

Norfolk Historic Buildings Group

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Newsletter



Number thirty-five
Spring 2018

www.nhbg.org.uk
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CHAIR

This issue contains updates on the various large-scale research projects that members of the group are involved in at the moment, following on from Journal 6 on the buildings of Walsingham. Compared to some other groups we are lucky in that so many of our members are actively involved in this research. More than 40 of our members have taken part in the three projects currently in progress. It is through this sort of active involvement that the work of the group will go forward. Relying on just a few members for research carries with it the danger of setbacks, as none of us is getting any younger. Extensive previous knowledge is not a pre-requisite to join in.

Involvement does not just mean getting out in the field, especially in the winter - there are other ways of participating. Apart from documentary research in the warm of the Record Office, there are many other ways. Mary Ash is always interested in hearing from members who might present a short piece on their own research on members' night. In the last newsletter, I asked for suggestions from members for summer visits and winter lectures as this ensures that we reflect the interests of our members and helps to retain membership. Similarly, members might have collections of photographs which could be used on the back cover of the newsletter, as there are only so many subjects that I can do from my own photos. You may live in a house that might be of interest to the group, or know someone who might be willing to allow a group of members access to their house. Each house examined furthers the collective knowledge of the Group and sometimes helps in explaining aspects seen elsewhere in the past.

Please get involved.

Ian Hinton
Chair, Norfolk Historic Buildings Group
March 2018

ian.hinton222@btinternet.com

Committee Contact Details

Ian Hinton *Chair & Journal Editor*
134 Yarmouth Road, Norwich NR7 0SB
01603 431311 [h] *e.mail: ian.hinton222@btinternet.com*

Alayne Fenner *Deputy Chair & Newsletter Editor*
24 Mount Pleasant, Norwich, NR2 2DG
01603 452204 [h] *e.mail: alayne.fenner@btinternet.com*

Lynne Hodge *Committee Secretary*
The Old Stables, Elsing Hall, Elsing, Dereham NR20 3DX
01362 668847 [h] *e.mail: lynne@walknorfolk.co.uk*

Maggy Chatterley *Treasurer*
134 Yarmouth Road, Norwich NR7 0SB
01603 431311 [h] *e.mail: maggy6@btinternet.com*

Hilary Newby-Grant *Membership Secretary*
Ketteringham Cottage, Sloley, Norfolk NR12 8HF
01692 538383 [h] *email: billnewby8@hotmail.com*

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

Dominic Summers *Summer Events*
3 Speke Street, Norwich, NR2 4HF
07709 028192[m] *e.mail: d.summers1@btinternet.com*

Jackie Simpson *Web Page Database*
The Chestnuts, Church Road, Neatishead NR12 8BT
01692 630639 *e.mail: jackie.g.simpson@btinternet.com*

Diane Barr *Documentary Research*
24 The Shrublands, Horsford, NR10 3EL
01603 898928 [h] *e.mail: dibarr@btinternet.com*

Anne Woollett *Web Pages*
The Cardinal's Hat, Back Street, Reepham NR10 4SJ
01603 870452 [h] *email: anne.woollett@tiscali.co.uk*

3 Vacancies

Paul Hodge *(not on committee)* **Facebook Group**
The Cardinal's Hat, Back Street, Reepham NR10 4SJ
01603 870452 [h] *email: pt.hodge@tiscali.co.uk*

Administration

Data Protection Regulations

New Data Protection Regulations come into force in May 2018 and every organization that holds personal data on a computer has to review its procedures to ensure that they comply.

What the NHBG holds

The Membership Secretary of the NHBG currently holds your name, address, email and phone number and whether you pay your subs by standing order. There is no electronic processing of this data other than the production of merge letters accompanying the Newsletter and other member-wide communications.

The Secretary keeps a list of names and email addresses of current members in order to send out notifications of forthcoming events. The organizers of summer visits may temporarily hold some information that you give them in order to manage the arrangements for the visit.

What the regulations require

Strictly speaking, the regulations require you to consent to us holding and using your data to send you the Newsletter and email reminders of events. We have taken advice that this was not meant to apply to organizations such as Utility Companies to send out utility bills, as there is no point in telling people the obvious. Since the NHBG's sole purpose in communicating with its members is to send out member-based information and reminders, it is felt that this is the same as the Utility companies. Unless we are advised otherwise, we will continue to operate as we are currently doing.

Our commitment to you

- The NHBG will never release any of your details to any third party without your express permission. This includes a request for a member's contact details by another member - such a request will be passed to the second member to reply if they wish.
- The NHBG will delete your details if you terminate your membership of the NHBG.
- The NHBG will ensure that security on the computers used to store the data will be kept up to date and that the training of any committee member handling data is also up to date.

Cover photo: The Radar receiver at RAF Neatishead - photo by Ian Hinton

Summer Programme

Summer Programme 2018

If booking by post, please use the forms provided to book, **with a separate cheque for each event**, even if going to the same person. IF YOU WANT TICKETS POSTED TO YOU, DON'T FORGET the SAE.

If you are happy to receive the tickets by email, DO NOT SEND AN SAE, the tickets will be despatched by email, but I am afraid that, until the Bank allows voluntary groups to have access to phone or internet banking, the cheque is best for us as it is the only way that we know payment has been made until several weeks later.

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

Church Day - Three churches of the Hempnall benefice Saturday 28th April

Time: 10:30
Meet: Shelton church
*Parking: Shelton school car park,
Low Road Shelton, NR15 2SD - to
the north of the church*
Cost: £10
Limit: no limit (members only)
Walking: Churchyards
Food: BYO picnic OR pub lunch (tba)
*Contact: Dominic Summers
07709 028192
d.summers1@btinternet.com*

We will be visiting three of the eight churches in this benefice - Shelton - the stunning brick-built Perpendicular church built by Sir Ralph Shelton in the 15th century; Fritton - with its magnificent wallpaintings and rood screen, and Bedingham - one of two churches originally in the same churchyard with evidence pointing to an earlier cruciform layout. All very different from each other.

We hope to arrange lunch at the Kings Head, Woodton - details notified to attendees nearer the date.

Hall Farmhouse, Ketteringham NR18 9RS Wednesday 23rd May

Time: 2:30 pm
Meet: Hall Farm NR18 9RS
Cost: £10
Limit: 25 (members only)
Walking: Stairs
*Contact: Mary Ash 01603 616285
mary.ash@ntlworld.com*

This house is a large five-celled building listed as a timber-framed house of the sixteenth century but was probably originally built in brick with crow-stepped gables and a large stair turret. There have been various interesting finds in the house, including ritual deposits in the chimney and medieval floor tiles. It may originally have been the Rectory and is now divided into two dwellings.

The Manor House, Northwold IP26 5LA & St Andrew's Church Saturday 2nd June

Time: 2:00 pm
Meet: The Manor House
Cost: £10
Limit: 24 (members only)
Walking: Stairs, rough churchyard
*Contact: Ian Hinton 01603 431311
ian.hinton222@btinternet.com*

We will be guided by the owner, in two groups, around this house which was supposedly built in 1721 although there are several indications that it was earlier, and parts of which were derelict for almost 100 years. The Manor complex has been undergoing a full restoration since 2014, including repair, replacement and sympathetic new building.

Across the road is the magnificent church of St Andrew, with its interesting bencends and monuments, its early arcade piers and stunning Easter Sepulchre.

King's Lynn Town Walk Saturday 7th July

Time: Walk starts at 11:00 am
Meet: True's Yard cafe from 10:45
Parking: Public car parks in Lynn
Cost: none
Limit: none
Walking: Mostly roads and pavements
*Contact: Dominic Summers
07709 028192
d.summers1@btinternet.com*

We will be shown round Lynn by Paul Richards. At one time it was the most important port in the country and was part of the Hanseatic League. Its prosperity supported many Guilds who built impressive Guildhalls. In the early 16th century Thoresby College was built to house the priests of the Holy Trinity Guild, opposite the Kings Lynn "Minster" - the church of St Margaret. We will be visiting the huge church of St Nicholas which was originally built as a chapel of ease to St Margaret. We will finish at Thoresby College.

followed by the AGM

Thoresby College, Lynn NHBG AGM

*Time: 1:00 pm - soup and bread rolls,
1:30 pm AGM*
Meet: Thoresby College
*Food: Please return ticket, or email
Dominic, for catering numbers*
*Contact: Dominic Summers,
d.summers1@btinternet.com*
AGM Papers to follow nearer the date.

Heath Farmhouse, Fakenham NR21 8LZ Summer Party afterwards Tuesday 17th July

Time: 3:00 pm
*Meet: Heath farmhouse, Norwich
Road, Fakenham*
Cost: £15
Limit: none (members only)
Food: Drinks and finger food
*Contact: Maggy Chatterley
01603 431311
maggy6@btinternet.com*

Listed as an early 18th century brick and flint house with gable-end stacks with an unheated central cell. But there are many indications that it is of an earlier date. The hood moulds above the rear windows and the oak and pine staircase with splat balusters both indicate a 17th century date. The main roof timbers are of pine but show chisel-cut carpenters marks.

The owners, Rob and Nesa Howard have kindly invited members to stay for drinks and nibbles after the visit.

RAF Neatishead Radar Station and Cold-War Bunker

Details and a date are still being organised for a visit to the Radar Station (pictured on the front cover) and underground Cold-War bunker, but details cannot be finalised as the site is currently up for sale and the attitude of any new owners is unknown.

As soon as details can be setup, members will be notified by email.

Doorways to the past: recent discoveries in the historic centre of Diss (17th October 2017)

Jess Johnston

Diss is a small market town, built around a six-acre Mere on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk. In 1275, the Market Charter was reissued and it is likely that the town was rebuilt soon after by Robert Fitzwalter, the lord of the manor. As with many other towns, some of the medieval layout can still be seen such as burgage plots and later Market infill. The aerial view highlights the triangular shape of the area. It's a layout that hasn't changed much over the last four hundred years.

The land around Diss was ideal for growing hemp. In Diss and the surrounding villages it was processed, spun and woven into a type of linen. In about 1450 this linen trade was gaining a foothold, and for the next 350 years Diss was a linen town. Although the linen trade declined in the early 1800s, farming prospered and the coming of the railway to Diss in 1849 enabled it to thrive once again.

In 2014 the Diss Heritage Partnership (Diss Town Council, Diss Corn Hall and Diss Museum) was successful in gaining funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the refurbishment of the Corn Hall, (an arts and heritage centre) and the surrounding area. The aim was to deliver economic regeneration whilst interpreting and protecting the buildings. Part of the HLF action plan was to carry out more in-depth investigations into the buildings of the Triangle.



Orange = pre1550, red = 1550-1780

A solid body of archival research, carried out by volunteers under the direction of Professor Alun Howkins produced an outline social and economic history of the market area from the late medieval period and set it within the wider context of the South Norfolk and Waveney Valley. Investigation into historic maps, the records of the local administration, the vestry, the manor, the local newspapers and historic photographs helped to broaden this account.

The building surveys began in the summer of 2015 and were carried out by a small group of volunteers led by myself and Dr Sarah Pearson. Internal access was granted, but detailed measured surveys proved difficult because some rooms of the businesses were full of stock. HLF money and VAG a grant enabled dendrochronological analysis (tree ring dating). Our

team and Susan and Michael Brown, worked together with Ian Tyers to identify buildings with suitable timbers for sampling. Unfortunately, as at Walsingham, the samples taken didn't correspond with the current oak database, so the dates of a building could only be surmised through stylistic dating. But what the investigation did show was a significant use of elm in buildings in Diss, perhaps because this was historically easily available in the Waveney valley. Two buildings 100 years apart showed the same growth stresses; this could be due to fluctuations in the water table, again indicating that the local source of timber was the Waveney valley.

Five key buildings highlight the development of the area - Tudor House 23 St Nicholas Street, 18 Market Place, 7 St Nicholas Street, 2-3 Market Place and The Corn Hall.



right:
The Tudor House, 23
St Nicholas Street -
possibly early 15C

above:
The arch-braced
tie beam inside

below:
the inserted roll-
moulded floor joists



Winter lecture synopsis



Diss Iron works - 1950s shopfront fronts a building of around 1600



Jess co-ordinated the buildings research for the Triangle project. She continues to volunteer for the project and now works as a freelance heritage practitioner.

Patterns are still recognizable from the open, triangular shaped market and its stalls in 1300s, through to the gradual emergence of permanent structures in the 1500s, encouraged by landlords keen to gather more rent, to the buildings that we see today. We were very lucky to work with UEA school of Computer Sciences, Virtual Past to create 3D computer models to illustrate this evolution. These also show the buildings that have been lost over time, such as the Guild Chapel of St Nicholas - demolished in the late 1500s - and the market place 'Pepperpot' which was destroyed by fire in 1878. The models provide the back-bone for people to find out more about the history of Diss on the interactive map in the Corn Hall and Heritage Triangle website. This is only a brief overview of the project and the history of some of the buildings. If you would like to find out more please visit www.heritagetriangle.co.uk. Or take heed of John Betjeman's words and go and discover Diss for yourselves!



1380



1637



1838

**UEA School of
Computer Science -
Virtual Past**

Members' contribution

Aylsham documentary update - William & Maggie Vaughan-Lewis

It was good to see so many members in our 'adopted' town of Aylsham for the AGM last summer, and William and I are very grateful to Roger Crouch for enabling access to the most intriguing buildings in the Market Place for recording, which will help with our documentary research. As the Newsletter is widely read, I'd like to address two points that arise from the last issue.

Dating of Holman House

Having seen the owner's deeds and carried out further research, we are sure the present house dates from the late 18th century with an 1820 addition. There is no evidence at all to back up Harbord's claim for 1760, for which he gives no reference; the house around this time was mortgaged, defaulted on and owned by a non-resident widow, so a new build would be extremely unlikely.

Edwin Rose in his report on the house states that both parts of the house have 'horizontal skintlings indicating a date after c 1770-80'. Although I gather from Roger that dating from skintlings is tricky, Rose's dating would fit in with the style of the building and the purchase of the house in 1786 by James Curties, a major trader in Aylsham. He owned several premises around the Market Place and may have lived in Repton House (directly opposite). There is a gap in the poor rates for Holman House between 1796 and 1801 which could indicate a major rebuild. Thomas Cook, an engineer, created the 1820 extension and alterations.

Barnwells status

A suggestion has been made that the Barnwells shop building may have been a civic building such as a market house because of the fine ogee-carved beams found upstairs. While research is continuing on the whole infill block, it is becoming clear that the origins of the block was a butchers' shambles with a loke and stalls running the length of it. These had evolved into shops and 'messuages' by the 17th century and Barnwell's owner, Christopher Sankey, a glover, would have been of sufficient status to upgrade the old structure well, perhaps to have a display room to show off his wares. He owned the property from 1622 to 1651.

There are no abutments or mentions of any civic building anywhere on the east of the market place, the only possibility being a former 'Woolcrosse' shop which was a little further down Red Lion Street on the same side. Apart from that, an old tollhouse (ruined by the 16th century) stood to the south of Holman House (roughly where the Co-op now stands) and a small thatched market cross also stood in the market. This had gone by the end of the 17th century, along with the stocks, tumbrel and pillory which are all mentioned in the 16th century court rolls. John Sapwell wrote in his history of the town, that the South Erpingham justices sat at the Black Boys from the late 17th century, only moving when the Corn Hall (Town Hall) was built in 1858. From all the evidence, most business was conducted in the many large inns that lined the Market Place and Red Lion Street.

Reflections on a career researching Vernacular Architecture in Norfolk by Adam Longcroft (7th December 2017)

notes by Ian Hinton

It is a shame that Adam's entertaining and instructive lecture was missed by many of the usual attendees as there were alternative attractions on the night elsewhere in the County.

Adam started with a brief resumé of the setting up of the NHBG and went through the Group's achievements. After this he was quickly back into his Continuing Education lecture mode outlining the many factors which influence the diverse local styles of vernacular architecture in Norfolk - soils, farming regimes, topography and social structure. He demonstrated the architectural differences across the county influenced by soil type (building materials), agricultural regime (building type) and manorial and social structure (affecting the number of people of middling rank who built many of the houses that we still see today).

He noted that prior to the advent of the many permanent timber-framed and brick-and-flint-built buildings that we study, there had been a raft of medieval building styles which were far less permanent because of their methods - earth-fast timber posts and clay-cobb buildings particularly - none of these buildings survive at all above ground, although many had been uncovered by archaeologists, even in the city.



Successive generations of clay-walled buildings discovered in Alms Lane, Norwich by archaeological excavation

Images on this page taken from Adam's Powerpoint

He then questioned why certain building types and styles that **have** survived, managed to exist for so long, given their often archaic nature - particularly the open-hall house with its central fireplace, which appeared in the eleventh or twelfth century and continued to be built until the middle of the sixteenth century. This was despite the fact that more modern styles, such as the chimney, had existed for a good part of this period - was it a lack of resources that prevented advances, or the tradition for those lower down the social scale to copy their social superiors?

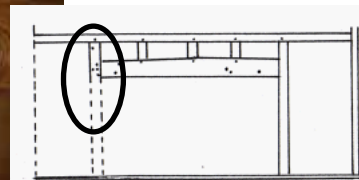
This led to the question of the overlapping periods of certain styles of building - such as the replacement of the open hall with timber chimney bays and their subsequent replacement by stacks built of brick. Living in a county with abundant clay and the obvious ability to make bricks, why did people in Tacolneston (and perhaps other places not yet uncovered) continue to build smoke bays and timber chimneys up until the 1640s, even in relatively large farmhouses, when they had gone out of use and fashion elsewhere almost a century earlier - was it tradition or lack of money?



*above:
Timber-framed chimney (now bricked in) at 44 Norwich Road, Tacolneston*



*left and below:
Timber-framed chimney at Riverside Farm, Fornsett St Mary - dendro-dated to 1645*



Adam then turned to the question of survival - why did some buildings survive and not others? The answer seems to be adaptability - if a house is large and tall enough to be able to be altered to meet changing needs, such as increased space and privacy, then it is more likely to survive rather than be redeveloped - a single-storey building is less adaptable than one which can house an upper floor easily, and fewer of these survive than similarly-sized one-and-a-half- or two-storey buildings.

Adaptability also covers the ability to keep up with fashion and progress; the cladding of buildings in brick and the replacement of thatch with tile and latterly slate has enabled buildings to be retained as they can meet the new fashion -for looking like new

buildings (which seems to have been a consistent requirement until recent times) - but also present a more sustainable structure for survivability in the case of fire - a dual advantage.

Despite often being considered on the fringe, in vernacular-architecture terms Norfolk has been at the cutting edge in the past. Two-storey, jettied houses were built in New Buckenham several decades before they became common elsewhere - Oak Cottage and Yellow Cottage were dendro-dated to 1473, much earlier than expected.

The study of vernacular buildings has changed considerably over the last few decades - the inclusion of contextual elements



Adaptability - two buildings of similar size and age in Hempnall.

left:

Poacher's Cottage - much as it was originally built around 1600

right:

Lundy Green Farm - also timber framed, but now brick-clad and pantiled, with raised eaves and a new internal Georgian staircase in place of the original chimney stack behind the front door

(photos: Ian Hinton)

Adam was the NHBG's founding Chairman, whose career took him away from UEA to Cambridge



Winter lecture synopsis

The furnished interior: caring for historic textiles (7th November 2017)

Maria Jordan

The phrase "the furnished interior" conjours up the idea of comfort, often achieved through the use of textiles as they offer insulation, colour and texture. For most of the population, these items are expected to wear out and eventually be discarded; however for a very small elite, interior decoration has an additional dimension; these furnishings, in particular tapestries, were designed to impress. Woven in wool, but often augmented with silk and metal threads, tapestries cover subjects ranging from classical myth to Biblical stories and from battles to commemorative triumphs. The subject chosen to make personal or public propaganda statements.

Textiles had an additional advantage - they were portable. With estates often many miles apart, households were constantly on the move and leaving these very important tapestries and textiles behind, exposed to damp, neglect and even thieves, was an unacceptable risk; so they were rolled up and taken to the next house. Given the expense and symbolic value of tapestries, concern for their care and protection was, arguably, as crucial at the time of immediate acquisition as it remains today.

Tapestries that survive are mostly of very high status, used in the central space of buildings such as the Great Hall, the Long Gallery and the Great Chamber. An excellent example can be found at Hardwick Hall; the only Long Gallery to retain its original tapestries and many of its original paintings. With the introduction of larger windows in buildings, curtains, blinds and shutters were needed both to protect these precious textiles from light, but also from dust and temperature fluctuations.

Tapestries continued to be valued as part of the interior decoration of houses but evolved in style and form to echo those of interior design. A fine Robert Adam interior provides an example at Osterley Park in the Tapestry Room, where the tapestry was woven to fit the room and is tight hung, like silk hangings, with Boucher's designed medallions, woven at the Gobelins in Paris.



above: The Long Gallery at Hardwick Hall - Story of Gideon tapestries of the 16C
©National Trust Images/Andreas von Einsedel

below: The tapestry room at Osterley Park - Gobelin tapestries from the 18C
©National Trust Images/Bill Batten



Winter lecture synopsis

Causes of damage

The care of these valuable furnishings was of paramount importance not only due to their cost but also to the display they made and continue to make. However, being organic materials, textiles begin to deteriorate from the moment they are made. Light is the biggest threat and being cumulative, it has always been important to regulate the quantity of light on textiles. Blinds were used from the earliest days in order to cut out the very harmful ultraviolet light; causing damage to the fibres and their dyes. Temperature and relative humidity are also harmful, especially large fluctuations, as textiles absorb and relinquish moisture relatively quickly and with each cycle, the fibres expand and contract causing damage, particularly to old and degraded fibres. Such good housekeeping regimes have to complement the regular cleaning of textiles to remove dust and dirt. This is important as high humidity can cause dust to become cemented to the surface of the textile as well as causing moulds to grow and allowing unstable or fugitive dyes to bleed.

Damage to textiles will also occur due to their use or misuse. As tapestries have to support their own weight, with age, the weave structure of the tapestry begins to show signs of strain, and handling from moving the tapestry may incur further damage. Over the centuries, such damage has been repaired by members of the household or for the royal palaces, by the Great Wardrobe, either by reweaving an area of loss and inserting a new section or by using patches of other tapestries to fill the area of loss/hole. In both cases, the repairs have saved the tapestry and allowed it to continue to be displayed.

Today we do neither of these; our work is to conserve what remains and this is done with stitching, reinstating some areas of design where we have



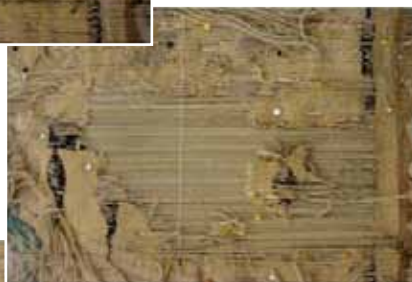
above: previous repair in the Hebrew script



left: a dyed patch behind the hole

right: the area re-warped

below: partially couched using a template from another tapestry in the set



below: the area conserved showing the Hebrew script after rewarping and couching



Images on this page
© National Trust Textile Conservation Studio.

documentary evidence (from other tapestry of the same design or from the original cartoon or from the object itself). The idea is to stabilise what remains. From a distance the work should not be visible but blend with the original, though close up, the conservation should be clearly identifiable and ultimately reversible. Decisions on how to treat a tapestry are taken by the team involved with the conservation project, namely the conservator, the curator and the client, which in the case of the National Trust is the property itself.

The Conservation Process

When a tapestry comes in for conservation at the National Trust's Textile Conservation Studio, it is photographed on the front and back and detailed documentation is carried out of its condition and any past repairs or patches. It is then vacuum cleaned and sent to be washed at a special facility using their aerosol suction method, developed in 1991, to clean tapestries.

They are laid out on foam to support them on top of the mesh layer of the large suction table, set inside a large enclosed wash chamber. The tapestries are sprayed from above, with a mist of soft water and conservation detergent while the suction from beneath draws wash liquid through the tapestry. Generally, the dirt in tapestries is very acidic and as the wash progresses, the pH should move towards neutral, i.e. pH7. Once washed, the tapestry is rinsed, firstly with soft water and finally with de-ionised water. It is then left in the wash chamber to dry at 25-30 C, with the suction on until it is dry. It is always wonderful to see



a tapestry just after its wet clean. In terms of the aesthetic impact, the image is better defined with the nuances of colour and the outlines are clearer.

before and after wet cleaning



On returning to the Studio, the tapestry is prepared for support stitching on a loom. The tapestry is given a second skin with the introduction of a linen backing through which all stitching is worked. This gives the tapestry more strength, allowing it to carry its own weight when on display. The stitching can be worked in a mixture of yarns; we use wool dyed in-house, stranded cotton and polyester thread to provide strength. The stitching is worked to give overall support as well as addressing particular areas of weakness of broken warps and lost weft. Once completed, the tapestry is lined with a tightly woven cotton cambric to give it additional protection from dust and dirt. Most tapestries are hung using Velcro, as this gives the tapestry even support across its entire width as well as being easy to install and remove. The conservation of the largest tapestry in the National Trust's Collection (9x6m) took two and a half years to complete, a total of 5,995 conservator hours, including a full report on the conservation work carried out.

This is just a glimpse of what it takes to care for these extraordinary textiles and I hope the next time you visit an historic house, you will look at the textiles in a different light.

Maria Jordan leads the National Trust Textile Conservation Studio - details can be found at:

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-textile-conservation-studio

Winter lecture synopsis

The Fairbanks' House, Dedham, MASS

Members' night - (17th January 2018)

Susan & Michael Brown

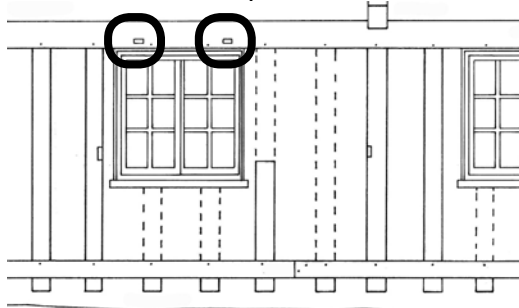


The Fairbanks' House from the north-east and south-east - images from www.fairbankshouse.org

We originally received a request from Stephen Soper, a Massachusetts resident, as to whether a seventeenth-century relative of his, John Soper from New Buckenham, could have been the carpenter of this house. It is the earliest dendrochronologically-dated house in the USA, at 1636.

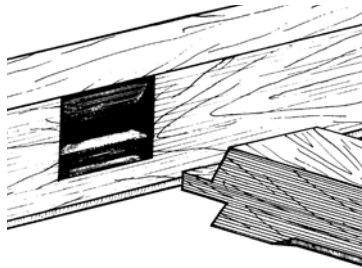
Having investigated the carpentry and other aspects of the building, based on the book about the house by Abbot Lowell Cummings, we concluded that it was possible that John Soper had been involved, as there were many similarities with the techniques used in the houses of the villages and countryside of South Norfolk surrounding New Buckenham.

Since then, further evidence of similarities has come to light from other sources, as well as the intriguing possibility that this house may have had oriel windows - a very rare occurrence in the USA. We interpreted empty holes above the windows, such as those in Friday Cottage, Walsingham, as the possible mountings for oriel windows (projecting in front of the building face), in the absence of mortises for window mullions in the soffit of the wallplate.



empty mortises in the face of the wallplate at Friday Cottage for earlier oriel windows (extract from the drawing by Colin King)

Other similarities included the joints between the principal joists which take the form of a diminished-haunch centre tenon with undersquinted soffit-spur, shown below, with an identical example from Hempnall.

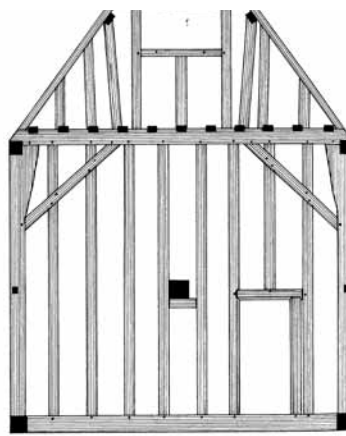


Fairbanks House



Grange Farm, Hempnall

Another similarity is the supporting of a principal joist on a short support jointed into two studs, as below. The drawing of the frame of Fairbanks House also highlights the placing of a doorframe against a stud, rather than placing the studs a doors-width apart. This was also seen in Manor Farm Pulham



Hempnall photos: Ian Hinton



*above: Principal joist support at Lundy Green Farm, Hempnall, notched, tenoned and pegged
left: support of the axial joist also on the frame, rather than jointed into a post, at Fairbanks House*

These additional similarities between the techniques and practises found in the buildings of South Norfolk and those used in The Fairbanks' House in Dedham can only re-inforce the possibility that New Buckenham carpenter John Soper was involved in the building of this house in the New World almost 400 years ago.

How I caught Cotmania

Members' night - (17th January 2018)

Karen Mackie

Leeds Art Gallery has just set up a website called "**Cotmania.org**" on Norwich Artist, John Sell Cotman. Their collection is particularly interesting because it comprises the bequest of Sydney Decimus Kitson, who wrote *The Life of John Sell Cotman* (1937). It includes not just artworks but digital copies and transcripts of Kitson's research notes. Karen Mackie, who moved to Yorkshire last year, came back for members evening to explain what you might find on the site.

The comments in the letter below, about his etching ability, written to Dawson Turner in 1812, show that Cotman was always looking to improve his skills. He had been engraving for ten years by this time.

The drawing of Armingham Hall porch (right) is the image he was referring to as taking a week to draw.

The letter can be found at <https://cotmania.org/archives/sdk/1/3/1/2/52>



What can you find on Cotmania.org?

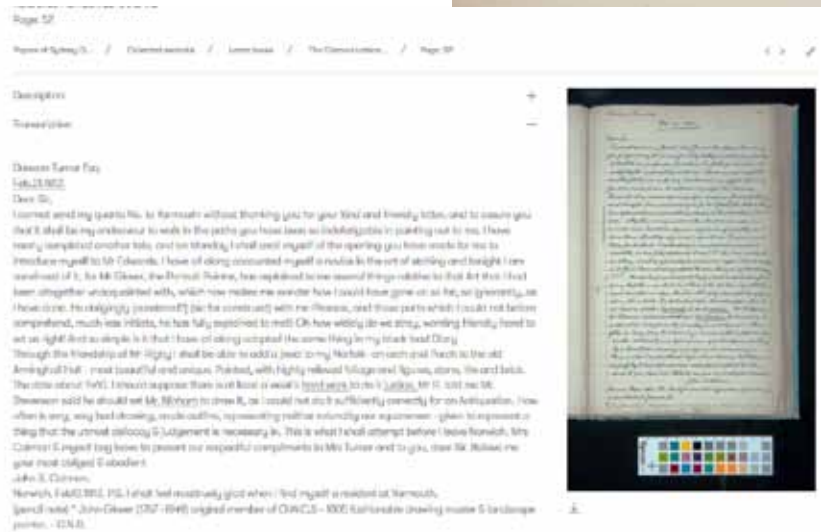
The website is part of a four-year project to make the Cotman collection at Leeds better known. The site contains Kitson's original research notes and the latest research by art historian, Professor David Hill, who has previously published work on both Cotman and Turner. It gives access to high quality images showing over 700 sketches and many paintings. Some were recently displayed in an exhibition exploring the popularity of Cotman in the inter war years of the early twentieth century when Kitson was collecting.

Today John Sell Cotman (1782-1842) is recognised as one of the best watercolourists of all time. The Guardian placed his painting of Greta Bridge eighth in a list of the top ten watercolours in 2011. A contemporary of Turner and Girtin, it was not until the 1920s that his skill was fully recognised. In his lifetime, his paintings probably appeared 'unfinished' and he earned his living primarily as a drawing tutor.

Where does the name Cotmania originate?

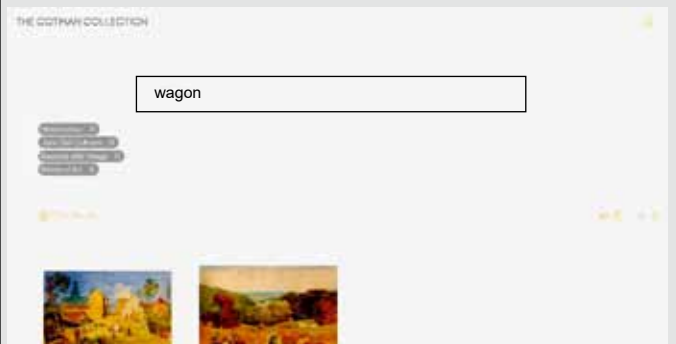
The simple answer is, Harriet Cholmeley first coined the phrase in a poem to 'Cotty' after he stayed with her family in Yorkshire in 1803. Kitson later used the name on the twelve journals, in which he wrote his research notes for the book on Cotman, between 1927 and 1937. It is after these that the website is named. The website has digitised copies of all the journals with typed transcriptions that remove the need to decipher his hand writing. His notes reveal how he approached his investigation of the paintings and life of Cotman. Besides his handwritten notes, Kitson transcribed a considerable number of Cotman's letters, the originals are at the British Museum as part of the Dawson Turner collection. The typed versions online make Cotman's letters a much more accessible resource, and provide a fascinating insight into Cotman's personality.

The project has given me an insight into the world Cotman lived in. For example, the engravings he produced were for the antiquarian market. His drawing skills were used to teach others - both ladies, who privately sought to learn an accomplishment, and students at Kings College in London, where he was the first drawing tutor. Among his pupils was Rosetti. Cotman's letters reveal his passions, hobbies and despair. They show his enthusiasm for sailing, excitement at discovering new buildings and frustration with his fate in the "miserable profession" of a drawing tutor. The best way however to learn more about Cotman is to head to www.cotmania.org where you can take a look for yourself.



How can you search on Cotmania.org?

The site is fully searchable. You can type any word into the box. Besides the any word box, it is possible to select from a list of locations or a list of people to bring up related information.



You can see the people and place symbols on the right. Here I typed wagon into the search. You can narrow this down to filter the results using the drop-down option. I brought up an image of *Caen* and *The Harvest Field* by selecting *watercolours* and *John Sell Cotman*. Each painting has extensive notes reflecting the research by David Hill. It also gives related entries where Kitson mentions the painting in his research journals.

Karen was an NHBG committee member for several years before moving with her family to Yorkshire

Three Thorpe St Andrew churches

Members' night - (17th January 2018)

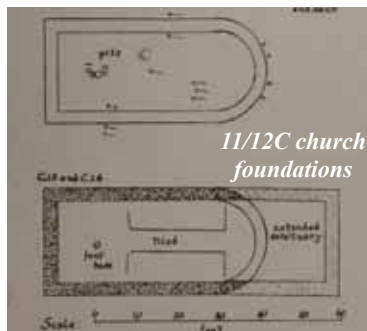
Ian Hinton

The two church towers of Thorpe St Andrew are easily visible to passers-by on Yarmouth Road, one from the "sixteenth century" and a larger one from 1866/72 built behind it, to cater for the fast-growing population. The later church was built in 1866 by Jekyll and the tower completed in 1872, when the old church was partly demolished and left as a romantic ruin.

In 1951, the foundations of an eleventh- or twelfth-century church were discovered under the modern allotments, then on the sheep runs at the edge of what had been Mousehold Heath (often referred to as St Catherin's Chapel). This has been explained in the past as the original location of Thorpe St Andrew and that this church was literally moved and rebuilt at its current riverside site in the sixteenth century.

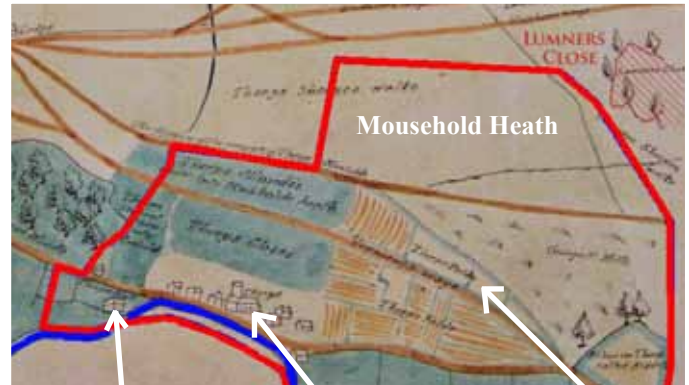
There are several indicators that this may not be the case:-

- This manor was very important from around 1100 when it was granted to the Bishop of Norwich, whose manor house was located on the river, later replaced by Thorpe Hall built by the Bacons. Surely the population that worked on the extensive manorial lands of the Bishop would have lived close to the Manor House and its fields.
- The river must always have been important as a method of transport and for industry. Settlement must have fringed the river from the earliest times, rather than have been relocated here in the sixteenth century.
- The map of Thorpe and Mousehold of 1589 shows nothing at all where the 11C church was located, except the open fields, which had been there for centuries. Something of the old site would have shown only a few years after "the move". An old path supposedly named "church way" has been used to justify this, although the blurred script can also be read "common way" i.e. the route to Mousehold Heath. A sizeable settlement, and church, is shown on the river's edge at this time.
- The "sixteenth-century" church has been dated by the Tudor bricks that define the rere arches of the windows, but the windows appear to be later than the walls, as there are brick-filled put-log holes for scaffolding right next to the current windows, indicating that they were later, larger, replacements - a common occurrence everywhere as pious donations were used to update and enlarge windows.
- The "16C" tower is supposed to be of one build, again dated by its Tudor brick elements. But there is evidence of a blocked tower arch in the west wall - indicating an earlier tower that was demolished, and the original two-storey porch (defined by stone quoins) extended upwards



11/12C church foundations

Thorpe and Mousehold - 1589



Bishop of Norwich's manor house

Riverside Thorpe St Andrew village and church

location of 11/12C church foundations

(defined by brick quoins) to replace it (perhaps at the same time as the windows were enlarged). This evidence in the west wall has been interpreted in the past as a filled-in doorway, but it is the same width as, and continues up into, the "west window" - and is far more indicative of a tower arch.

- It is not unusual for Norfolk parishes to have, or have had, two churches, so that both the eleventh-century church and the one on the river could well have existed at the same time, rather than the later being built using the materials of the earlier, as has been suggested.
- The presence of The Buck Inn in the churchyard, as close as 2m from the church with no boundary between, lends weight to the idea that The Buck may originally have been the Church House - the medieval church replacement building for the fund-raising church ales previously held in the nave. Many of these buildings, especially in East Anglia and the west country, became public houses after The Reformation. If this is the case it would mean that the church was located here in the 1400s for the replacement building, which became The Buck, to have been needed.

photos - Ian Hinton



put-log holes too close to the window for it to have been the original one



tower extension with brick quoins, built above a two-storey porch with stone quoins

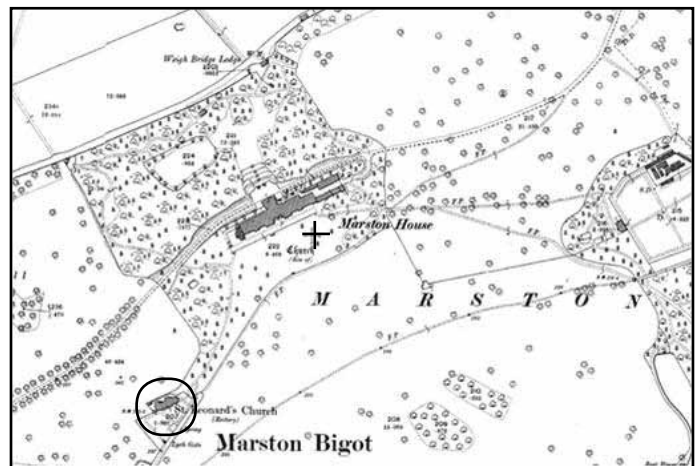
The Big House and the Church (8th February 2018)

Sarah Pearson

The relationship between the great houses of England and their respective churches is one which has existed for centuries and is built on Saxon foundations. Despite the fact that the majority of churches predate the construction of a neighbouring country estate, the concept of those in authority supporting the provision of a place of worship is an historic one. The feudal systems of the middle ages were formalised through land reform and the enclosure acts of the eighteenth century creating vast country estates with Big House, church and neighbouring village. Historically it has been the duty and responsibility of the 'big house' to provide and maintain the local parish church and as a result there is an enduring architectural and artistic link between the two structures. This link may be demonstrated through the location of the structures, their architectural development and their internal decoration.

The location of many country houses and their respective churches was recorded in the 1715 publication *Vitruvius Britannicus*, or, The British architect : containing "the plans, elevations, and sections of the regular buildings, both publick and private, in Great Britain, with variety of new designs ...", compiled by the pioneering Scottish architect and architectural writer Colen Campbell. Campbell's images recorded the new mansions being created by a generation of Grand Tourists who, having seen the architecture of the continent, returned to England driven by the desire to replace their outdated Tudor buildings in the fashionable neo-Palladian style. Campbell's engravings were intended to showcase these new houses but in many cases they also document the location of the associated church at the time of publication. In the case of Marston Hall in Somerset, shown on the right, the pre-existing church of St Leonards is recorded close to the new hall on the garden front. This position was evidently deemed unsuitable by the hall's owner Edmund Boyle, 7th Earl of Cork, who sought an Act of Parliament to demolish this structure and create a new parish church for the village some 220 yards south west of its original site. In this instance the presence of the first church, depicted by Campbell, is now signalled only by the existence of mature yew trees - frequently concentrated in churchyards - in the grounds of the house.

In contrast to this scenario is the case of Ravenfield Hall near Doncaster. The house and its adjacent church was recorded by Campbell shortly before the church was updated in the neo-gothic style by the resident Westby family. The subsequent decline in the fortunes of the Hall resulted in its destruction in the early twentieth century. In this instance the church now stands as the only reminder of the former presence of the Hall. The loss of many of England's country houses in the first decades of the twentieth century means that the example of Ravenfield Hall is not an isolated one. Another is Normanton House in Rutland, a sweeping neo-classical mansion, constructed by Henry Joynes for Sir Gilbert Heathcote, 3rd Baronet in 1735. The house was demolished in 1925 but the family's private church of St Matthew remained in the parkland. The creation of the reservoir of Rutland Water in 1976 resulted in the church being partially buried and protected by an artificial promontory at the edge of the reservoir. In this instance the entire landscape has changed and only the stable block and the church remain from the Heathcote estate.



Marston Hall, Somerset:

above:

The estate in around 1900 showing the site of the original church in front of the house (the cross).

below:

The new church, circled above, built in 1789 away from the house



St Matthew's, Normanton - before and after the creation of Rutland Water



Winter lecture synopsis

Within parish churches the memorials, hatchments and wall tombs all record the presence and influence of the resident families of the neighbouring country house. In the case of the church of St Martin's, Houghton the entire church stands as a memorial to the Walpole family, residents of Houghton Hall constructed in 1734. The entire tower of the church was rebuilt by Sir Robert Walpole in about 1730 as a memorial to his grandfather Sir Jeffery Burwell. The close link between the family and the church may well have protected St Martin's from destruction when the original village of Houghton, recorded by Colen Campbell adjoining the new Hall, was cleared to create parkland and kitchen gardens. By comparison, the medieval church of St Patricks in Elveden in Suffolk was considered to be too small for Elveden Hall following its purchase by the Earls of Iveagh and so the nave of St Patricks became an aisle of a greatly enlarged church dedicated to St Andrew and St Patrick in 1906.



The mixture of lordly memorials and Tractarian texts at Helmingham, Suffolk



Above:

The original St Patrick's church at Elveden on the left and the addition of the much larger nave on the right, creating St Andrew & St Patrick

Below:

The interior of the new nave

All images taken from Sarah's Powerpoint



Architectural intervention and memorialisation within churches of the type found at Houghton is not unusual. In some cases the entire church reflects the presence and influence of the local family. Such is the case at St Mary's church in Helmingham where wall monuments to the Tollemache family fill the church interior whilst painted religious texts from the mid-nineteenth century underline the Tractarian leanings of the 1st Lord Tollemache.

An alternative choice was to construct a family chapel to house such memorials and this was the case at Stow Bardolph where the Hare family, residents of Stow Bardolph Hall, constructed the Hare chapel on the southern side of Holy Trinity church. This chapel contains many fine carved wall monuments and wall tombs to the Hare family. The most unusual memorial however is that of Sarah Hare who died in 1744 and left instructions that her effigy should be cast in wax. A wooden cupboard in the south



Above:

The Hare family memorials and hatchments at Stow Bardolph in Norfolk

Right:

The unique wax memorial of Sarah Hare in the family chapel



west corner of the chapel contains her life-size wax effigy, considered to be one of the finest examples of its type in the country.

The examples discussed are a small illustration of the many ways in which the enduring relationship between the church and the Big House can assist the historian and the architectural historian. Whether it is providing insight into lost landscapes and demolished structures, or recording and reflecting the whims of the local aristocracy the relationship between house and hall is enduring and worthy of further study.

Sarah teaches The History of Building Design in Cambridge and is currently researching the Riddlesworth Estate in Norfolk

Curvilinear Gables (16th March 2018)

Gordon Taylor

As a general theme, I suggest that the opinion that Dutch and Flemish gables, so called, is false, as they are neither Dutch nor Flemish or even, as sometimes attributed, Huguenot.

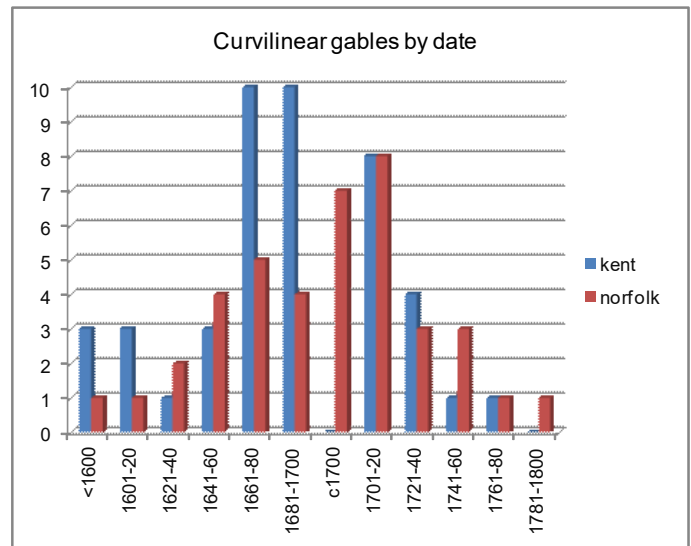
In the beginning of my researches, the date was the prime consideration as I was trying to determine the date of a friend's house that only incidentally had curvilinear gables. As East Kent had approaching 170 so-called Dutch gables, comparisons were readily available. Gradually, the differing shapes of the gables became an interest as equally important as the date. The fact that different brick bonds were apparent in the houses was also noted.

Searching for information on curvilinear gables revealed only limited sources, indeed one author stated that a study was needed. The challenge was accepted and eleven years after the first enquiries, sufficient knowledge has been accumulated to start spreading the knowledge gained – although research is ongoing.

It became apparent that focus of subject had to be made as the style of curvilinear gables was revived from c.1840 to c.1910 (the Victorian Revival), and examples varied from architect designed grand houses down to two room cottages; not to mention stepped gables. In East Kent there are few, if any, grand houses due to gavelkind (*partible inheritance - the practice of dividing an inheritance between male heirs rather than passing the estate to the eldest son*), so I concentrated on the vernacular examples; even so, they varied greatly in size. Poulton House, a moated Tudor timber-framed house, had large brick extensions in the early eighteenth century on both sides, with an impressive three-storey porch, contrasted with Pepper Alley, a single-storey, originally thatched, cottage that is an amalgamation of three tiny cottages, and possibly of the sixteenth century.

Eventually, having visited all 180 in Kent, I was able to classify pediments and the curves below them and able to date 25% of them, and checked to see if there were recognisable pattern changes over the period from the late sixteenth century to the 1740's when the fashion for curves dies out in Kent (later in Norfolk). Poulton House and other Tudor houses with curvilinear gabled brick extensions led to my belief that fashion was behind the style. Having noted the grand houses as a side-line, it was seen that the fashion started in the biggest houses in the sixteenth

century and travelled down the social scale¹. The Queen Anne style came into fashion at the start of the eighteenth century, illustrated by St Peters Farm re-fronted in 1710, the porch being dated 1682. The owner believes the house is 30 years older than the porch and incidentally had flint lower down at the rear as seen elsewhere.



Analysis of dates between Kent and Norfolk

Analysis of pediments and gables showed that the architectural guru Pevsner, so hot with churches, was unable to visit enough gables to be accurate with dates or possibly styles. He stated - "to be Dutch a gable had to have a triangular pediment" which may be so in the grand house but not in the vernacular. The latter have very few triangular pediments, the segmental and semi-circular being by far the most common, but do not fit Pevsner's 'shaped' alternative label i.e. the clover leaf. His dates are also partly out but I believe he was only viewing the larger house. I was able to influence the present author of the update of Pevsner to include other examples of curvilinear gables in the latest edition for East Kent.



Big and Small:

Poulton House (above) with large added wings in Flemish bond
Single-storey Pepper Alley (right) built in an irregular bond above
what appears to be a rare bond called Minster bond,
but both have segmental pediments!



Winter lecture synopsis

As to the source of the curvilinear gable fashion in England – it is not from Netherlanders. The preponderance in Eastern England may be from the cross flow of sailors and English exiles to the Netherlands (Charles II, his retinue and followers being only one of many) coming back with a taste for gardens, art and architecture as has been noted elsewhere,² but a more compelling source is Italy, via Bavaria to the Baltic coast then eastwards *via* traders on the old Hanseatic trade routes. This is my deduction influenced by the European examples found on the internet, Hitchcock's "Netherlandish Scrolled Gables"³ and elsewhere.

Dutch could be a corruption of *Deutsch* as the Pennsylvanian Dutch were of German origin. Mistakes in written works and county records, led me to verify facts where I could. For example, one book states the Flemings were responsible for all the gables, the brick bond and so on. But Flemish bond is known as *Polnisher verband* (i.e. Polish bond) in Germany – another indicator of the eastward route of the fashion.

Studying all these, mostly brick, buildings prompted an analysis of the bonds used. With admittedly small numbers of dated properties, from those in Kent it appears that English bond is earlier than the popular Flemish bond; again, one fashion ousting another. Before the arrival of English bond (from France⁴) there was no discernible bond. Other bonds were occasionally seen.

It is generally acknowledged that bricks were in use in Norfolk earlier than in Kent. I contacted friends in archaeology to determine the arrival of brick in Kent. Excavation of a building floor, a survivor of a documented French raid on Stonar (across from Sandwich) in 1385, revealed bricks (from estuary mud?) that from associated evidence could be as early as 1350 or shortly after.⁵



One of my personal favourites, in the village of Worth in Kent. Helpfully the panels contain initials and the date - 1675



Perhaps the earliest curvilinear gable in Norfolk - at 54, Bracondale - dated 1578, with both round and ogee gables, in English bond. Wall anchors show 1578, although reputedly built for Anne Kempe in 1620, and the rainwater hoppers show 1656 with the initials on one of R over AE and on the other R over ME - presumably a later addition by a new owner.

1. "Fashion is perhaps the second most important determinant of house plans. For those at the highest levels of society the choice of a plan seems increasingly to have been for reasons of fashion rather than function; for those at lower levels the desire to imitate their social superiors was evidently very strong..." Houses by R.W. Brunskill 1982, Collins. P. 198-201.
2. Simon Schama – The Embarrassment of Riches 1987. Going Dutch by Lisa Jardine, 2008, Harper Press.
3. Netherlandish Scrolled Gables of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries by Henry-Russell Hitchcock published by New York University Press, New York, 1978.
4. A History of English Brickwork by Nathaniel Lloyd, H Greville Montgomery, 1925.
5. In correspondence with Nigel Grant.

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Gordon is a retired Estate Agent, and past Chair of the Isle of Thanet Archaeological Society. He has published a book "Dutch & Flemish Style Houses of Thanet" as well as contributing to Kent's Archaeology Society Journal (*Archaeologia Cantianna*) and to the Pevsner Volume on East Kent

Courses

Centre for Parish Church Studies NHCT - Day Schools - summer 2018

All day-schools will be held at St Martin-at-Palace, Norwich, and cost £30.00, including coffee/tea and study materials, but exclusive of lunch.

To book for any of them, please visit the website www.nhct-norwich.org, where online booking is available or telephone 01603-611530

14 April: The visual setting of late medieval worship: Dr Allan Barton

19 May: 'Decente and Conveniente': the English parish church interior c1550-c1850: Dr Nick Groves

23 June: two linked half-days -

Morning: Introducing the Saints: A-Z: Dr John Beal

Afternoon: Shrines, pilgrims and miracles in medieval England: Dr John Beal

15 September: Medieval stained glass: style, design, and conservation: Dr Allan Barton.

Research progress for forthcoming NHBG Journals

Members' night - (17th January 2018)

Ian Hinton & Di Barr

The NHBG has produced six Journals so far in its 17-year existence. Volumes 2 and 4 in 2005 and 2009, on the buildings of New Buckenham and Tacolneston received prizes and Volumes 5 and 6 in 2013 and 2016 on the Schools of Norfolk and the buildings of Walsingham have been well reviewed. Studies for the next three NHBG Journals are underway, each at a different stage.

Boulton & Paul

The work on the buildings of Boulton & Paul is just commencing. The project currently is without a project leader, but there is plenty of documentary work to start with, under the capable guidance of the Documentary Co-ordinator, Diane Barr.

Documentary

A team is currently sorting through the extensive archive in the Norfolk Record Office, where there are 96 boxes of records. They take the form of hundreds of catalogues and booklets of B&P products, along with production and assembly specifications, testimonials, order books and photographs. Much of this is being sorted for the first time. Part of the hoped-for output will be a list of B&P buildings in Norfolk and a better understanding of their full range.

It is interesting to see the change in emphasis of B&P products as time progressed - the earlier catalogues concentrate on large landowners and their estates, with buildings for the grand house and its garden, buildings for the running of the estate and buildings for their staff, as well as portable buildings for lease-holders. In the 1920s and 30s the emphasis shifted towards small houses for general use and a greater emphasis on timber rather than iron.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork in a project where the target is unknown is two-fold - identifying existing buildings on the ground as well as identifying buildings from order books and testimonials and seeing if they still exist on the ground. Consequently, it has been decided to delay the start of full fieldwork until we have a better idea of where many of the buildings from orders and testimonials are. It would be counterproductive to send surveyors to remote parts to look at a building, only to ask them to go there again when further buildings had been identified.

Contact has so far been made with a few Local History Groups in the county with a view to asking for their help to identify buildings still standing.

Volunteering

The searchers in the Record Office would welcome additional assistance - contact Diane Barr (contact details on page 2).

If anyone has information about standing buildings in their area or is interested in searching for, and identifying, buildings as the weather improves during the Spring and Summer, please contact Diane Barr or myself.

Publication

It is hoped to publish the results as a Journal in 2021



Above: 5 Boulton Road, Thorpe St Andrew
Given the name of the road, was this group of B&P bungalows a series of show houses - perhaps the Record Office will reveal this?

Below: Bungalow B64 from the 1928 catalogue - the same layout as above but without the dormer over the window - all available for £490 erected by B&P men on your foundations or £600 including foundations and chimney - internal fittings at £40 extra!



Above: B151 - an example of a fashionable "moderne-style" bungalow from the 1935 catalogue.

A two-bedroom bungalow available for self assembly at £195.
"Designed with a flat roof with easy access for maximum benefit from the fresh air"

As a result of the web-site appeal, we have been informed that one of these buildings is being used as a control tower on a small airfield.

Other contacts have alerted us to large and small buildings elsewhere, including a house for sale at £1.75M and a National Trust garage.

The buildings of Hempnall

The initial surveys for this study started in 2012, but the project was put on hold because the production of the Walsingham Journal intervened, in addition to the fact that it was felt at the time that insufficient details of interest had been uncovered in the initial surveys.

Documentary

NHBG member, and from a family of long-term residents of Hempnall, Mo Cubitt, wrote and published a book on the history of Hempnall, with all its attendant research, in 2008. This research, including unpublished details, will help to place the buildings of the town in context.

Fieldwork

For the first stage of the field work – the initial visits and brief reports - owners were contacted through local contacts and the houses of all the owners who were interested in the project were visited. This was completed in 2013, although we are now trying to gain access to 3 or 4 more houses, where owners have changed in the meantime.

The second stage - a detailed measurement and analysis of a subset of the houses, and drawing up of the results - is

underway. Four have been completed so far and the remainder should be completed during 2018. So far, this has highlighted developments in the buildings and other features which could not have been identified without the detailed investigations.

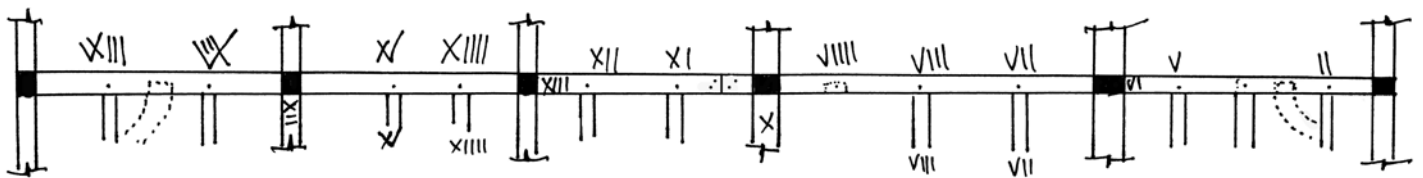
Publication

It is hoped to publish the results as a Journal in 2019 or 2020



above: Home Farm, Hempnall

below: The full series of carpenter's marks running the length of the house on the western wallplate from 1-18 (I-XVIII)



The church aisles of Norfolk. The low side windows of Norfolk

Documentary

Completed

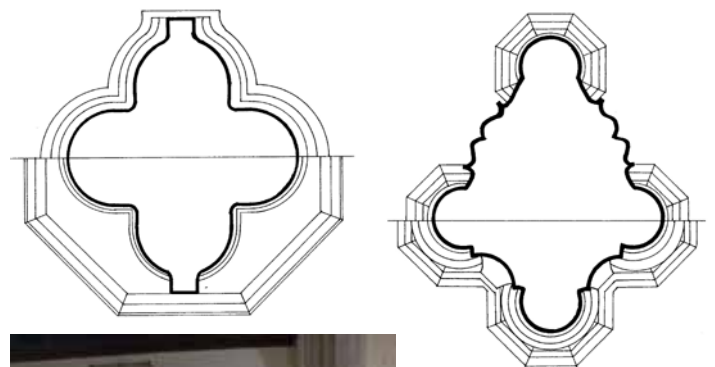
Fieldwork

Low side windows fieldwork is complete - but it was only ever really a descriptive exercise, completing the interim survey published in Journal 3. Ecclesiologists have been trying to explain their existence for over 150 years, without any success - nothing we found could add to the debate.

Fieldwork for the study of the church aisles and the stone that was used is almost complete. The typology throughout the county has been established - as usual Norfolk is different from elsewhere - with unique types!

Investigations of the type of stone used has been halted due to the difficulties involved in detailed identification. It had been hoped to link the type of stone used (and its cost) to particular patrons (where the patron's resources and contacts could have resulted in the use of better stone) and the location of the church (closer, or further from, the sea or large river), resulting in transportation issues with its attendant costs.

Writing up of the results of the surveys has stalled due to ill health and the pressures of paid employment. Any publication date is likely to be dependent on both of these factors.



above:

two of the aisle pier sections that are unique to Norfolk

left:

The low side window in the chancel at Banham.
Why have a small, often openable, window right next to a larger one?

Was it for ventilation or for part of the service - the broadcasting of the sound of the sanctus bell?

Or was one of the other twenty-odd reasons that the Victorians put forward?



Heritage Open Day visit - Undercroft at 23 Castle Meadow

Ian Hinton

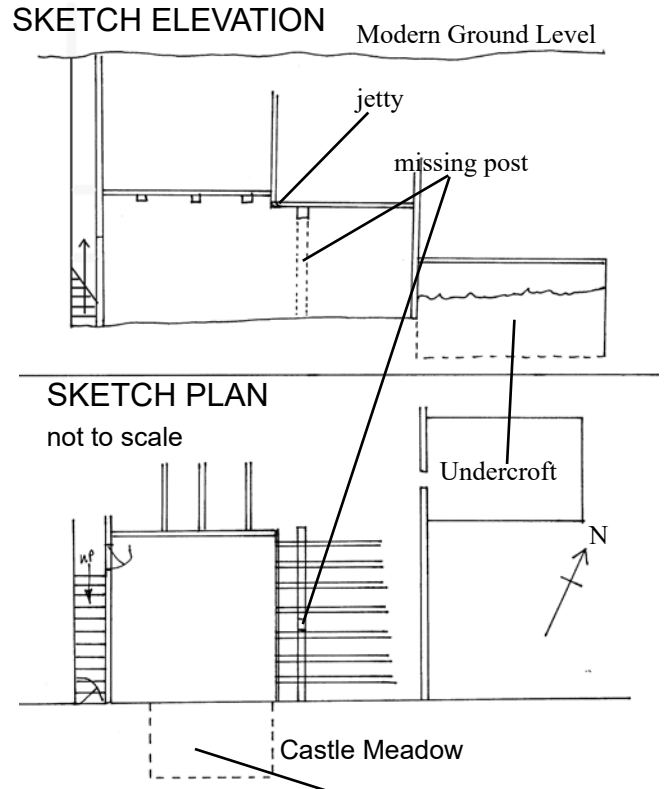
As part of Heritage Open Days in September, Maggy and I visited The Missing Kind shop and Cafe at 21-3 Castle Meadow to have a look at the remains of the medieval undercroft. The occupiers had been led to believe that the undercroft was a secret tunnel that led to the Castle.

Descending a staircase from the shop and peering through a rough hole cut through the western end flint wall into the undercroft revealed the classic three-centred arch profile of the brick roof. It appeared to be of similar dimensions to that discussed in *Newsletter 34* beneath Holman House in Aylsham, but was three-quarters full of rubble. The roof is approximately 3 metres (10feet) below the current ground level.

What was more of a surprise was to come face to face with a substantial jetty almost as deep underground (see photo), with a sizable jetty plate and the classic rounded ends of the flat-laid joists overhanging the plate. A plain chamfer runs along both lower corners of the plate terminating in simple shield stops respecting the position of a large post (now removed), although there was no mortice present. Such a jetty must have been built to be seen, but it runs at rightangles to the current street frontage and is several feet below it. Other substantial floor timbers in an adjacent room at rightangles to the jetty had lamb's-tongue stops with nicks, pointing to a (later) sixteenth-century date for them.

Between No 23 and the adjacent No 25 is a straight flight of about 20 steps rising from the floor level near the jetty up to an external doorway at current street level.

Given the building's position facing, and close to, the Castle Mound, these buildings were originally built in the Castle ditch, perhaps around a small courtyard or in an alley accessing one of the yards down to the marketplace, so the 14/15th C undercroft was originally closer to street level as was the 15/16th C jetty. The shop that this jetty was part of has been superseded as the ground level has been raised, completely hiding, but preserving, the earlier features.



Victorian cellar beneath street

far left: The jetty, looking east

near left: The undercroft seen through the access hole

Photos and sketches: Ian Hinton



NHBG Research

A Digest of Buildings Visited Since August 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.

Fen Farmhouse, Carleton Rode

The house is timber-framed and thatched and runs parallel to the road facing north. The 1½-storey eastern half of the facade is of two bays with two gabled dormers and a central axial stack. The two-storey western half of the facade is also of two bays with an off-centre axial stack. There is a later single storey extension to the west and a flat-roofed single storey extension to the rear of the kitchen.

Inside, many of the timbers at the eastern end appear to be re-used, but the girt in the north wall has a shutter groove. In the two-storey half are the remains of a six-light window with ovolo mullions in the north wall; two mullions survive although the windows are now blocked. The west wall has been removed, the room extending into a single storey addition.

The two-storey-end roof has two tiers of in-line purlins, arched wind-braces and clasped collars with chiselled carpenter's marks. The clasped collars alternate with



bird's-mouthed collars which are separately numbered with chiselled carpenter's marks. The eastern roof has some re-used timbers and two tiers of in-line purlins to the south, staggered to the north.

Discussion

The two-storey range with its close-studding is of high status and seems to date from the first half of the 17th century. The ovolo mouldings, face-halved scarf joint, jowled storey-posts, in-line purlins and clasped collars are all features which support this date. Comparison can be made with the cross-wing at Eagle Farmhouse, Bunwell which has a similar chamfer stop and was dated by dendrochronology to 1598. The eastern half of the building is more problematic as many of the timbers seem to be re-used and are nailed rather than jointed. However, the studs are pegged to the wall-plate and it could be as early as the 17th century.

Lynne Hodge and Susan&Michael Brown

Needham Cottage, Needham

Needham Cottage has two storeys and three cells, that to the west being a modern addition which continues the original roof line. The windows are modern leaded casements but on the first floor above the entrance door is a 3 light mullioned window with ovolo mouldings. There is an axial stack and a modern gable-end stack to the western extension.



The entrance door opens onto a lobby beside the stack with a staircase rising to the upper floor. The living room to the east

(the parlour) has a fireplace with large moulded brick arch over which is a relieving timber. The revealed bricks are narrow and laid in English bond. The storey post has an integral bracket supporting the transverse axial joist which has shield chamfer stops. The common joists are flat-laid. Some of the wattle and daub has been removed in the rear wall and carpenter's marks have been revealed on the inner face. In the centre of the gable wall is a glazed window with original ovolo moulded mullions. The rear wall has a framed window opening with the sill hacked off to what was the exterior elevation - this is probably the remains of an oriel window.

To the west of the chimney, the transverse principal joist and flat laid common joists have shield chamfer stops. This room was probably the original kitchen with peg-holes for a jack in the mantel beam. The mantel beam is an unusual 'pedimented' shape and has some taper burns. There are diamond mullion windows in both the front and rear walls, the mullions to the rear having carpenter's assembly marks I/II/III.

The parlour chamber has a fireplace with a brick arch, whereas the western chamber was originally unheated. The staircase beside the chimney rises to the attics. It appears that it originally only gave access to the western room, the stair to the room above the parlour chamber being added later. This would reinforce the suggestion that the parlour chamber was originally open to the roof, only later being ceiled. Some of the roof timbers are smoke-blackened, possibly after a thatch fire.

Discussion

This is a lobby-entrance house of two cells although the partition in the roof indicates that there was a third, service, bay to the west. The features such as ovolo-moulded mullions, flat-laid joists, the English-bond brickwork of the fireplace, as well as the lobby-entrance plan indicate a date of the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The extension to the rear is also timber-framed but the primary bracing and timbers of slight scantling would date this part of the building to the 18thC.

Lynne Hodge and Susan&Michael Brown

Member's Contribution

Vernacular survival: the vernacular architecture of the long eighteenth century

A report of the VAG Winter Conference by Lynne Hodge

The concept of the long 18th Century was intriguing and spurred me into booking for the VAG Winter Conference which was held in Leicester this January. British historians have used the idea to cover a more natural historical period than the simple use of the standard calendar definition. They expand the century to include larger British historical movements from the Glorious Revolution of 1688 to the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. This period covers the time, interesting to architectural historians,, where vernacular architecture gives way to the 'polite'.

Talks covered the introduction of the suburban villa, particularly in London from the 1680s where new houses were built in reach of the City, and the Georgianisation of Norwich and York. Jeffrey Klee looked at buildings on Beacon Hill, Boston, Mass. comparing pre- and post- independence building styles and concluding that decorative details were still imported from the Old Country. There was a digression into the colour of weatherboarded barns in Suffolk, where Philip Aitken has found red ochre as well as black pigment used. These are rare survivals as cladding can be replaced or was painted over when coal tar became more widely available. Were Suffolk barns often

red, most famously featured in the Red Barn murder of Maria Marten?

Lee Prosser, who talked to the NHBG last winter about Baltic timber marks, compared the building techniques and materials used in barns north of London from the 17th to the 19th century, noting the transition from the fully pegged oak frames to the slight scantling of imported Baltic pine nailed and bolted together in the early 19th century barn. There was also a paper on the Picturesque and how it shaped perceptions of the cottage and an interesting inscription found on a bridging beam in Essex dated 1771- THOUGH HEART OF OAK BE SO STOUT, KEEP ME DRY AND I WILL LAST HIM OUT. It is an old adage concerning the properties of poplar as a building material.

Overall it was an exhausting weekend leaving me with a lot to think about. It is useful too to hear about buildings and research from outside Norfolk so I would recommend the experience to other Group members. Take a look at the VAG website WWW.VAG.ORG.UK for further information about the organisation and their programme.

Lynne Hodge



Some of the magnificent Church roofs of Norfolk

- Gissing Ringland Marsham
- South Burlingham
- Scarning Cawston Ringland
- Swannington Walsoken
- Cawston Tivetshall Saham
- St Margaret Toney

photos: Ian Hinton

