com

Rosemary Forrest *Newsletter*
3 Highlands, Costessey, NR8 5EA
01603 742 315 e.mail: forrest.rosemary@gmail.com

Richard Coulton
Little Ketlam, Low Road, Pentney, King's Lynn PE32 1JF
01553 691 661[h]

Karen Mackie *Tacolneston Project*
44 Norwich Road, Tacolneston NR16 1BY
01508 488467 e.mail: karen_mackie@btinternet.com

Jackie Simpson
The Chestnuts, Church Road, Neatishead, Norfolk
01692 630639 e.mail: jackie_simpson@beeb.net

Diane Barr *Documentary Research*
24 The Shrublands, Horsford, NR10 3EL
01603 898928 e.mail: di.barr@btinternet.com

Alice Leftley *Publicity*
224 Earlham Road, Norwich, NR2 3RH
01603 453385 e.mail: alicemily@yahoo.co.uk



Above: Misericord in Binham Priory.



Tacolneston Project



Karen Mackie

It was great to see the village hall packed with people on Friday 6th June to hear what has been found out about houses in the village so far by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group.

For those of you who were unable to make it here are a few snippets:

Most of the houses seen during the project were originally farmhouses, large or small, and they often had a subsidiary building used for the practical and messy jobs such as laundry, brewing, baking, butchering and cooking. We have found a number of these backhouses, as they were called, in the Tacolneston area.

It has been a notable feature of the project that we have found evidence of at least twelve timber chimneys in Tacolneston and its environs (*see Newsletter 15*). These hearths were at one end of the hall and confined to a smoke hood constructed from timber and wattle and daub, the same materials as the rest of the house. After 1600 these timber structures were often replaced by brick so that remains of them are only rarely found.

The Browne family were prominent in the early history of Tacolneston. In this will extract Mary bequeaths ‘unto John Browne of Tacolneston the sonne of Edmund Brown my meadowe called Depmere meadowe by estimation four acres and also one piece of lande by estimation two acres.’ Unfortunately, as with most wills, the location of any property is difficult to establish.

Dendro-dating is now underway. Watch out for more news.



Right: Three large interpretative posters which have been prepared to highlight aspects of the Tacolneston Project. They cover documentary evidence and the landscape, timber-framed chimneys, and auxilliary buildings. They have been used to great effect in Tacolneston and at Binham.

Norwich WEA

Day School

Saturday 25 October 2008

10.00 am to 4.00 pm

Wensum Lodge, Norwich

How to date a medieval timber framed house

Medieval timber framed houses are dated on the type of house, their layout – where were the door, windows, etc, their type of roof, the type of carpentry and the joints used, all of which changed over time. This day will look at how to recognise these and finish with a case study.

Tutor: John Walker

Cost £15.00

Details: Diana Bulman 01603 454805

SPAB Wash/Fenland Regional Group

(with support from the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and others)

BRICK

Sunday 12 October 2008

10.00 am — 4.00 pm

Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn

Tickets: £10.00

Speakers include several leading experts in the field both in the history and the repair of brick.

Tickets and information from:

Bob Turner

01945 871100 or e.mail: morriski@hotmail.com

(Several members are planning on attending this Conference so do not feel that you might not know anyone on the day. Please do contact Rosemary Forrest (01603 742315/forrest.rosemary@gmail.com) if you would like to know who else is going.)

Vernacular Architecture Group

A date for the diary:

Winter Conference

13 – 14 December 2008

University of Leicester

Vernacular Architecture Group

A date for the diary:

Spring Conference

14 – 19 April 2009

Marginal Architecture

If you are interested – please contact:

Rosemary Forrest

01603 742315/forrest.rosemary@gmail.com

Jersey

If you are interested – please contact:

Rosemary Forrest

01603 742315/forrest.rosemary@gmail.com

Remember:

you do not have to be an individual member of the VAG, we do have Group membership

Winter Events 2008/2009

The Winter Lectures are free to members and there is no need to book tickets. Non-members are most welcome and will be asked to contribute £2.00 each.

Mary Ash, Winter Events
01603 616285
e.mail: mary.ash@ntlworld.com

'Queenpost roofs in south east Norfolk barns'

...Dr Philip Aitkens

Date: Tuesday 21 October 2008
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Room 01.02, Elizabeth Fry Building, University of East Anglia, Earlham Road (off B1108 Watton Road), Norwich

Members' Evening

Date: Thursday 20 November 2008
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Room 01.02, Elizabeth Fry Building, University of East Anglia, Earlham Road (off B1108 Watton Road), Norwich

'Surviving military structures on the Suffolk coast' ... David Sims
'Farmhouses of the Wolterton Estate' ... Lynette Fawkes
News of the Tacolneston Survey ...Susan and Michael Brown

'Some Reflections on the course of 20C Norfolk architecture'

...Dr Stefan Muthesius

Date: Thurs 11 December:
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Room 01.02, Elizabeth Fry Building, University of East Anglia, Earlham Road (off B1108 Watton Road), Norwich

'Putting up a front: the difference in appearance of houses in late medieval York and Norwich'

...Dr Jayne Rimmer;

Date: Friday 16 January 2009
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Room 01.02, Elizabeth Fry Building, University of East Anglia, Earlham Road (off B1108 Watton Road), Norwich

'The rebirth of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital in the 1870s'

...Dr Jeremy Taylor

Date: Tuesday 10 February 2009
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Room 01.02, Elizabeth Fry Building, University of East Anglia, Earlham Road (off B1108 Watton Road), Norwich

'Urban & rural vernacular buildings in Northern Germany: comparisons with East Anglia'

...Dr Adam Longcroft

Date: Wednesday 25 March 2009
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Thoresby College, South Quay, King's Lynn

The summer events have been very well attended this year and I hope that this reflects a programme that was designed to provide opportunities to visit a wide variety of buildings in different contexts and throughout the county (and beyond). I think that we managed to dodge most of the showers, this being especially important on the town and village walks, which, I feel, were particular successes.

I would be very interested to hear from any members who have suggestions concerning the overall mix of events or about particular buildings and places that you think we should visit.

I look forward to seeing many of you again on next year's trips.



*Summer when the sun shone...
... memories of Heydon gardens.*

Dominic Summers
Summer Events
01603 788374
d.summers1@
btinternet.
com