

Norfolk Historic Buildings Group

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Newsletter



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Chair & Contact details	2
Winter Programme 2018/19	3
Hall Farm, Ketteringham & St Peter's church	4
More notes on thatching	5
Lincoln Lane Farm, Sixhills (meeting with RUBL).....	7
Northwold Manor restoration and St Andrew's church ..	8
Church Day - Shelton, Fritton & Bedingham	10

Contents

Mills and Marshes Project	13
King's Lynn Walk	14
AGM Report.....	15
Heath Farmhouse, Fakenham and Summer Party.....	16
Neatishead Radar Museum and Nuclear Bunker.....	18
Buildings surveyed since March 2018.....	19
Norfolk Church Chests	back cover

CHAIR

Despite my computer-based background, I admit to being a luddite when it comes to social media. In discussion with many NHBG members, this feeling seems to be fairly commonly held.

Having said that, Facebook has been very useful in spreading the work of the NHBG to a much wider audience. The NHBG Facebook Group, run by Paul Hodge, has grown in size and has contributions from people who would otherwise probably not have come across our work and it has helped to gain members, increase the attendance at some winter lectures and sell some of our Journals. Items posted on the Group page also help to alert us to other related events and sources within the county, such as the recent talk by a master thatcher for the Churches Conservation Trust at Hales church. There are so many building and conservation groups active within Norfolk, it is not possible to be members of all of them. I rely on the NHBG Treasurer to keep me up to date with what is going on on Facebook.

Seen in this way, as a forum for like minded people, Facebook can outweigh its perceived downsides of possible breaches of data security and undue influence. We take sensible precautions against crime in other aspects of our lives - door locks, burglar alarms and insurance - it makes sense to do so on-line. You don't need to be a facebook member to have a look at our pages -

go to <https://en-gb.facebook.com/norfolkhistoricbuildingsgroup/>

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Chair, Norfolk Historic Buildings Group

August 2018

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Paul Hodge (not on committee)

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Administration

Subscription renewals

At the AGM, subscription renewals were discussed, especially in the light of the new Data Protection Regulations, where it is now illegal to hold data on computers when not specifically permitted to do so.

We have established that when members join the NHBG, they expect communications about the group's activities, implicitly agreeing to communication and the holding of their data.

If subscriptions are not paid on time, the NHBG has to establish whether non-payers were intending to resign, or the subscription renewal had just slipped their mind. This April, this process took up hours of time for the NHBG volunteers who administer the Group, with multiple emails and letters to many of those who do not pay by Standing Order.

The AGM agreed that in future there will be ONE email or letter reminder to members if subscriptions have not been paid. If there is no response within a reasonable time, we have to delete their details from the NHBG records.

Subscriptions are due each year at the end of March.

Unfortunately, the banks have made this situation worse by failing to follow instructions on payments of Standing Orders in six cases this year. We will check with members whether or not it was their intention to resign, and ask them to chase their bank if not.

Front Cover Photo: St. Mary's, Shelton on a sunny day (Ian Hinton)

Winter Programme

Winter Programme 2018/19

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

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

Thursday 4th October 2018

Frances & Michael Holmes

Old Courts and Yards of Norwich

Resulting in a published book, this research delves into a disappeared world. There are many narrow entrances accompanied by a sign proclaiming the existence of a court or yard. Some lead to pretty squares containing restored or new properties, but often what lay beyond has long been demolished. Going through the same passageway in the 19th and early 20th centuries the visitor would have entered a world very different to the one we live in today; this was a time when the courts and yards were not only the homes of bustling communities but were also notorious for containing the City's worst housing.

Wednesday 14th November 2018

Ian McKechnie

History of the sash window

Ian is the newsletter editor of the Suffolk Historic Buildings Group and was chief housing architect at the London Borough of Ealing. After early retirement in 1990 he formed an architectural group. One of their early commissions was from English Heritage to produce an archive of sash window information to inform EH's campaign 'Save the Sash', on which this talk is based.

Friday 7th December 2018

David Bussey

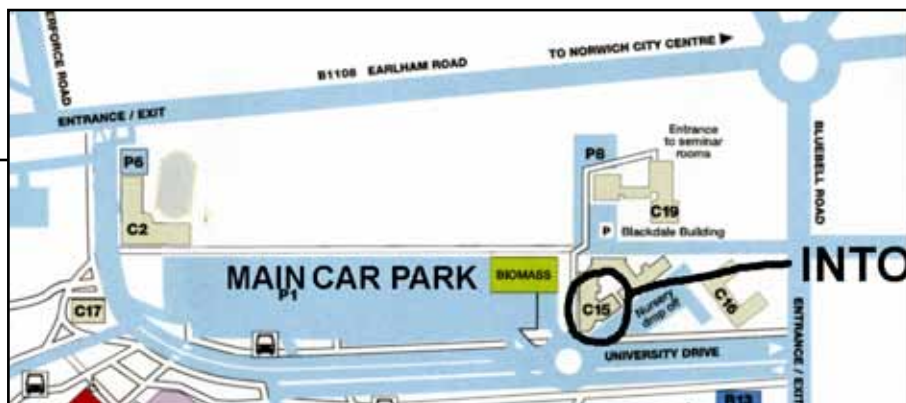
Building a modern city; the work of Edward and Edward Thomas Boardman

Following his well-received lecture on Norwich Terraced Housing last year, this winter David will be revealing his research into the work of Edward Boardman. Born in Norwich in 1833, Boardman was involved in building and refurbishing many of the finest secular and religious buildings in Norwich and throughout the county, including Chapelfield Methodist Chapel and the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital. His son took over the family firm in 1900.

INTO is located at the Bluebell Road end of University Drive

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

SATNAV - NR4 7TJ



Thursday 17th January 2019

Members' evening

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

Susan & Michael Brown - 3-5 Castle Street, Thetford

Mary Ash - Howard House

Brian Ayers - Martin, Mathew and a putative lost market

Wednesday 20th February 2019

Jenne Pape

The Sixhills Project - Lincoln Lane Farm

This building has been the subject of extensive research by RUBL (our Lincolnshire equivalent) over the last couple of years. Successive alterations and additions, some from local monastic sources, has resulted in a building with an extremely complex history which has taken considerable unravelling. RUBL kindly shared the building with some NHBG members during a summer visit. National publication awaits.

Thursday 21st March 2019

Ian Hinton

Church Houses

The church house enjoyed a short life between the end of the fifteenth century and the Reformation, or occasionally the Puritan period, as a replacement for the church itself for the local fund-raising that went on so frequently in that period. Often unrecognised, in parts of the country they form a substantial part of the local landscape. Many of them continued in various forms of public use after their abandonment by the church. Ian researched these buildings as part of his PhD on church location and alignment.

Hall Farm, Ketteringham and St Peter's Church (23rd May 2018)

Ruth Pearson

On a lovely bright and breezy day 26 of us were treated to a visit to Hall Farmhouse, home of one of our members, Jill Golzen, and the adjacent St Peter's Church, Ketteringham. Jill found the house many years ago, courtesy of an eccentric B&B owner who had prior knowledge of its imminent sale.

Susan and Michael Brown explained that the house was built in around 1600, possibly on a medieval floor plan, as it seemed narrow when compared to most timber-framed houses. It has since been extended and divided into two properties on three floors with many charming features. Was it a merchant's house, farmhouse, parsonage or all these? Described as on "rectorial" land, there may long ago have been a link with Pentney Abbey.

Viewed from the outside, the east side has a brick stair tower – possibly part of the original construction - which juts out into a beautifully-tended cottage garden with fragrant plants and shrubs, where we enjoyed tea and delicious cakes after the tour.

Downstairs are parlour, cross passage, hall, service rooms and a kitchen, and above them, the respective chambers. Upstairs there is a corridor on the east side with wide windows - there was speculation about whether it was part of the original build and why the windows were originally so large. The former perhaps reflected the need for privacy: the panoramic view onto the church with its tower, views of Ketteringham Hall and the surrounding pastoral scene, could have been the reason for wide windows. The tower stairway and corridor have two three-centred arched doorheads and the stair leads on up to the attic beneath, we were told, a medieval-style roof, possibly older than the house.

Medieval tiles found beneath the current floor in the hall, and dated to 1320, may give an indication of the status of the earlier building.

Also on display were many of the items that had been found in spiritual midden deposits, some in the chimney; including fabric, gloves, shoes and some unpleasant bodily items. These,



above:
the eastern facade of Hall Farm
with its stair tower
(photo: Euan Pearson)



left:
Michael Brown framed by the
arched doorcase in the stair
tower that he was describing
(photo: Ian Hinton)

combined with the many apotropaic deep burn marks on the mantle, give a good indication of the superstitions of those who lived in a dwelling that still harbours many of its secrets.

Many thanks to all who organised and hosted this delightful day – especially Jill, two Marys, Susan and Michael and Ian (great signposting!)



above:

Two of the worn medieval floor tiles discovered under the current floor



left:
some of the deep
burn marks on the
repaired mantle
over the hall
fireplace

Photos:
Ian Hinton

The ownership of Hall Farm has been previously researched by Charlotte Barringer but the actual date of construction of the present building has not been found in the records. The house belonged to the inappropriate rectory that had been in the possession of the Prior of Pentney before the Dissolution.

The walls of the building are entirely of brick and not a timber frame bricked over. The bricks had been dated by Alan Carter as between 1570 and 1600. This dating appears to be confirmed by the change of ownership in 1607 at which time the house was described as "the capital message of brick".



left:
some of the
midden deposits -
fine leather gloves,
clothes, shoes
plus certain
bodily items not
on display

St Peter's church, Ketteringham



St Peters during our sunny visit



One of the Saxon windows

Described as “Extremely ancient” and now incorporated into the Ketteringham-Hall estate, St Peter's has many fascinating features including the remains of several Saxon windows and evidence of possible Saxon porticus chapels.

The chancel is full of grand monuments to many well-known Norfolk families from The Hall (Greys, Heveninghams, Atkyns and Boileaus). There is an elaborately decorated font, ancient bells from 1420, ledger slab brasses of the Grey family and brasses on the Heveningham tomb, as well as pieces of beautiful 15th century stained glass, together with a large Flemish bust.

A striking altar reredos painting by a Flemish artist depicts the Marriage Feast at Cana, where water was turned into wine, and according to Mary (the church warden who helped us appreciate its many treasures) when the winter sun shines in, the characters really come to life.

Life however, has not always been peaceful in that seemingly tranquil neck of the woods: we heard tales of animosity between the local Calvinist parson and the Boileaus. Sir John built the

gallery at the west end of the nave for the Sunday School to the annoyance of the parson. There were also tales of mysterious moving of bodies for “family reasons”.



(photos: Euan Pearson)



*above:
The Flemish reredos painting*

*left:
the east window with many substantial
pieces of medieval glass*

*right:
The Heveningham
tomb with the
Grey brass on the
wall to the right*



Member's contribution

More notes on thatching Ian Hinton

In previous *NHBG Newsletters* (22, 23, 26, 29 & 30), the differences between thatching in Norfolk and elsewhere in the country (and abroad) were examined - particularly the assorted types of covering itself - showing that there is a need for an undercoat of turf or heather to ensure the shallower slopes and thinner coats of thatch outside Norfolk are waterproof. Also that there are many methods of retaining the thatch against strong winds, including Alan Eade's description of crows' beaks in Denmark, compared with ropes and long hanging stones in Caithness or tying ropes off to stones projecting from the walls on the Isle of Man.

This summer, thatching on the Hebridean island of Lewis was investigated. The first building was a reconstruction of a Norse watermill at Shawbost on the north-west coast, in use until the 1930s and one of 15 in the area. The second was a Victorian blackhouse at Arnol close by, lived in until the 1970s. Most of the remaining blackhouses are Victorian and date from the the second half of the nineteenth century as crofts were set up after the clearances on Lewis for sheep rearing.



*Danish crows' beaks
retaining the thatch
(photo:
Robin Forrest)*



*Caithnesss -
hung cut-stone
anchors*

*remaining photos:
Ian Hinton*



*Isle of Man -
projecting stone
anchors*

Hebridean thatching (continued)

Although very slightly different in detail, the impression is that successive re-thatchings on the old mill have been done in the same manner as the Victorian houses - alternatively, the Victorian houses were thatched "in the old way" because it worked. Both are hipped at both ends - a practical shape that does not require seals to be maintained against, or over, gable-end walls (as they have to be elsewhere). Most of the timber that was used in the roof construction was drift wood, supplemented by re-used timber, in fact the re-roofed blackhouse still uses two oars and a stern tiller-post amongst the more modern timber in its construction. Unlike the roofs in Caithness which only had manufactured crucks as principal rafters and many "purlins" along the roof, the roofs here have a more traditional construction - principal rafters, common rafters and single purlins with collars. Most of the joints are just roped together with heather rope.



above:
The mill at Shawbost, with Hebridean double hipped ends with "crow posts" and roped-together stones

The thatch itself has an undercoat of heather turf (green side down) at each end of the house so that the peat swells when heavy rain comes through the thin thatch and seals the roof. In the centre of the roof, above the peat fire, no heather is used so as to allow the fire smoke to percolate out through the thatch. The thatch itself consists of multiple thin layers of oat straw laid down the roof. The oat straw requires frequent replacing and the soot-encrusted part above the fire was removed annually to be placed on the lazy-bed cultivated strips along with sea-weed to improve the poor soil.

To retain the thatch, large stones are laid around the base of the thatch (see photo above) on top of the projecting walls, and the whole roof is covered in a form of netting originally made of heather rope (much like the chicken-wire now used in Norfolk). To retain all this is a series of large flat stones that are suspended from a rope (again made of heather) tied round the roof about half-way up rather like a necklace.

In each of these houses, including some other semi-derelict houses at Callanish, the central rafter of each round hipped end projects above the roof and is known as a crow-post, presumably for the obvious reason. They provide the anchor for the ropes that retain the stone weights around the hipped ends. On Lewis, these stones take the place of the long thin stone weights hung below the eaves in Caithness and the projecting stones to anchor the ropes on the Isle of Man.

In the mid twentieth century, one end of some houses was converted to a gable end in order to replace the central peat fire with a fireplace and chimney, which required wooden pegs to be inserted into the wall to anchor the retaining ropes, instead of the crow post - similar changes were made on Skye.



Twentieth-century gable end, requiring wooden pegs to anchor the ropes after the hipped-end and its crow post was replaced

Each of the buildings described in the various articles outside Norfolk is in a coastal location and is single storey, presumably partly to lessen the problems with wind, but illustrate three interesting variations of a solution to a common problem of retaining the thatch in these conditions.

Where are your holiday photos of buildings? Send them to the editor for inclusion in the newsletter.



Caithness - manufactured crucks and multiple "purlins"



Hebridean roped joints in the black house, with the heather undercoat poking through



the method of stone suspension

Visit to Lincoln Lane Farm, Sixhills, Lincs (meeting with RUBL) (23rd June 2018) Anne Woollett

Only four members of the NHBG took up the invitation from RUBL (Lincolnshire Historic Buildings Group) to attend a community day about Lincoln Lane Farm, Sixhills at The Heanage Arms Hainton, a community-run pub.

In the morning several members of RUBL talked about different aspects of the study they have made of the house over the last two years. The house has been empty and so with the support of the Heanage Estate it was possible to spend many (often cold) hours exploring the building and testing out ideas without disturbing residents and their furniture. The house sits on the edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds which in itself is a good enough reason for visiting the area. Jenne Pape and Chris Page took us through the history of the house which started as a timber-framed open-hall house of 1530-1555. While this design was common in the Midlands, it was unusual for Lincolnshire, where single storey stone buildings with much poorer quality timber were more common. The roof appears to be original, but is of in-line butt-purlin construction, which to Norfolk eyes, belongs to a period many decades later.

In about 1660-1692 there were major changes: a stone skin or cladding was added to the building, the parlour was reworked with very substantial timbers and the chimneys were given a make-over with facilities for cooking. Between 1692-1702 there was another programme of improvements when staircases were upgraded and the roof space came into use, and there was more work on the chimney stacks. Often the work was not of a high quality, at times even threatening the integrity and structure of the building, but also with intriguing details such as the sophisticated pulley for a spit.

In the nineteenth century what had been a substantial building was made into three cottages, each with their own staircases and cooking arrangements in extensions at the rear of the building.

David Stocker focused on the Group's analysis of the stonework and the timbers. The stone cladding which provided a corset was partly of new local stone and erratics but also of worked Jurassic limestone reused from other buildings, including the nearby Gilbertine double Priory (monks and nuns) at Sixhills, founded between 1148 and 1154. Some of the stones are from the bases and capitals of double columns of the monastery's cloister which was preserved after the Dissolution by being converted into a house. This was later demolished freeing up stone for re-use here. The timbers inserted in the parlour at the same time, as joists, seem also to have come from the cloister of the monastery as dendrochronology has suggested dates of 1140-1160. Huge peg holes in the timbers suggest that the joints were not complex: the timbers leaned against one another and were anchored with huge pegs.

After a lunch at The Heanage Arms, the group visited the house and the information about the site and the building became real. There were amazing views towards the west, a sense of the position of the nearby monastery, and on the exterior of the building the pieces of quality worked stone. Inside, RUBL members were on hand to point to ancient timbers, staircases, reworking of the chimneys, roof timbers, nineteenth-century extensions, and painted elements. Our visit was enhanced by the presence of two sisters who had lived in one of the cottages as children and were able to assist RUBL members to work out



Lincoln Lane Farmhouse on the Heanage Estate

where the stairs had been and how the main building linked with the extensions.

A fascinating day: this report has only touched on some of the many facets of the building and its recording. Jenne Pape of the RUBL team is scheduled to give us more detail of the project in a winter lecture in February.



*left:
The centre
section of the
in-line, butt-
purlin roof*



Photos: Ian Hinton

*left:
The substantial joists from
the Priory cloister, brought
in as part of the seventeenth-
century changes to the house*



*left:
One of the reused stones from
the monastery, thought to be
one of the double capitals
from the cloister.
Here the carved face was
hidden as the smooth worked
face was required for the
outer surface of the wall*

RUBL is part of The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (www.slha.org.uk)

Northwold Manor (2nd June 2018)

Anna Allison



*Above left:
the rear of the Tudor Cottage in 2013*



*Above right:
the front of the manor house in 2013*

*right:
the whole range taken recently
from the church tower - Tudor Cottage on
the left, then dairy, Manor House, 1814
wing, and orangery on the right*

photos: Warwick Rodwell



The restoration of the Manor House is labour of love for the owners, Prof. Warwick and Diane Rodwell. Acquired four years ago, the house had been boarded up for 40 years and was obscured even on Google Maps because of the overgrown trees. The house was in a near-terminal stage of decay and it took a year just to stabilise the building.

Prof Rodwell summarised his philosophy for the restoration. Rooms have been restored as faithfully as possible and have not been sub-divided. This means that modern services and conveniences can only be accommodated by extending building at the back for bathrooms and a utility room. He has not added bedroom corridors which does constrain modern use of the building. The renovation is still very much a work-in-progress.

Looking at the building from the roadside, it is formed from a sequence of adjoining builds which comprise from left to right across the 60m frontage: a partly-Tudor cottage; a former dairy; an originally seventeenth-century manor house, remodelled in 1721; a further wing built in 1814; and the site of an orangery now rebuilt as a library.

The cottage began as a single storey building, a string course showing the original eaves line. The roof remains unaltered, having been jacked up while the walls were raised. There was previously a second cottage, evident on the 1837 tithe map, of which only the cellar remains under the gates to a yard to the left of the standing cottage. Access to both cottages was originally where the dairy building now stands, round to a courtyard at the back. The dairy is of red brick. The original flat roof had collapsed and Prof Rodwell has created a gable roof.

The Manor House has a T-shaped plan, with shaped gables to left and right and a third stepped gable on the wing at the back. The right-hand curved gable is now obscured by the attic of the 1814 wing built around it, but this shelter has preserved the original colours of the 1721 date-stone with the initials of Thomas Carter. These colours have been reinstated on the date-stone visible in the left hand gable.

The windows at the front are later sashes from a refurbishment of the 1760s, but the windows at the back still have the original earlier heavy glazing bars. The fanlight over the front door is made of a single piece of oak, about two inches thick, by piercing. There is evidence of foundations for a large portico. Two columns from this had been moved along in 1814 to augment the doorway of the new wing. The railings at the front originally curved back towards the building but now butt up to the dairy on the left and the 1814 porch on the right.

The 1814 wing replaces a previously demolished wing from 1741. The front door in the tower porch has an unusual segmental arch of broad concentric ribs. Damage from the partial movement of the front of the building has been repaired but there remains a crack in the arch which has been left to tell this part of the story of the building.

The blind ground floor windows beyond the stair tower are believed to be a concession to propriety in obscuring the

existence of a ballroom unfortunately positioned opposite the church. Inside the ballroom, behind these blind windows, is an arch defining the space for the dance musicians. The orangery, originally beyond the ballroom, would have provided a quiet change of pace for dance guests. The ballroom and the dining room could not be accessed.

The front door opens onto a hallway with a cantilevered stair and a large landing window. In the parlour to the left of the hall, the currently bare brick walls show evidence of the former large mullioned and transomed seventeenth-century front windows. The parlour leads into the original kitchen of the manor house, still with its large fireplace opening. Beyond the kitchen is the former dairy. A rainwater cistern discovered under the floor may once have provided water for keeping dairy products cool. There is also evidence of a square foundation under the floor, perhaps for the staircase tower of a fifteenth-century timber-framed house.

The bedroom in the T-wing at the back has an interesting single hinged light in the centre top pane of the sash windows, a Victorian feature typical of the Channel Islands but unusual in Norfolk. The large drawing room above the ballroom has been reinstated, having been previously subdivided. The room previously had false doorways to give the impression of two symmetrical pairs of doors.



*The new-build stair tower
photo: Ian Hinton*

The library wing (former orangery) is new build. There is a ground floor library at the front, with a study behind linked to a second first floor study by an octagonal stair tower. This struck me as a modern version of the dilettante's closet and library, executed with a Gothick flavour, that an eighteenth-century owner might well have aspired to.

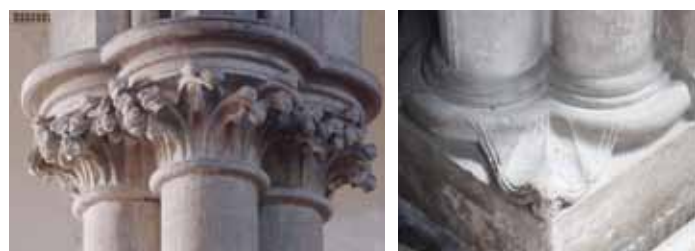
The detailed restoration continues into the garden with plans for a seventeenth/eighteenth-century style Dutch canal garden.

The Manor House provides much food for thought on the difficulties of achieving sympathetic restoration without overt pastiche; and the variable attitudes of conservation officers.

Views may differ, but I loved it. The current renovation is another complementary stage in the house's history of sequential change, new build and rebuild. It seems to me that the house is more than happy about it. Many thanks to Warwick and Diane for sharing it with us.

St Andrews's Church, Northwold

Northwold was already a substantial settlement by the time of Domesday, and a particularly wealthy parish by 1334. This wealth is reflected in the church, the current church has early thirteenth-century origins. Some of the piers have beautiful stiff-leaved capitals and stylised birds and ball-flowers on the bases,, characteristic of the period, but uncommon in Norfolk. It was probably built by the Bishop of Ely who was a Northwold man.



Recent archaeology in the church uncovered what was probably the west wall of the shorter Norman predecessor to this building beneath the nave floor.

The tower was added in about 1470. There is evidence that one bay of the thirteenth-century church was demolished for the building of the tower: the last arch in the north arcade is smaller and the different design of the pier and its capitals indicate that the arch has been rebuilt.

The most distinctive feature of the church is the unique Easter Sepulchre, finely carved from chalk, including carved vaulting. It dates to 1350-1400, based on the costume of figures at the base. An Easter Sepulchre is often little more than an arched recess and this is an example of rare quality.



the canopies of the Easter Sepulchre, carved in chalk

It is also worth noting the floor slab at the altar that marks the grave of a seventeenth-century rector, protesting about recent political events with references to the "Tyranny" and "Pseudo-protectorate" of Cromwell.

The removal of the gallery about fifty years ago revealed a wall painting on the north wall of the nave. It is possible to make out a hawk perched on a hand and elsewhere two skeletons, which appear to be a fragment of a "Three Dead Kings" painting. The story goes that three kings encountered three dead kings who told them "*As you are, we once were; as we are, so shall you be*", a cautionary tale of the certainty of death and a frequent reference point after the Black Death.

The roof is sometimes wrongly described as having hammerbeams, but is in fact composed of larger and smaller arched braces, with truncated wallposts above the clerestory windows.

Outside, the blind flushwork arcading with complex three-dimensional tracery between the clerestory windows is probably the same date as the tower. There is a dedication to a benefactor above one window, but its placement appears not to have been well thought out as it is poorly integrated with the very work that he presumably funded.



*left:
the thirteenth-century
stiff-leaved capitals and
bases of the arcade*

*Church
photos:
Ian
Hinton*

*above:
the blind flushwork
panels between the
clerestory windows*

Three churches of the Hempnall benefice (28th April 2018) Dominic Summers

It may have been ambitious to schedule our Churches Day for late April, but NHBG members are a hardy bunch. A good crowd turned out on a chilly, squally morning, wet ankle-length churchyard grass ready to make life miserable for those with inappropriate footwear.

St Mary's, Shelton

We started at St Mary's, Shelton. There was gratifying surprise expressed by some members on first encountering the church, for it is mostly faced in brick and, other than the tower, there is little flint to be seen. The brickwork is very smart, red bricks with blues laid in a diaper pattern, very much in the manner of contemporary high-status domestic buildings. This may not be a surprise if one considers that the patron of this building, Sir Ralph Shelton, was a very wealthy member of the local gentry with pretensions to social advancement and ambitions at the court of Henry VII. This is a Tudor building and deserves to be thought of as belonging as much to the early modern period as the middle ages. It shows, not only in its display of materials, the direction in which an English ecclesiastical aesthetic was heading before it was brought up short by the Reformation.

The church can be dated by Shelton's will of 1497, proved in 1498. In it, he instructs his heirs to complete the church according to the form that he had begun it. It seems though, that the church was finished with less care than that in which it was started, for it remains incomplete. Sir John Shelton, Sir Ralph's heir, had married into the Boleyn clan (he was Queen Anne's uncle) and had continued the family's upward trajectory, becoming a fixture at court. It is likely that his attention was distracted from finishing St Mary's and I think this is reflected in the arrangement of the west end of the church. Several members remarked that the church seemed a little too short for its other dimensions; this may be a perceptive



St Mary's, Shelton on a grey day - all photos: Ian Hinton



The lofty interior of St Mary's

observation. There is no architectural chancel, the nave arcade carries through to the east end of the building. By the end of the fifteenth century this was common, dividing the chancel from the nave had fallen out of fashion - think of grand churches like St Andrew's or St Stephen's in Norwich. The tall narrow east window, with original dynastic glass, and the low eastern sacristy, which seems contemporary with the main building, lead me to believe that the east end was completed as planned. At the

west end, though, is a modest flint tower of the early fifteenth century, that clashes aesthetically with the rest of the church. It is difficult to believe that Sir Ralph had not intended this to be replaced, given that the rest of the building is clearly designed to express his taste and social position. Furthermore, the south porch also raises questions about the founder's original intentions. The lower stage of the porch was designed to be fan-vaulted, with the vault providing support for a solar above. The vault was never finished although the wall-ribs and brattishing are still in place. Curiously, a much earlier window, probably of the late fourteenth century, is incorporated into the west wall of the porch, with a deep exterior wall arch cutting across its top. The south porch itself, leads into the western bay of the nave, an unusual if not unknown arrangement. All this makes a rather unsatisfactory western termination to the building and leads to the supposition that Sir Ralph's original design may have had the church extended a bay to the west with a new and more impressive tower.



*above:
The incomplete porch*



*left:
The complex cross-section of the sawn-through screen post*

Needless to say, the quality of the architecture and masonry is very high. The mullions of the clerestory windows extend down to form wall panelling, a motif unusual in Norfolk (although present in Norwich, St Andrew), and the moulding of the nave arcade projects upwards to unify the whole design and frame image niches in the spandrels of the arches. The brattishing in the incomplete porch vault recalls that in Henry VII's chapel in Westminster Abbey, a very fashionable touch. The timber roof was replaced in the eighteenth century with a flat plaster ceiling, lending the church a slightly unusual feel. All in all, this is a building that more than most reflects the taste and ambition of one person. It is slightly ironic, then, that Sir Ralph Shelton's tomb, to the north of the main altar in the founder's position, is incomplete.



The spectacular nave arcade moulding and the extended clerestory mullions providing a unified scheme

and the porch is from the fifteenth century. The real glory of St Catherine's though is its paintings. There is the usual large St Christopher from the end of the middle ages on the north wall and, to the east, a large St George and the dragon, slightly earlier in date, though subsequently restored. The castle from which the saint has ridden-out looks like the Red Mount chapel in King's Lynn!



St George slaying the dragon

St Catherine's, Fritton



St Catherine, Fritton, where we headed next, is a very different building. About a mile from Shelton as the crow flies, it sits at the end of a long shady lode in a peaceful churchyard. It is a modest church, without aisles, that displays in its fabric the attentions of many generations of parishioners. There was a major restoration in the middle of the nineteenth century and most of the fenestration seems to date to this campaign. Far more than Shelton, it is the reflection of its medieval community. It has a round tower that is entered through a tower arch with very simple impost blocks that suggest an early date; perhaps around the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The well-coursed flints in the lower stages support this early date. There is an octagonal belfry stage of the fifteenth century that seems to be contemporary with the inserted west window lower in the tower. The south door into the nave dates from the fourteenth century

More interesting is the small painting of a bishop next to the rood stair. This is clearly much older than the other paintings. It has been identified by style and vestments to the middle of the thirteenth century and may represent St Edmund of Abingdon, the last Archbishop of Canterbury to be canonised.

The rood screen has eight painted dado panels. One panel is very crowded: it depicts John Bacon, his wife



and their fourteen children! John died in 1511 and this panel may have been given just before then, or as a memorial. It is painted in a local style, but the clothes are recognisable as being of the early sixteenth century.

*above:
St Edmund of Abingdon?*

*left:
The rood-screen painting of
John Bacon and his family*

Three churches of the Hempnall benefice (continued)



St Andrew's, Bedingham

After lunch in The Kings Head in Woodton, the group made its way to St Andrew's, Bedingham, the last stop of the day.

There were once two churches in the churchyard, but there are now no traces of St Mary's above ground. Walsingham Priory owned the manor and this raises the question of its interest in and patronage of both churches. Was the Priory's interest in St Mary eventually transferred to St Andrew and might this reflect the curious plan of the present church. Priory Farm is located to the east of the churchyard. The list of Bedingham Rectors and Vicars is shown on the next page.

As at Fritton, there is a twelfth-century round tower with a late-medieval octagonal belfry stage. The rest of St Andrew is much grander than Fritton though. For students of window tracery and arch mouldings this is a great church. The chancel has lovely, well-executed geometric tracery in its windows, dating from the late thirteenth century. There is a large window in the south transept with reticulated tracery of the early fourteenth century. The aisle windows have characteristic generic panel tracery of the late fourteenth or fifteenth century. Best of all though, is the priest's door in the south wall of the chancel. This has that gorgeous, rich many-ordered moulding so typical of the transition from Romanesque to Gothic architecture of the late twelfth century. It must have been kept from an earlier building and reset in this wall, for the chancel is surely

Transitional priest's door with many Romanesque-style decorations



of the thirteenth century.

The chancel is the most impressive section of the building. It is very large and other than the Decorated windows there is a lavish piscina framed with Purbeck marble columns which is replicated in a similar canopy to the west of the sedilia. A clerestory was added in the fifteenth century.

The bay at the west of the chancel is confusing. It appears to have been planned as the crossing of a centrally planned church with arches opening in all four directions. One of them leads to a fourteenth-century south transept which interrupts the later clerestory.



The marble-columned piscina in the chancel



The southern arch into the transept which interrupts the flow of the clerestory

To the east and west are the chancel and the rest of the nave, but to the north is only the last bay of the fifteenth-century north aisle. Furthermore, this arch is anomalous. It is very simple, without mouldings and has impostes that suggest an eleventh- or twelfth-century date. Was the church planned with a central



The apparently 11th or 12th century arch into what may have been the northern transept

crossing and then the builders changed their minds and decided on a west tower? Was a central tower ever built? This complicated church deserves more study.

It is interesting that All Saints', Woodton, visible only half a mile across the fields to the north appears almost to be St Andrews' twin, albeit a little less grand.

Despite the dreadful weather, this was a good day. We didn't visit any of the superstar churches of Norfolk but were able to compare three different and very interesting churches that in their fabric reflected very different types of patronage in such a small area.



Two of the bench-end decorations which appear to have almost escaped the iconoclasts' attentions

BEDINGHAM RECTORS AND VICARS	
1185	BENEDICT de BEDINGHAM Rector of St Marys BEDINGHAM
1208	JOHN de BRANCASTRE Rector of St Andrews
	ALBINUS Clerk, date unknown, Son of TVO
1225	VINCENT de REC Rector
1231	PETER de GRIMBOLD Rector
1239	CANONS of WALSINGHAM gained the advowson and Title
1239	A VICAR (name unknown) appointed by Walsingham, paid taxes
1249	GALFRIDUS Vicar
1302	WALTER de MVDENE 1st July
1303	WILLIAM de WOODTON 15th July
1319	PRIORY MANOR given to Canons of Walsingham by JOHN DEVALE
1324	JOHN de HOVEDEN 1st December
1334	ROBERT de CNAPETON (CNAPTON) 13th December
1354	WILLIAM "Perpetual Vicar of BEDINGHAM"
1347	HUGO de SHOULDHAM 22nd February
1349	WALTER de SOTERLEE 23rd November
1349	JOHN COOK de HEDENHAM 22nd August
1361	JOHANNES TIRRELL 15th October
1383	JOHN HONYHOS "Vicar of St. Andrews" (Will 1388)
1388	SIMON SENREY 11th February
1397	WILL WESTON 29th September
1426	WILLIAM de KENIPTON 12th May
1431	THOMAS MILDENHALE (Will 1440)
1447	STEPHEN ESTAUGH (Will 1447)
1447	JAMES HARROLD
1480	RICHARD ATHOWE 18th October
1480	ROBERT STROKE from SWAFIELD, exchanged with RICHARD ATHOWE
1508	WILLIAM BRETT (died 1521)
1516	JOHN GRAND "Vicar of Bedingham", witnessed JOHN COOKING'S will
1530	JOHN RUDGE "Vicar of Bedingham", witnessed SIMON WAGES will
1537-40	RESOLUTION OF WALSINGHAM PRIORY by HENRY VIII
1555	ROBT RANDOLLS "Priest" (deposed 1665)

The list of Rectors and Vicars displayed in the church shows different Rectors for St Mary and St Andrew at the end of the 12th century - John de Bedingham and John de Brancastre.

The Canons of Walsingham gained the advowson in 1239 after which only Vicars were appointed, implying that the Canons had the advowson of both churches. Priory Manor was given to the Canons in 1319.

Neil Batcock in "The Ruined and Disused churches of Norfolk" notes St Mary's disappearing at The Reformation, but from the list of Vicars it is not possible to say whether both churches were operational between 1239 and 1539.

News

Water Mills and Marshes Landscape Project

The Water Mills and Marshes Landscape Partnership Programme is a joint exercise between Norfolk County Council, UEA and NAHRG, part funded by the HLF. Its main aim is to record the area's heritage before it is lost. Launched at UEA at the end of June, the project is expected to last several years and apart from the recording aspect will include apprenticeships for maintaining heritage buildings and new "Broads Mill" trails.

Within this overall study is a section on "Broads Hidden Heritage" to examine and record aspects of Marshland life (other than marshes and mills) - industry, boating, churches and farming. This will involve an archaeological and documentary review of the landscape, including its standing archaeology as well as collecting oral history from some of the vanishing marsh-based trades.

In order to achieve this, a community archaeology training programme is being initiated to introduce residents to the techniques and buildings involved. Day schools have been organised on Churches, Understanding Maps, Using Archives and Interpreting Aerial Archaeology. NHBG committee members Ian Hinton and Dominic Summers are leading the church day schools and there will be future dayschools on recording historic buildings. It is expected that NHBG building recorders will be involved in dating and recording the many farmhouses located in the Broads area as the project progresses.

In addition, a grants scheme will allow local people to apply for funding to make their own heritage ideas become reality. Water, Mills and Marshes will connect the people of the Broads, including schoolchildren, with their heritage so they can appreciate its importance, enjoy it and help protect it for future generations.



Cley mill at sunset - Ian Hinton

King's Lynn on a lovely Summers day Maggy Chatterley & Dominic Summers

About thirty members met in the café at True's Yard on a blisteringly hot day for a walk around the north end of historic King's Lynn before the AGM. Many were sensibly topping up fluid levels before setting off. The walk was led by Dr Paul Richards, an enthusiastic, extremely knowledgeable and fluent guide. True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum, renovated after raising £160,000, has the sole surviving fisherfolk yard with late eighteenth-century cottages.

After leaving the museum we headed to St Nicholas Chapel. Larger than all but a handful of parish churches, it is the largest chapel of ease in the country, reflecting the great mercantile wealth of this area of Lynn in the late middle ages. Although St Nicholas repeatedly petitioned for parish status, St Margaret's, in the older southern end of town, preserved its privileges doggedly. Documentary evidence suggests that the rebuilt Perpendicular church that we see today was finished by 1419. The tower and western bay of the south aisle remain from an earlier building, probably of the early thirteenth century. The nave arcade is tall and slender, creating a very open space on the model of fourteenth-century friary architecture. The absence of an architectural division between the nave and chancel is quite precocious for East Anglia. The early angel roof is one of the finest anywhere and the window tracery, both in the vast east and west windows and the unusual aisle windows, is innovative and displays a vivacity of design unusual for this period.

By the thirteenth century King's Lynn (or Bishop's Lynn as it was known until 1537) was one of the county's foremost ports. Traders from the Hanseatic League came with cargoes of fish, furs, timber, wax and pitch and left with English wool, cloth and salt. Hanse House, just off Saturday Market, is a grade 1 building dating from 1475, and is the only surviving Hanseatic warehouse in England.

King's Lynn also imported a lot of wine and a recurring theme of the walk was the many vast wine cellars beneath the buildings. The Grade-1 listed Guildhall of St George on King Street, said to be the largest complete medieval guildhall in England, has a huge wine cellar underneath it. It has a scissor-braced roof with 61 trusses and has four buttresses to hold the building up. Vast wine cellars are also found under King's Staithe Square and Purfleet Quay. We were told that in WWII lots of cellars and undercrofts were built under Tuesday Market for use as shelters, but could these have been a re-use of further wine cellars?

Another theme that occurred was the number of buildings that had been preserved from demolition by well wishers, and this shows how the conservation of heritage has changed over the years. The Guildhall of St George was saved six weeks before it was due to be demolished in the 1940s in order to build a garage. In 1962 the whole of Queen Street was set to be demolished. Thoresby College on the west side of Queen Street



above:
*The grand facade and
spectacular interior of
St Nicholas' chapel,*

left:
*Hanse House on
Queen Street, with
jettied warehouses
behind, leading down
to the wharf edge*

photos:
Maggy Chatterley

has a fine wooden door dated to 1510. It was originally used to house thirteen priests employed as chantry chaplains by the powerful Trinity Guild of Lynn whose Guildhall is in Saturday Market. In 1963 the entire complex was bought by Ruth, Lady Fermoy and her daughter, Mrs Shand-Kydd and presented to the King's Lynn Preservation Trust for restoration, with the request that the building be used for the benefit of the whole community. The Great Hall made a fine setting for the subsequent AGM.

A two-hour walk was not enough! In some ways it was too much in the heat and there was so much to take in. Methinks King's Lynn is worth a longer, more leisurely, visit, staying in one of the many hotels in the town and perhaps taking a trip on the *Baden Powell*, a double-ended fishing smack originally built in 1900 which takes visitors on summer cruises on the River Great Ouse and The Wash, showing King's Lynn from a different, maritime, perspective.

With particular thanks to Paul Richards for his instructive tour of this wonderful town. The NHBG has made a donation to the True's Yard Museum in appreciation.



*left:
the facade of the
Trinity Guildhall facing
onto Saturday Market*



*right:
Paul Richards (in blue
suit and sunglasses) and
George Vancouver (in
bronze and verdigris)
explaining the intricacies
of King's Lynn*

*photos:
Maggie Chatterley*

Administration

AGM Report (7th July 2018) Lynne Hodge

Despite the heat and the attraction of England's World-Cup match, 28 people attended the AGM following Paul Richards' guided walk round Lynn. The meeting took place under the magnificent medieval roof of the Great Hall in Thoresby College after soup and rolls and plenty of cold water.

This year it was the turn of the Treasurer to be elected - there were no other nominations, so the existing treasurer, Maggie Chatterley, was re-elected by a show of hands. Similarly there were no other nominations for committee members so the current seven members were re-elected by a show of hands. There are still three vacancies, so if anyone feels that they could contribute, please let me know.

In his report of the year, the Chairman, Ian Hinton, outlined our achievements during the last year and thanked the committee, and everyone else who has helped, for their efforts during the year in making the group a continued success. Ian was thanked for his efforts.

The Treasurer's report outlined the healthy state of our finances. Expenses had been held stable since the previous year, summer events produced a small surplus, winter events pretty well balanced out and membership income will contribute to future publications. The clarity of the figures was commended and a vote of thanks was proposed to Maggie.

The committee has taken the view that

the NHBG is a "single purpose organisation" for the purposes of the new Data Protection Regulations. We will continue to email and write to members, but only about our activities, and your data will never be shared with others - even other members, unless expressly permitted by you. This was approved by the AGM.

The issue of membership renewals was discussed in relation to these regulations. If subscriptions are not paid at the end of March, in future ONE email or letter will be sent to the member to establish whether it was their intention to resign or not, with the outcomes outlined and reasonable time allowed for responses. If there is no reply, the member's details will have to be deleted under the new regulations. This was agreed by the AGM.

Last year at the AGM, the committee was asked to consider whether the quorum of 10% (of fee-paying members) attendance at the AGM should be reconsidered. The committee felt that it was important that as many as possible were involved in the annual oversight to avoid the possibility of a small group taking over.

After a fairly painless 25 minutes, the meeting was declared closed with thanks from the Chairman for attending and a request for suggestions for future venues and visits.



Thoresby College Hall - photo: Ian Hinton

Heath Farmhouse, Fakenham (17th July 2018)

The visit - Colin & Annie King

The house details - Ian Hinton & Lynne Hodge



The group heads off to the neighbouring barn after a kind invitation by the owners of the barn to examine that too. (photo: Colin King)

The Visit

It was a fine summer's afternoon as our group of about 30 NHBG members gathered by the rather noisy Norwich Road. The farmhouse, now well hidden from the road by towering trees and shrubs, sat just to the east of converted barns and outbuildings that were once part of the farm.

Faden's 1797 map of Fakenham shows the farmhouse to be quite isolated. Very few other properties appeared on the heath or on Fakenham Common to the south.

Heath Farmhouse was once the home of Dick Joyce, who took over his father's tenancy of the farm in 1940. He later became well known for his Anglia TV programme 'Bygones'. His life-long collection of domestic and agricultural artefacts eventually ended up in a stable block at Holkham Hall. Dick sold his dairy business to buy shares in Anglia TV.

We first gathered on the front lawn of the property for an initial view of the house. Well established trees and shrubs enclosed this area. The parched lawn was a testament to one of our hottest summers on record. There followed a lively discussion about the cobble faced exterior front, especially regarding the materials used. We then moved on to the rear of the property, where more cobbles, blocked off doorways and other features were discussed.

Once inside the house, several rooms provoked debate and differences of opinion regarding stylistic features. The staircase and possible divisions in the central unheated hall was discussed at length.



Every aspect of the staircase examined in detail

Our convivial hosts, Rob and Nesa Howard were on hand throughout our visit to answer questions and guide us around. Doorways were examined, chamfers questioned and panelling prodded. We then progressed upstairs where springy, sloping floors held firm under our collective weight. Baltic timber marks on a ceiling beam were a particular feature and the high ceilinged rooms were very impressive. Those who had failed to get lost, were kindly invited to visit a neighbour's barn on the west side of the property.

Finally we came across a table laden with a splendid variety of food and drink, which turned out to be an absolute treat. The terrace had been beautifully laid out with tables and chairs for a summer picnic, so we all gathered there to enjoy the company.

An invite to descend to a cellar, possibly Georgian, was taken up by some of the members. Rob told the story of a wondrous store of vintage bottles that unfortunately had disappeared prior to buying the house.

Special thanks to Rob and Nesa Howard and the organizers of a lovely summer party that was enjoyed by all.



The discussion about the building continues over food & drink outside photos: Ian Hinton

The House

This house is an enigma. It presents as a late seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century gable-end-stack house with an unheated central bay (Type 'T' in the RCHME Classification). The front, south, elevation appears to have been refaced in the nineteenth century with selected, similarly-sized and coursed flints with soft red-brick window and door surrounds and is almost symmetrical. At the rear, the flint walls are far rougher and stones less evenly-sized with small blocked windows, and neither front nor back has any brick in it. The gable ends, particularly the eastern gable, are a patterned mixture of brick and flint. Both gables have been reduced in height, presumably when the thatched roof was replaced with pantiles. The eastern stack is internal, whilst the western stack is external, but internal photos taken during recent repair work show the gable walls to be of flint, but brick where the stack is located (photo) - indicating that the stack was once internal and has been rebuilt outside, perhaps when the room was panelled in pine during a Georgian makeover, with large fielded panels.



sunk-quadrant chamfers on the inside, terminated in elaborate stops which include a lamb's tongue and nick, with a half-round bar, with diamond bratishing both sides and a central small pyramid



The roof is of sawn-square pine, with large collars half-dovetailed and bolted into the principal rafters, with chiselled assembly marks. It has two rows of continuous purlins notched into the principals, all of which which could date to the same campaign as the refacing of the front elevation. Some of the additional pine principal joists upstairs still display parts of the original Baltic Timber Marks from their shipping to England.

However, all the principal joists downstairs have simple chamfers with lamb's-tongue stops with a nick - usually dated to the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The cranked newel staircase also dates to the seventeenth century but probably towards the end (details in the panel below). It was not originally located where it now is, as empty mortices for floor joists are visible in the stairwell and the top newel-post is not located at the end of the stair run. Was it brought in, or moved within the room? A scar in the ceiling indicates an earlier partition which could be interpreted as a cross passage, another possible early seventeenth-century feature - was the stair relocated when this was removed?



The chamfer on the door frame into the eastern room from the central bay has

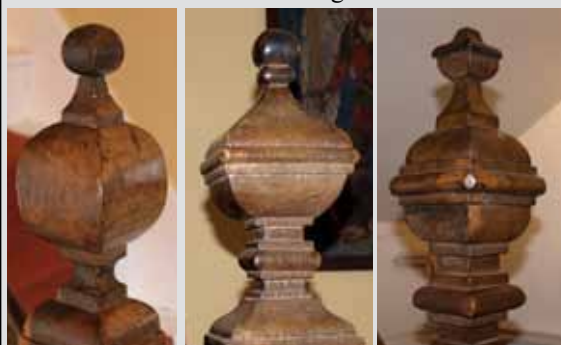
The house was originally built in flint, but was it a tripartite house in the sixteenth/seventeenth century style (Type 'G' or 'J' in RCHME terms), later extensively remodelled with gable-end stacks, or was it a late seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century house built in the new way with end stacks (Type 'T'), but with some earlier timbers incorporated?

above right:
the elaborate chamfer stop on the door-frame (photos: Ian Hinton)
above left:
the external stack on the east gable
left:
flint walling replaced by the later brickwork of the external stack, unlike the internal west gable (photo: Rob Howard)

The staircase

Despite minor differences in materials and some of the carving details, this staircase compares well with the best late seventeenth-century stairs described in Walsingham (see *NHBG Journal 6 - The Buildings of Walsingham*, pp58-59). The similar form of the finials on top of the newel posts and the similarities of the baluster mouldings raise the possibility that they were the work of the same carpenter - Walsingham is only 5 miles to the north. Although the balusters here are of pine and they lack the three-dimensional detailing of the Walsingham ones shown below, it is worth noting that the Stella Maris balusters are only moulded on the display side and are flat on the reverse.

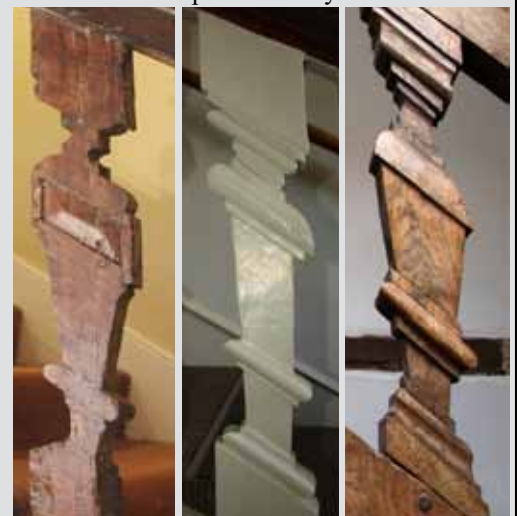
As explained elsewhere, this stair is not in its original location - whether it was moved internally (it could be contemporary with the house) or was brought in from another house during a refurbishment is not known. However, given the other fashionable remodellings done here - the fielded pine panelling with a domed-back alcove cupboard set into a blocked window opening, and the window-reveal shutters, is it likely that an "out-of-date" staircase was brought in during a later update?



Finials compared :-

Heath Farmhouse Stonegate Farm, Walsingham St David's, Walsingham

(photos: Michael Brown)



Balusters compared:-

Heath Farmhouse Stella Maris Walsingham St David's Walsingham

Neatishead Radar Museum and Nuclear Bunker (11th August 2018)

Ian Hinton



I am surprised that only 20 members wanted to go on this visit, given that most NHBG members lived through the Cold War, with all its talk of RSGs and nuclear bunkers. This was a rare chance to see one close up.

The bunker

Those that did go, enjoyed an instructive guided tour round the bunker by a knowledgeable volunteer after a walk across the large site to an unprepossessing building into which we descended. We were led through large corridors and halls with enormous blast doors and hundreds of devices to dampen any blast that might get through. Huge plant rooms capable of dealing with purifying the air and water and decontamination after a nuclear attack dominate one end of the complex. Early computer rooms with raised floors for the enormous wiring looms of the time are now eerily empty. Large switch panels, covered in lights and dials remain on the walls.

Unfortunately, in 1966 an underground fire killed three firefighters and the complex had to be flooded as the only way to extinguish the fire.

The lowest-tech solution in the bunker is the escape cord that is now on the walls of every corridor. Every few feet are two knotted pieces attached to the cord, one shorter than the other, and these indicate the direction to the nearest exit in the pitch black - Minotaur chase, anyone!



*left:
the low-tech
solution to
finding the exits
in the dark*

In the afternoon, in the RADAR Museum it was explained that this is the longest continuously-operating RADAR site and that the Museum traces the history and development of Air Defence Radar since its practical invention in 1935 right up to today, although the idea of detection had been discussed since the end of the nineteenth century. The Museum houses several rooms showing different aspects of Radar and Neatishead, as well as displaying fighter and bomber cockpits.

*top left:
The listed Type 84 receiver and one
of the many exits from the bunker
(photos: Ian Hinton)*

*top right:
the plan of the main level of
the complex*



upper middle: descending into the depths

lower middle: one of the many blast doors

bottom: one of the computer rooms

In September 1941, the Air Ministry installed the first secret radar system at RAF Neatishead. At first, the station was home to temporary mobile Radars but soon had new, improved fixed Radar systems. In 1953, as part of the upgraded 'ROTOR' system, operations were relocated from the wartime 'Happidrome' building to a new three storey bunker, deep underground, designed to withstand a nuclear attack, but not a direct hit. The large above-ground Type 84 concrete receiver from the 1960s (photo previous page) is on the DOE list, as having Architectural merit.

Upgrades and revamps went on throughout the 1980s and 1990s as technology advanced. Neatishead closed in 2004 and was reassigned as a Remote Radar Head, supporting the last two remaining CRCs at Boulmer and Scampton.

The Museum is an independent Trust and was accredited in 2002 and well worth a visit. Thanks to the volunteers who showed us round.

Lastly, thank goodness that none of its nuclear capability ever had to be put to the test!



part of one of the many plant rooms underground



some of the pressure-absorbing mechanisms in the event of a nuclear blast

NHBG Research

A Digest of Buildings Visited Since March 2018

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.

Castle Street, Thetford

This house presents an array of heavily weathered timbers to the street with three doors and sash windows under a roof of eighteenth- or nineteenth-century pantiles. The west wall is composed of full-height studs of large section, with two contiguous doorways with two-centred arch heads forming the inner wall of



the service end of a medieval house. Through a modern partition to the north is a two-centred arch 'durn' doorway, evidently the rear end of a former cross-passage. The later inserted stairs rise against the north wall and from these can be seen the northern brace for the central tie beam. Both brace and tie beam are strikingly massive, with surviving spandrel tracery. Evidently the entire existing domestic accommodation within the walls is a later construction inside a large open medieval hall, for which the service wing was to the west and probable parlour wing, now gone, to the east. The rafters of the roof, seen through a hatch, appear to be sooted, suggesting that the hall originally had a central open hearth before the construction of a lateral chimney stack which partly survives in the north-east corner.

Such a large, expensively built (large timbers and twenty-two foot tie beams) and elaborately-decorated building at a mid-



fifteenth century date could be a Guildhall or the house of a very prosperous person. Either the service wing to the west or the eastern wing could have been used for trade given the location next to the market.

Vicarage Road, Foulden

This house is a long two-storey range with the north front facing the road. It has a slate roof and a modern porch. The porch leads into what was the cross-wing of a timber-framed house and the



remains of a jetty are visible. Beyond this is the cross-passage with the remains of two doors to the service rooms.

This was a large and important house when it was built, probably in the 16th century with the jettied cross-wing and the kitchen being added later, possibly when the hall was floored. There were few dateable features apart from the flat-laid joists and the long edge-halved scarf joint. The form of the building is not revealed from the outside because after a roof fire the walls of the whole building were raised in height and it was covered with a continuous long roof so that the articulation of the cross-wing with its roof at a right-angle was lost. It wasn't possible to determine the full fenestration but a watercolour of the late 19th century confirms the steeper pitch of the original roof and the cross-wing.

The stair turret at the rear with a small adjoining room could be interpreted as a 'waiting room' with the upper chamber of the cross wing possibly being used for a manorial court.



Norfolk church chests
 photos: Ian Hinton
 Ludham W Bradenham
 Thompson
 S Burlingham Wilton
 Litcham Reedham
 Gt Witchingham Erpingham
 Gt Witchingham
 detail
 Hindringham Hempstead
 (photo Anne Woollett)

