

NHBG Newsletter



Autumn 2005

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Norfolk Historic Buildings Group



Hemsby: Norfolk's answer to Cressing Barns (see pp 11-14)

Contents

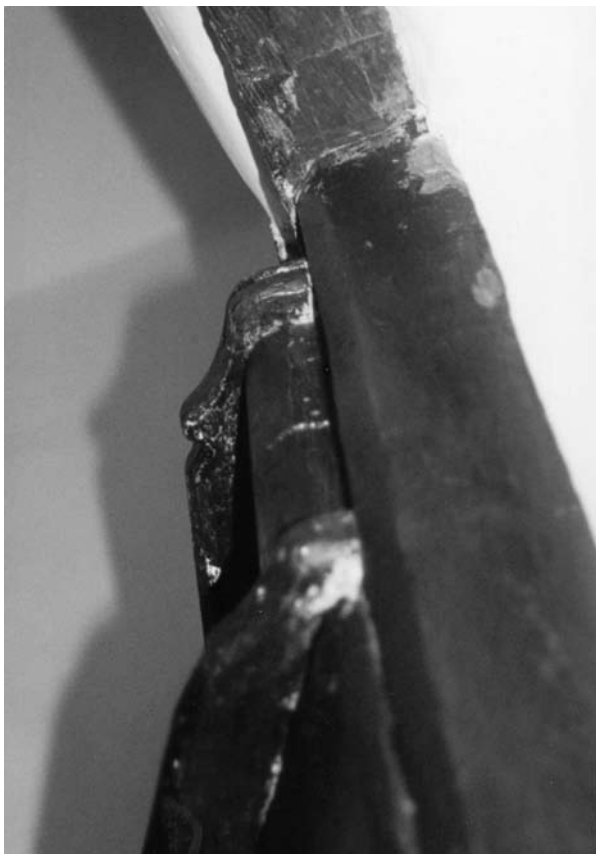
Chair	2
Moulded Stair Treads	2
VAG Meetings.....	2
From East Anglia to New England	3
Harleston Day with Mark Kenyon	4
A view of Swaffham.....	6
Redenhall Church	6
Swaffham Church	7
Cromer – A Late Victorian Seaside Town.....	8
NHBG visit to Raynham Hall.....	9
Old Hall South Burlingham: a Reprise	9
Dower House: Points to Note.....	10
Hemsby Barn.....	11
Waxham Great Barn.....	12/13
Essex Historic Buildings Group Study Day at Cressing Temple	14
Gowthorpe Manor	15
NHBG Church and Chapel sub-group	16
The Ancient House, Thetford.....	17
Insurance Note	17
Editor, AGM, Courses.....	18
Book Review and Reading Suggestions	19
NHBG Winter 2005/2006	20

CHAIR

I am amazed that a year has passed since last Autumn's Newsletter; the Group has been so busy. As we near the end of our Summer programme we can review our now customary range of activities successfully carried through. We have had visits to Harleston, Cromer, Swaffham and Aylsham, each conducted by experts on the towns. Groups have explored the individual houses of Gowthorpe Manor, South Burlingham Hall, The Dower House at Tacolneston and Raynham Hall. The last named, and grandest, was a revelation in its originality of design and quality of detail. The estate buildings at Holkham were the subject of a visit led by Susanna Wade-Martins and we were privileged to visit two agricultural buildings of earlier eras on the AGM day at Hemsby and Waxham. Hemsby is clearly an historical document of the first importance and Waxham is impressively well presented by the Norfolk Historic Buildings Trust. It is peculiarly frustrating, though, after spending twenty-five years debunking the myth of 'ship's timbers', to find one of the Waxham tie-beams has been replaced with a full size ship's mast.

As you must know by now, the Journal No. 2. has been issued and is meeting with a very favourable reception. The Journal Launch at New Buckenham on June 13th attracted an encouragingly enthusiastic audience and sixty people from far and near attended the Study Day on July 9th when eleven houses were open for examination and discussion. I was particularly impressed at these two events by the cheerful support and organisation given by the members of the committee (particularly those who have heard me talk at least four times on the subject). Their energy and commitment have helped the Group to deliver another season of constructive and entertaining activities.

Michael Brown, Chairman



Moulded Stair Treads

This is Michael Brown's photograph of a moulded stair tread at the newel post end and it comes from Yeoman's Cottage in Wacton. It is not a very common occurrence and has been included in this newsletter to draw members' attention to the existence of an approach to detail. A similar moulded stair tread in the stair turret was also noted on the visit to Gowthorpe Hall, a rather different status of building (see page 15); sadly we were unable to take photographs of the interior and it is not possible to compare the two mouldings. Let us hope that at some stage in the future this will become possible

Vernacular Architecture Group Conferences 2005

Oxford Conference at Rewley House, Oxford. 28-30 Oct
Diffusion and Invention: Vernacular Building in England and the New World will explore a variety of aspects of building practice in both England and the eastern seaboard of the United States.

Winter Conference at Royal Holloway. 17-18 December
Buildings, Rebuildings and Vernacular Thresholds will explore approaches to the theme of the 'great rebuilding' a little over half a century after the publication of W G Hoskins' seminal article on the subject.

contact: Rosemary Forrest: 01603 742315 for details

From East Anglia to New England Lawrence Butler

This lecture intended to explore the vernacular building traditions in Virginia and New England, to assess the contribution of similar traditions in East Anglia and to identify the point of time when the English traditions ceased to have noticeable influence. How numerous were timber structures on stone foundations, close studding, windbracing, jettied upper storeys, roofs of thatch or clay tile, central chimney stacks in brick, lobby or end entries?

Throughout the study of the eastern seaboard of North America three factors played their part: the universal availability of large timbers of oak, pine and poplar, the intractable stone sources, and the width of the rivers allowing easy transport of building materials. The earliest excavated buildings (ca. 1640) at Jamestown were ‘cottages’ with earthfast posts and mud walling, as in coastal Lincolnshire. Jamestown had settlers from that county as well as from Norfolk and King’s Lynn. The earliest surviving building was a farm, Fairbanks House (1641) at Dedham (Mass.), its building traditions drawn from the Stour valley on the Suffolk/Essex border. This was timber framed with close studding on a stone base, three uneven bays with a central entry and chimney stack, serving a living room and a kitchen. Slightly later was the Gedney House (1664) at the small sea-port of Salem (Mass.) – timber-framed with close studding on a brick base, four bays with an off-centre chimney stack, serving a hall and chamber, with bed-chambers above, that on the street frontage originally jettied. The original roof covering of shingles over boarding was concealed beneath a later heightening. In part brick nogging infill survived behind the clapboard walls. A variant on the entirely timber-framed house was the “stone-ender” where one gable and its fireplaces was substantially constructed in stone whilst the rest of the house was timber framed, with horizontal timber clapboards and often a shingled roof. In an example of 1696 in Lincoln (R.I.), the Valentine Whitman House was of square plan with parlour and kitchen sharing the ground floor chimney stack, and two upper storey bedrooms doing likewise. The lobby entry was alongside the chimney stack and a stone-built basement store ran under the house. Where stone was unworkable, the stone-ender might become a “brick-ender” as at Fones Greene House of 1715 in Warwick (R.I.).



*Bacon's Castle,
Virginia 1665*

Much more ambitious was Arthur Allen’s Brick House (later called Bacon’s Castle), a mansion of 1665 in Virginia. The use of English bond brickwork, curvilinear gables and elaborate chimney columns (at the two gables) gave the house an East Anglian character. The plan is also English with a central passage between the front porch tower and the rear stair. Each of the two main floors, with a tall basement below and attics above, had two main rooms with grand fireplaces. The roofs are now clay tiled but were originally stone tiles from south-west England. The use of brick, initially used as a polite material, became more common in farmhouses after 1725 and also in town houses where there was risk of fire sweeping rapidly through wooden structures. Brick makers were known in Williamsburg from 1690 onwards.

However, as the eighteenth century proceeded, although the use of timber as the vernacular material continued, new classical elements of internal decoration and then of external detail increased, such as overmantels, stair balusters and door pediments. Again the towns develop their own vernacular, aided by the spacious street layout and extensive gardens as in Williamsburg or Yorktown. Housing was seldom cramped by continuous frontages.

An even bigger contrast is in the plantation architecture: the grand mansions of the Chesapeake basin in Virginia, such as Shirley of 1738 or Mount Airy of 1760-4. These were discreetly flanked by offices, stabling and slave quarters and supported by barns for grain, tobacco and cotton. Minor agricultural buildings on staddle stones may hark back to a Dorset or Cotswold vernacular, domestic buildings are usually derived from Georgian pattern-books.

So, perhaps the question should not be where and when does the debt to the East Anglian vernacular cease, but how did the new settlers adapt to the totally unfamiliar conditions of abundant timber and few other building resources (until they started brick-making locally). As Carl Lounsbury has written, “Distance certainly weakened the communication of ideas and few, if any, English or European ideas existed in their complete and orthodox form in colonial North America... Small decorative elements seem to have travelled best across oceans and continents. [Such elements] provide a reassuring measure of familiarity for those who seek the common bonds that united Great Britain and her American colonies. Up close, you feel at home. Step back and survey the room and you are in comfortable surroundings, perhaps a neighbour’s house. Open the door

and walk outside and you are standing in a strange place beyond the pale.” How different was the endless forest of New England from the long-cultivated, gently rolling chalkland of western Norfolk.

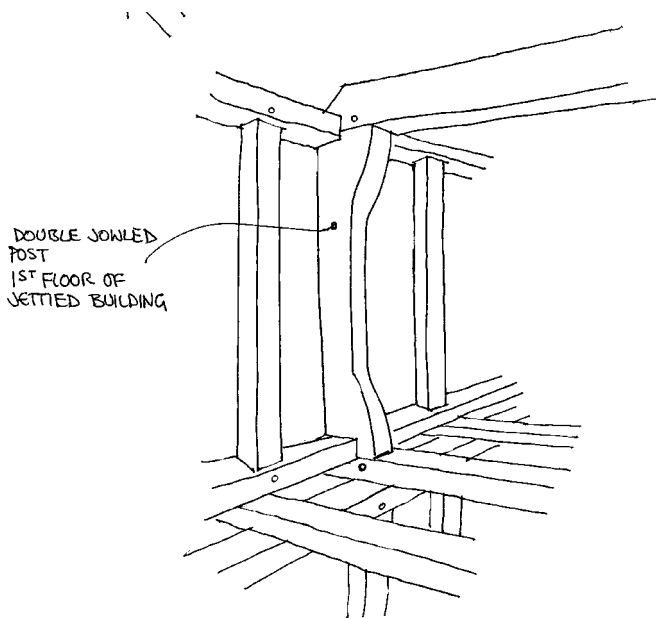
Harleston Day with Mark Kenyon



Carved Bressumer (photo : Denis Argyle)

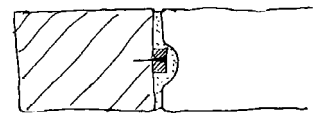
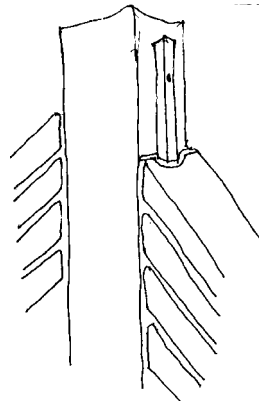
At first sight the buildings of Harleston appear to be fairly typical Georgian and Victorian, brick-built with sash windows. In fact Candler's House of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century might be regarded as the only true Georgian house in Harleston; others, apparently eighteenth century, are often far more ancient, with brick skins concealing earlier timber framing. Unlike Wymondham or North Walsham, Harleston was never devastated by fire, and houses continued to be timber-built, until the fashion for brickwork and symmetry arrived in the eighteenth century, and they acquired brick cladding and new fenestration.

The group assembled at The Merchant's House for coffee. Until recently it was known as Bank House, for in 1870 it was divided into a bank and the manager's residence. Today, six years of restoration work have revealed its history. Its very pretty Georgian façade and elegant front rooms conceal an important heavily-timbered sixteenth-century house with a front jetty. To the front elevation a double-jowled post remains exposed (see fig.1) – proof of the original jetty.



The floors between the ground and first floor rooms are about 30 inches thick to accommodate a massive carved and moulded bridging beam and joists, which were exposed briefly during restoration.

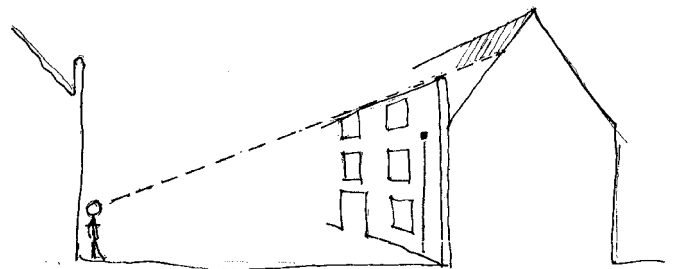
The main bedroom shows a particularly fine example of a moulded oak ceiling, with oak plank panels. Some original brick nogging infill is also visible; the bricks were found, during restoration, to be purpose made (fig. 2) A ritual mark, scratched into the wet daub is also visible. The rear of the house has two adjoining gables that could possibly have had an open



PURPOSE MADE BRICKS FOR NOGGING WITH AN INDENT TO KEY THE MORTAR AROUND A BATTEN

gallery below.

We sallied forth for the tour of the town, led by Mark Kenyon, in the course of which we circumambulated what had been the original huge triangular marketplace, now almost completely encroached upon by buildings, and criss-crossed by Church Street and several lokes. Mark pointed out houses that were timber-framed underneath brick cladding, and also those which at the time of such work had another storey added.(fig.3) As well as sharing his architectural knowledge Mark, who is a Harleston man, was also a fount of local history and reminis-



cence. The nineteenth-century colour-washed Magpie Hotel, we learned, still retains the original timber frame house underneath, but it was also the haunt of Sir Alfred Munnings (1878-1959) in his impecunious days as a young artist. He paid for his beer in pictures and left thirty paintings on the slate.

The Swan Hotel acquired extra front rooms by means of a handsome Georgian façade being added nine feet beyond the timber-framed front. Through the carriageway and into the back yard however, all is seventeenth century. We were allowed, two or three at a time to ascend, rather gingerly, the creaky, shallow staircase (see photo) with its elegantly turned but strangely low banisters.

On our way down The Thoroughfare towards lunch there was a lot to take in: a carved bressumer, early clustered chimneys, an enchanting tent-shaped Regency porch. Another back yard, once full of bustling workshops, had two houses oddly built, one in front of the other but the walls, with a window, barely a foot apart. Ancient lights indeed! Harleston, in its heyday must

have been extremely tightly packed. There was actually one grubby little whitewashed cottage, single-storied with dormers, still surviving, tucked in amid the changing shop fronts and the traffic.

We were rather tightly packed ourselves in the café where we enjoyed an excellent lunch.

In the afternoon, as a grand finale, Mark showed us his own rather special building. We entered an unassuming Victorian shop front, and proceeded up a rear stairway, to be confronted by a spectacular sight, a raised aisle hall – or rather the two central bays of an original four-bay building (figs. (a), (b), (c)).

It has been dated to between 1310 and 1315, and the roof frame above the wall plate remains 90% original. It is a crown post roof with paired rafters and half-lapped collars over a collar purlin, and it is heavily soot-blackened. The raised tie beam is set on replaced aisle posts – the hacked-off originals still show the jowled joints to the arcade plates. The original lower tie beam is still in place with replaced spandrels in their original mortices.

A floor of unknown date has been added; Mark thinks the joists are aspen and the boarding over is a mixture of oak and elm planks. The wall plates and the walls below have been replaced, and would appear to be either late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. The north wall of the ground floor has an eight-bar mullion window, with evidence below of either a fixed bench or a loom, that had been fixed to the frame with heavy oak pegs of one and a quarter inches in diameter. These later walls have been ruddled, and this stops above the pegs, so it is to be assumed that the bench or loom was in place when the walls were coated.

The front range (now containing the shop) runs transverse to the original hall and it is presumed that it was built across the position of the demolished west bay of the aisled hall. Inside there is still evidence of jetties that ran both on the west (street side) and to the east (abutting the earlier hall.) We assume that this was a pre-made frame that when erected did not use the ground floor inner wall of the jetty, but set it directly below the first floor wall as this was then an internal partition. The plasterwork between the ceiling joists also terminates at the point of the front jetty inset wall but continues, unbroken, to this partition wall between the front range and the hall to the rear.

The front (west) of the building was brick-clad in the nineteenth century and much of the original timber frame was removed. Swept head four-light sliding sash windows and a shop front were also added at this time.

Our thanks to Mark Kenyon for revealing Harlestone to us (and for helpful architectural notes), to Roger and Jane Elton for their hospitality, and to Carol Nutt for organising such an interesting day.



(a)



(b)



(c)

(a) Mark Kenyon's reconstruction of the frontage of his house; the raised aisle hall is at the rear.

(b) The house as it now appears (photo: Carole Nutt)

(c) The raised aisle hall following conservation/reconstruction

(d) Mark and the Group

(e) Swan Hotel: staircase

(f) Swan Hotel : Venetian window

(g) Lunch

(d)



(e)



(f)



(g)



(photos: Rosemary Forrest)

Redenhall Church

Redenhall church sits high on its hill in splendid isolation above the whirling bypass. The parish was once 'Redenhall with Harleston and Wortwell', but Harleston, at the river crossing with its great market place, grew and Redenhall declined. The great tower with its eye-catching flushwork indicates a building of high quality; indeed it was always a valuable rectory, with a series of very wealthy patrons. The earliest fabric visible appears to be fourteenth century, but in 1858 the foundations of a Saxo-Norman round-towered building was found beneath the nave. Later building campaigns can be suggested.

For example, in the early fourteenth century Thomas de Brotherton, Edward II's brother, became overlord of many lands in south Norfolk. In 1311 he presented as rector William de Neuport, a wealthy pluralist, who was buried in the chancel in 1330. Could we have here a Swaffham situation with a rebuilding campaign initiated by the rector? Later, the de la Pole family came into the main manor – their leopard's face logo and Brotherton's rose are on the tower. There is plenty of will evidence for a fifteenth-century campaign: in 1452 towards making the roof and from 1469 onwards bequests for the new tower, culminating in 1518 with the date and rebus of the then rector, Richard Shelton, on a top pinnacle.



(Photo: Ian Hinton)

In 1516 William Rede, 'carver,' was taken to court for fraud. His contract was 'to ceil the roof of the chancel there with timber called wainscot within 8 weeks for the sum of 5 marks [£3.6.8]' but he had used poplar and ash instead of oak.

The numerous Gawdy family came on the scene in the sixteenth century and built a grand north chapel, with, originally, a ceiling painted with black and white double-headed eagles, like those in the chancel roof of the Great Hospital in Norwich. This motif was once also to be seen in the chapel windows, and is today present in a corbel in the nave roof, on the font and, most spectacularly, in the famous brass double-headed eagle lectern.

There are many questions to ask about this building such as how wide exactly was the original Saxo-Norman church, why are the aisles of different widths and when was the chancel arch altered? Among the furnishings in the church were the screen (restored or repainted?) another, wooden, eagle lectern (like the one at Pulham St. Mary) and an Italian painted chest, but time was pressing and we were due at the Merchants House in Harleston for the start of the tour.

AF

A view of Swaffham, 17th July 2005, Elsie Lack

Swaffham showed us the pleasant face of a small market town whose heyday as reflected in its buildings seemed firmly set in the eighteenth century, although a considerable amount of earlier building remains behind some of the eighteenth century frontages, and there are important nineteenth century additions as well as many twentieth century conversions, showing the social changes and needs of the town.

With the story of the pedlar of Swaffham in our ears, we set off on a circular tour, examining brickwork, pointing, windows and such like on our way, as Vic Nierop-Reading, our guide, had suggested, (somewhat optimistically in my case) that we should 'date by appearances'. Faden's map of 1797 acted as a very good guide, showing as it does, that the importance of the town lies in its position at a crossroads, Lynn and London Streets going roughly north-south, Norwich Street going east-west. Our route via the Old Maltings, now flats, and Plowright Passage, a former agricultural engineering works, now a little shopping area, took us into the market place at the centre of the town. Long, triangular and still quite imposing for a small rural town, it is bordered by fairly large town houses, now mostly put to other usage. Of these, Hamond's School Sixth form centre seemed to me the most intriguing, Oakleigh House the most impressive. Both date from the early eighteenth century. Hamond's a house

of five bays with central pediment, pilasters, and un-usual brickwork, was aptly called by one of the group, 'Mid Norfolk country posh'. Oakleigh House, more sophisticated, has seven bays, a double pediment, a dentil frieze and quoins in contrasting coloured brick. But behind this 1730s Palladian façade lies a seventeenth and maybe sixteenth century flint farmhouse, probably once thatched, that we were lucky enough to examine, if only briefly, when the owner invited us into his garden, telling us of a 1658 date carved inside, and that it had remained a farmhouse until the 1940s; here town meets country in the building itself.

Town and country are indeed close; on the north side of the market place, in an area known as the Shambles, are both the Assembly Rooms, once a centre of social activity, and the Corn Exchange, once a centre of trade. (Sadly the former is com-



Oakleigh House: ?16C farmhouse to 18th C splendour (photo: Elsie Lack)

pletely under wraps at present and the latter is under repair – though it is possible to appreciate its Gothic style with attractive coloured brick-work and attention to detail.) Along the Norwich Road, the eighteenth century Manor Farm buildings and Manor Farm were to me the real joy of the tour as once again the country met the town. An avenue of trees, marked on Faden’s map, led from the Manor House – another pleasing eighteenth century house in red brick of two storeys and seven bays, and hipped roof.



Corn Exchange (photo: Elsie Lack)

The area at the upper end of the avenue is still almost in open country, yet only a stone’s throw from the town centre. Dunthorne’s National School in Gothic style deserves some scrutiny, partly because he was a local architect, as does the Shire Hall, now flats, mainly because of its unusual position with its back to the town, but very appropriately looking out to the countryside, again emphasising Swaffham’s role as a town dependent on the land surrounding it and to which the country people looked as a centre.

Thanks to Vic for the thoughtful and informative way in which he guided us into looking at the town of Swaffham.



Swaffham Church with Sandy Heslop Ian Hinton

In the afternoon we were treated to a masterclass by Sandy Heslop of how to analyse the construction of a church, in this case the sizeable town church of Swaffham, which was substantially rebuilt in the late fifteenth century.

Sandy’s guided tour of the building raised many interesting little anomalies in the construction, particularly of the window tracery. Why, for instance, in an apparently single rebuilding campaign were the five windows in the north aisle identical (following the pattern of those in Norwich Blackfriars), whereas four of those in the south aisle had apparently been made by four different masons and the fifth was identical to those in the north aisle? Apart from some issues of detail about why certain things were done, such as work of high and poor quality mixed in a single piece, it also raises questions about how stonemasons worked – were five masons really working on the building at the same time? If so, why? Whilst they appear to have been working to the same pattern, not only did they produce slightly different results, they were also of varying quality.

Our examination of the structure was admirably put in context by the results of detailed study of wills and donations which had contributed to the complexity of the building. With a wealthy population as well as seven guilds in the town, many substantial donations provided for new chapels, windows, seating and other furniture for the church.

The largest change that the late fifteenth century wealth of the town brought about was the demolition of the tower, followed by the extension of the nave westwards by two bays and

the erection of a new tower. The building sequence here also raised a series of questions.

Finally, Sandy put this extensive rebuilding and refurbishment of the church into its local historical context. These were turbulent times in Swaffham. The town was suffering from local political instability, which was affecting its commercial strength. It is possible that the rebuilding of the church was, in part, a community strengthening exercise and an attempt to show that Swaffham was in control of its own affairs.

Overall, this afternoon not only proved again that the more you look, the more you see, but it also reinforced the idea that context is so important when trying to explain something, rather than just describe it.

Thanks to Sandy for an instructive visit and to the churchwardens of Swaffham for the tea and cake, which was very welcome on such a hot day!



A very hot day in Swaffham! The Church, and Strattons’ oasis of cool. (photos : Ian Hinton)

Cromer – A Late Victorian Seaside Town

Richard Berry

The day dawned bright enough. However, Cromer had not been told that it was to be on its best behaviour as visitors were expected. The lifeboat was tucked up in its shed at the end of the pier, as no one in his or her right mind was at sea. The sea could not make up its mind whether to be grey or brown, with white tints. The seagulls had headed south. The wind was touting for business for the shops selling long johns and anoraks.

Nonetheless, a group of NHBG members gathered, shivering, outside St Peter and St Paul Parish Church to meet our guide for the tour, Andy Boyce. Fortunately, there were no weddings as we shuffled towards the porch to get out of the wind.

Andy advised us that a settlement had existed near at the time of The Domesday Book, but had been beaten by the waves and replaced by a prosperous fishing and trading town in medieval times. However, the absence of a harbour and despite a succession of jetties having been built and lost, decline set in and by the eighteenth century, Cromer had shrunk to a few houses around an oversize church – sufficiently oversize that at one stage, the chancel was demolished to make the edifice a more sensible size. (No record as to whether this helped with one of the jetties.)

Late in that century, a revival was spurred by growth in the belief in sea bathing. (Not on 14th May.) By the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the place had become favoured as a location for summer retreats for the moneyed classes of Norfolk and this really promoted Cromer's development. Despite the efforts of the Barclays, the Gurneys et al, the railway arrived in 1877 and then things really took off. So did we, to see what resulted.

The greater part of the development was from about 1880 to 1910, with the expected Norfolk architects (Skipper, Scott and Carter) playing a large part in designing both commercial and residential properties, the latter ranging from very substantial houses to terraced groups of villas, particularly as the west side of the town was developed from 1890. London architects augmented them also, brought in by outsiders engaged in speculative investment as well as those creating Kensington on Sea or whatever.

A major feature of many of both of these types of houses was the architects' blending the use of local materials (flint from the beach in both dressed and natural form, particularly) with 'imported' red brick and terracotta ornamentation.

Andy proved to be an excellent guide and incredibly knowledgeable, as he led us around showing us 'then' (from photographs) and 'now', in several cases showing the various stages of development of individual buildings. Of particular note is The Hotel de Paris at the top of the cliff, overlooking the pier, which was substantially re-fronted by George Skipper in 1894. The quality of the internal décor and the stained and etched glass in the reception area and dining room are such that it would be worthwhile going for dinner there to inspect. Unfortunately, no lunches on that day, so once more into the wind.

In Cliff Avenue, on the east of the town, we were especially charmed by both the variety of houses and the amount of detailing in their designs. Terracotta already mentioned; turrets, 'Tudor' chimneys and timbering, coloured glass in profusion and, even, mock Japanese characters in ironwork facing a

bungalow took minds off lack of feeling in fingers and toes as we walked.

A walk along the prom, prom, prom showed us various examples of the sort of building to be expected in such places, together with the mess which twenty first century improvers can wreak even in a conservation area. Fortunately, it also took us to the pier café, where we thawed and fed.

While in the pier pavilion, we were treated to a brief tour of the recently re-organised and enlarged theatre, itself the result of the growth of tourism early in the last century requiring more than a band-stand to please the punters. (Note: do go and see the end-of-the-pier summer show for a good old-fashioned entertainment.)

After lunch, Andy showed us a number of examples of how even relatively modest villas had been given interest by the Norfolk architects, who did not just work for the major fee earners.

Right on the dot of 3.30 p.m. Andy completed the four and



An interior view of the reception area at The Hotel de Paris. (photo: Karen Mackie)



Members dressed for mid-winter in a residential area of Cromer. (photo: Karen Mackie)

NHBG visit to Raynham Hall: 21 June 2005

Pevsner's *Norfolk 2* volume devotes almost eight pages to Raynham Hall, so the following is the briefest of summaries of the Hall and its history.

We were lucky to see the Hall. It is not open to the public and Lord Townshend is seriously ill, so it was a case of keeping fingers crossed before the visit. We were also lucky to have Scilla Landale, Lord Townshend's secretary, as our guide (Scilla was also our guide to Walsingham last year). The Hall, too, has been lucky. Sir Roger Townshend, grandson of Sir Nicholas Bacon of Stiffkey, began building his new home in 1619 and the family still live there. The Hall also escaped Victorianisation (apart from the building of a practical water tower) because, as Scilla said, 'when the family left politics [in the late eighteenth century] the money stopped'. So today the house is very much as it was when William Kent designed and installed his magnificent fixtures and fittings in the first part of the eighteenth century. Sadly, some of the contents had to be sold to meet twentieth-century death duties, so, fine though the collections of furniture and pictures are, they were once even finer.

The Hall apparently had no architect. Rather, Sir Roger and his master mason, William Edge, seem to have evolved the design together, something that was not particularly unusual at the time. Work went slowly: wainscotting was not ordered until 1635. Then, on 1 January 1637, Sir Roger died. Little more was done to the house until 1697, when the reins were picked up by Charles, Second Viscount Townshend, and his master mason, another William Edge. The Hall we see today is largely the result of their work.

The entrance in the west front seems quite modest for the eighteenth-century 'power building' that the Hall represents. However it opens into the magnificent Marble Hall. One and a half storeys high, the Marble Hall takes up most of the west side of the house. Although William Edge II had modified the original layout of this grand reception room by 1704, the grandeur of the room is the result of the marble work done by Isaac Mansfield to William Kent's design, for which marble was cut in 1726.

Kent was much in demand in this part of Norfolk. At the same time as he was working for Lord Townshend at Raynham, he was also working for Sir Robert Walpole at Houghton and Thomas Coke, later First Earl of Leicester, at Holkham.

On the first floor is the Belisarius Room (named after a Salvator Rosa portrait which was sold). It, too, is one and a half storeys high and has a grand ceiling, although this one is earlier, dating from around 1660. Despite the size of this room and the Marble Hall the rest of Raynham's rooms really are quite small (hence visiting groups being restricted in size). This emphasises the fact that the Hall really is a family home. And one of the present Lord Townshend's proudest achievements, we were told, is to have ensured that the view from the east front is still one of woods and fields; there is not a single wire or pylon in sight! Although (out of sight) there are many thick files attesting to the battles fought with bureaucracy to ensure that this is so.



The early eighteenth century central doorcase inserted in the west front.

The east elevation of Raynham Hall under observation.
(photos : Robin Forrest)



Old Hall South Burlingham : a Reprise Alayne Fenner

When our second group visited South Burlingham on a perfect June day, it so happened that Whispering Dan Cruikshank had just been on television pontificating about the Old Hall. He was of the opinion that it must once have been a grand house like Kirstead Hall and that the straight joints in the brickwork on the façade showed where it had lost its two cross-wings. This occasioned much hilarity among those of us slightly more familiar with sixteenth-century Norfolk buildings (and after all Stephen Haywood had explained this one – see Newsletter no.9) Old Hall was originally a timber framed building with brick wraparound end gable walls – rather like our NHBG logo, Laundry Farm, Tacolneston of about fifty years later.

Our host Peter Scupham further amused us by his vivid imitation of D.C. performing to camera, announcing triumphantly (with gestures) 'This must be the cross passage!' for at least half a dozen takes.

The house beguiled and baffled us - a paradox of obviously high status painted rooms, but very rough timber work. No mouldings, no stops, apart from a pair low down on a door frame, in fact, not much overhead woodwork visible at all. Maybe this was a result of the upheavals incurred during its long life such as when it was turned into two dwellings after WW1.

The attic gallery was extraordinary; the drawings looked so fresh they could have been done last week. And what was the medium? Certainly not charcoal or pencil. Oil-based perhaps? Even ex-art teacher Alex Humphries was puzzled. It was obviously something that clung to the wall, withstanding the many layers of whitewash put over it and then, four hundred years later, patiently scalped away. The tiny room adjacent to the gallery showed signs of being brilliantly coloured, which will be revealed one day, but there was no window. Could there have been a dormer?

After our picnic lunch in the idyllic garden and before the tour, we had been made free of photo albums of Before and After pictures and other evidence, all of which much amazed us. A labour of love indeed. Our grateful thanks to Peter and Margaret for making us so welcome once again.

Dower House: Points to Note...

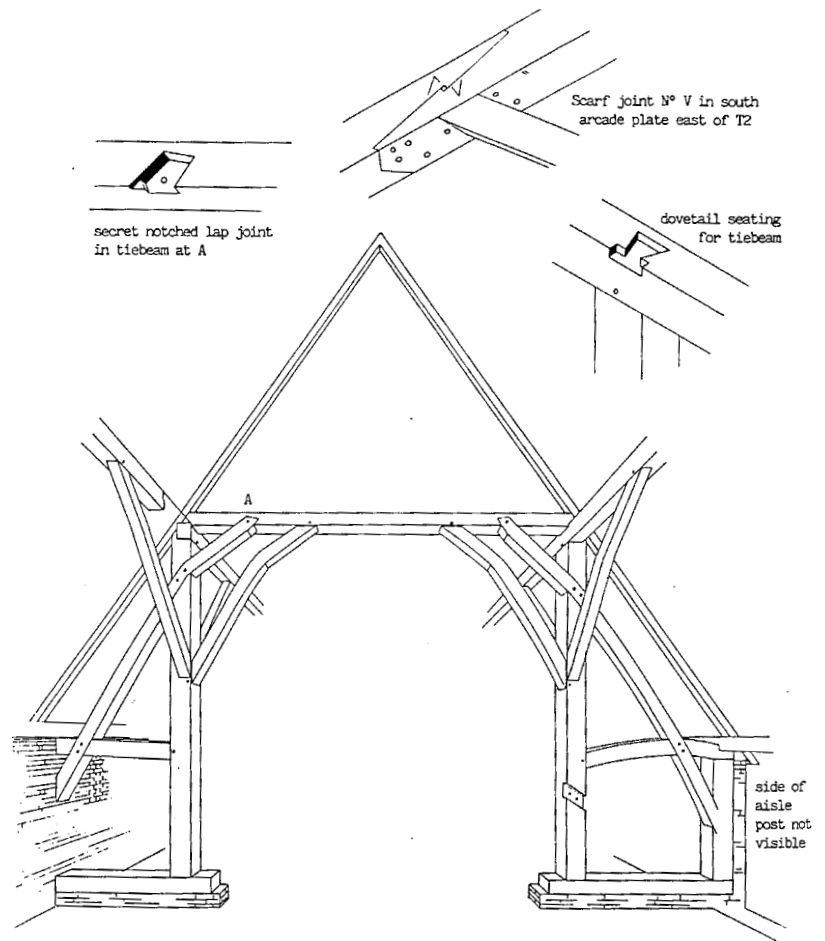
As can be seen, the evening visit to Tacolneston promoted questions, discussions and much pointing, as members studied the drawings of the Dower House against the building itself. (see Newsletter No 8).



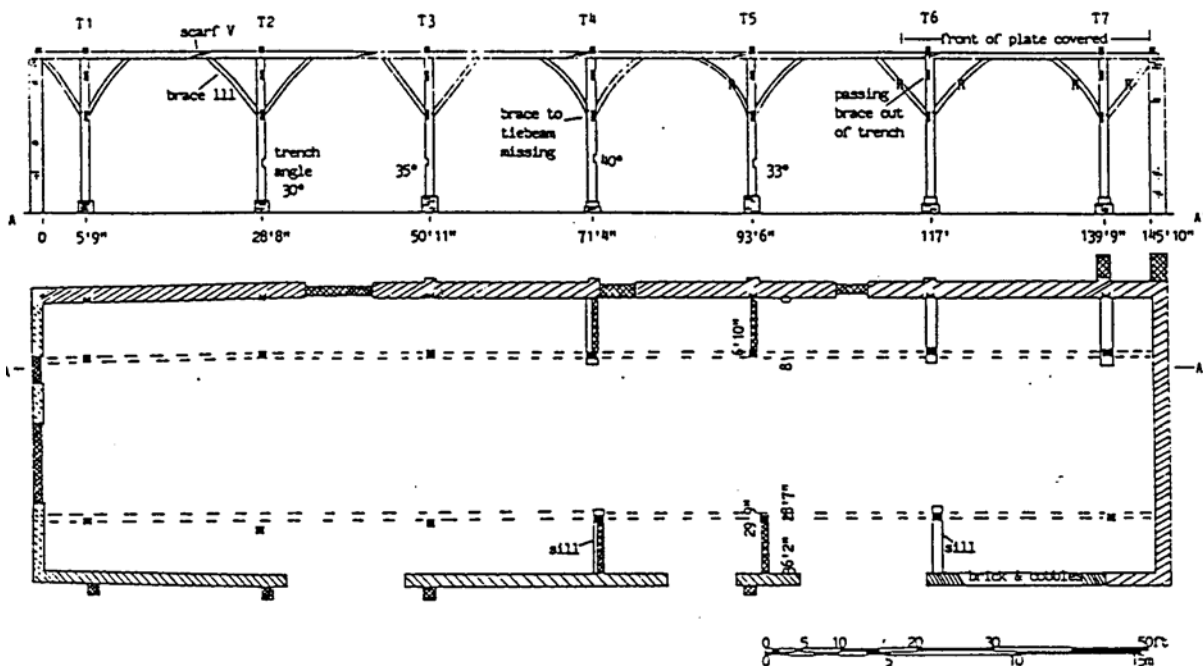
Hemsby Barn

Michael Brown

Our first stop on the day of the AGM was at Hall Farm Barn, Hemsby, and this building was a revelation to those of us who had not seen it before. Firstly, it is big, with eight bays and two threshing floors. Secondly, it is of high quality, fully framed with big square timbers, many of them whole trees. Thirdly, it is early, certainly in the region of seven hundred years old. Its size and quality are obvious to any visitor, but what of its age? It shares many of the characteristics of the earliest surviving large timber structures, the barns at Cressing and Coggeshall in Essex. The posts have no jowls but only little upstands to the rear. Passing braces run from the aisle posts across the aisle ties and the arcade posts to meet the tie beams with notched lap joints. There is a remarkable series of scarf joints in the arcade plate, splayed and tabled with transverse key and sallied, under-squinted abutments (see Cecil Hewett, *English Historic Carpentry*, p.265). These features put the barn at around 1300. This sustained integrity of design goes beyond the technical or picturesque to produce a real aesthetic effect which may be found lacking in later barns which are not fully timber-framed. This building is one of the treasures of the County, and perhaps not generally recognized as such.



Drawings reproduced by kind permission of John Walker. (see cover for photograph)

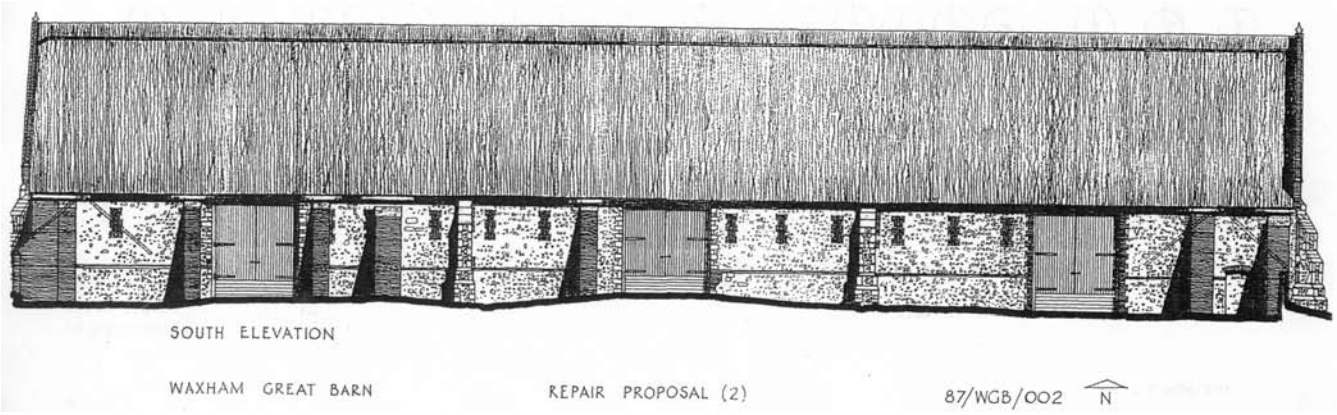


SKETCH OF PLAN & SOUTH ARCADE

Brick Walling

- English bond
- Flemish bond
- other brick
- Random Flemish bond

R = replacement



Waxham Great Barn Visit on 4 June 2005

Anthony Rossi

This grade I listed barn was already in a derelict condition when, in the late summer of 1987, the writer was asked by the Norfolk County Council to undertake a feasibility study with a view to its compulsory purchase and repair. The Council had already undertaken a less detailed study and had basic survey drawings prepared by Robert Smith. Within a few weeks of the present writer’s appointment came the hurricane of October 1987 during which a large section of roof at the east end collapsed, with collateral damage to walls, almost leading to the abandonment of the project. Six years later however, following a public inquiry and some opposition, the barn had been successfully acquired, repaired and re-thatched by teams of Norfolk craftsmen and with financial assistance from English Heritage. Since then, with the support of further external funding, the Council has achieved the repair of the four later low wings and the provision of visitor facilities, and opened the barn to the public.

This impressive building is one of the oldest and largest barns in Norfolk, and an important historical monument set within a still recognisable manorial complex. For many years it was thought on stylistic grounds to date from about 1570 but recent dendrochronology has shown it to have been built in the mid-1580’s, making it slightly younger than the similar barn further up the coast at Paston. It is slightly longer than the Paston Barn but shorter and younger than the barn at Hales Hall in south Norfolk and considerably younger than the monastic aisled barn at Hemsby. It also has affinities with the smaller and slightly later barn at Godwick.

There are interesting similarities and differences in design and construction between Waxham and Paston. The walls of both are predominantly of flint, buttressed, and incorporate

re-used and previously worked medieval freestone, obviously taken from recently dissolved local monastic sites, and including small carved heads, probably label stops, deliberately incorporated in significant positions. Both have roofs of twenty trusses and nineteen bays with alternating tie beam and hammerbeam trusses (also found at Godwick: see Newsletter No 7 Spring 2004).

Paston however has a consistent truss spacing with five common rafters to each bay, and a variation at each of the two threshing door openings, where arched braced trusses are used. At Waxham, which has three threshing doorways, the bays at each are longer, with nine rafters, and at each end of the barn are pairs of bays with seven rafters, while between the threshing doors are short bays of four rafters.

At Waxham the barn has a west-east orientation and the north side, facing the manor house, has a diaper pattern of brick, repeated in the end gables and clearly intended for show; the working south side has no diaper work. There is a similar difference in treatment at Godwick where the show side is even more architecturally pretentious and is given a domestic appearance, and this seems also to have been the case in the east wing at Blickling Hall, of the 1620’s. At Paston, which has a south-north orientation, there is no such distinction, although the general scale and quality of building is impressive in itself.

Paston also appears to be better built, with thicker walls (tapering towards the top) and the two threshing doorways have masonry above them instead of rising to wall plate level as at Waxham. The former shows little or no deformation whereas at Waxham the walls are seriously deformed,

Continued on page 13



*Paston Barn
(photo : English Heritage)*



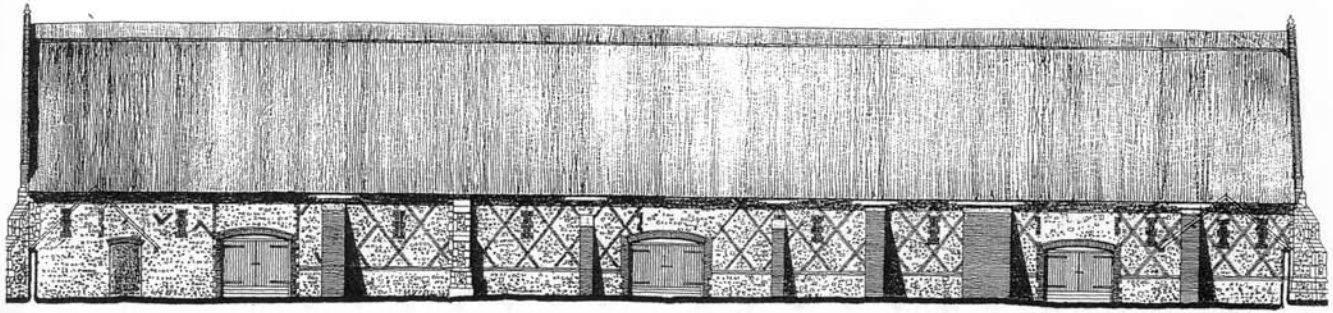
*Godwick Barn
(photo : Robin Forrest)*



*Waxham Barn
(photo : Robin Forrest)*



*Hemsby Barn
(photo : Robin Forrest)*



NORTH ELEVATION

Continued from page 12

especially on the south, probably due to weaker ground but also to weaker construction combined with differential wetting and drying out on the sunny side. In addition there is a marked eastward wracking of both gables and roof, particularly noticeable in the west gable which faces the prevailing wind.

The weaknesses and distortions at Waxham have resulted in the construction of numerous additional buttresses and the re-building of some sections of the south wall. Originally there were four angle buttresses at the corners and two more on each long face, all incorporating medieval stonework and looking almost as if taken bodily from their original locations. On the south side there are now no less than eight additional buttresses, mainly triangular in profile and of brick, with tumbled brick upper surfaces; at the west end a larger and smaller one run together and partly encapsulate the original corner buttress. On the north side six buttresses have been added, one of double width and another replacing an intermediate original; some are built with rustic fletton bricks and could be as late as mid-twentieth century in date.

The early 1990's repair programme included strengthening of the gables, particularly the west, with a network of concealed reinforced brick beams inserted section by section from the internal wall faces, leaving the external faces undisturbed. At the base of the west gable, which is effectively a hinge point, horizontal beams were inserted just below and above eaves level and linked by a series of short reinforced concrete piers similarly inserted. Similar brick beams were inserted for the full length of both side walls just above the heads of the ventilation loops, forming an almost complete ring around the building; at the inevitable breaks over the threshing doorways the south wall plates, significantly distorted, were strengthened and used to tie the separate sections of wall beam together above the openings. Advice on structural aspects was given by the engineer Brian Morton.

Apart from the south wall plates the carpentry repairs generally consisted of local strengthening rather than extensive renewal, even to the collapsed part of the roof, where chiselled carpenters' numbers made it possible to sort, repair and re-erect the main timbers. The common rafters were also largely repaired and re-erected but their previous locations could not be established as there was a confusing mixture of earlier scratched numbers, suggesting that this was re-used medieval material. The roof had in places undergone earlier repairs including the insertion of a tie beam alongside a pair of hammerbeams near the west end, and the renewal of a tie beam with a pine beam of circular section thought to have been a ship's mast.

Both here and at Paston the suggestion has been advanced that the hammerbeam trusses could originally have had tie beams which were later cut. At Waxham there is clear evidence, from the differential positions of the wall brace mortices, that this was not the case, but in any case it seems a fanciful proposition. These buildings were only a generation or two later than the splendid church hammerbeam roofs of East Anglia, and due to military demands long timbers would have become scarcer, while no sensible owner or carpenter is likely to have used expensive bulky timbers only to cut them out again.

Opposite each threshing doorway is a lower opening of similar width, permitting a loaded cart to be driven in, unloaded, and driven out through the opposite side. The lower openings are insertions and at Paston an earlier arrangement survives, with "person sized" doorways and lamp(?) recesses opposite the threshing doors. At both barns later buildings have been added, evidently connected to agrarian developments including the over-wintering of cattle. At Paston these additions were certainly staged but at Waxham seem to be close in date, consisting of a long low wing at each corner, largely open fronted but with enclosed fodder stores at their ends, and enclosing yard walls.



Waxham: recovered moulded stones (RAF)



Paston Barn (photo: English Heritage)



Waxham: old cattle yard with one of the three threshing doors (Photo: Rosemary A Forrest)

Essex Historic Buildings Group Study Day at Cressing Temple Jill and Chris Napier

The tickets warned us that working in old buildings could be a cool experience; one of the hottest days of the Summer ensured that it wasn't!

The EHBG offered an excellent and informative study day: Building the Timber Framed House. It opened with Elphin Watkins' talk on tools; he told us that the key tool used by craftsmen in the past was the axe. Other tools included the drill, chisel, saw and adze. Elphin used woodcuts and manuscript illustrations as well as slides of contemporary woodworking in Eastern Europe to illustrate both examples of tools and their use. He continued with a discussion of woodland management, suggesting that trees were being managed for building materials by coppicing from early medieval times in East Anglia. The Knights Templar, responsible for building the two great barns at Cressing Temple owned 70 acres of coppiced woodlands which, if managed properly, could supply the timber required to build a large barn every five years or so. Elphin took us through the process of selecting and working timbers for buildings use pointing out that the saw was a very secondary tool to the axe because of the poor quality of steel available in England.

Joe Thompson, chief carpenter for the Weald and Downland Museum, Sussex, took the discussion further and illustrated for us the laying out and erection of a timber framed building. His model was a barn recently built and erected for a Sussex farmer. Medieval carpenters he suggested could "see" their intended buildings in three dimensions guided by their experience of the craft. They had a good knowledge of the materials available, oak of course being the chief wood used. Their system was passed down orally and was never written down. The process began with the whole tree being sectioned in the boxed heart method using axes to square the timber. The result could then be halved to make two beams. Wood could be quartered to get four planks which could be used for braces. Rafters were paired from the same tree out of a tradition of respect for the wood. Young trees between about 30 and 40 years old provided the best materials as they would have fewer side-branches. The "green" would split easily. The carpenter's typical toolkit included marking and layout tools, tools for cutting and for erecting the building. The last might include rope and a pulling block, and the use of a capstan sometimes to get more motive power, with stout long pulls to raise the timber up.

Once the medieval carpenter had raised a frame, he had to consider its infilling. David Martin looked at regional variations beginning with Sussex where boards rather than wattle and daub were used between framing timbers throughout the 16th century. Essex buildings used a different method – a series of vertical timbers with wattles tied horizontally onto them to form a foundation for daub. He gave us a recipe for producing daub and suggested that walls were constructed by two people applying the material from either side. Lime plaster was later introduced to give a more pleasing finish, though lesser quality buildings could still have unfinished walls until the mid-17th century.

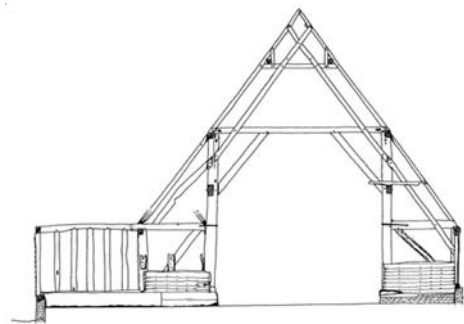
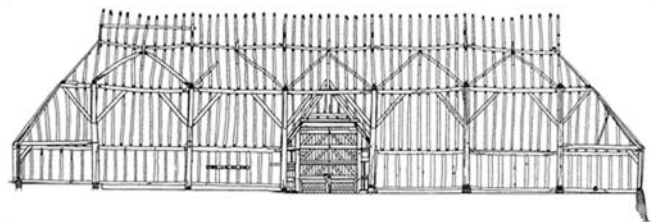
The framing of buildings and roof types was discussed by John Walker who looked at regional variations across Essex, North Suffolk and South Norfolk, the Midlands and Worcestershire. This was a very practical and informative study day, which took place in a magnificent setting.

The two famous barns, now known as Wheat and Barley, were built for the Knights Templar who owned the land from 1137 until their suppression in 1308. The Barley Barn was built from 480 oak trees felled between 1205–1236 and modified c.1400 and 1500.

The Wheat Barn was built later, from 472 oaks felled between 1257 and 1290 (probably just prior to the Hemsby Barn). It is 40m long by 12.2m wide and 11m high. It illustrates a number of important design features – for example, the transition from the notched lap to the secret notched lapped joint with both joint types being present within metres of each other on the East wall. The 6 trusses are about 5.6m apart and to overcome any potential sagging, a series of sub-trusses have been added. The original walls were made from vertical oak planking set between studs in each bay; the Barn was extensively renovated in the late 16th century and the timber walls were replaced by brick panels.

We would like to thank Adrian Gibson for his very comprehensive and informative tour of the Cressing Temple site.

The Wheat Barn



*These drawings and photograph of the Wheat Barn at the Cressing Temple site have come from : www.cressingtemple.org.uk
If you visit this site you will gain a more complete story.*

Gowthorpe Manor Rosemary Forrest



A group of members gathered beside what appeared to be a sixteenth century children's play house: a delightful single-storey, brick building of English bond, with a superior stringcourse, hood moulded windows, and Dutch gables. This 17th C gazebo was a foretaste of the intriguing dwelling, which Gowthorpe, Gowldethorpe or Gothorpe Hall, Swardeston, had to offer us. The Hall and manor lie some five miles to the south of Norwich, familiarly on the edge of a green, and its ownership has been associated with several of the established families of Norfolk and does, in fact, remain with a member of the Steward family. A quick hunt through records and archival indices by Alayne Fenner and Paul Rutledge shows that Roger Bigod had it at Domesday; by the time of Henry VIII, Sir Edward Boleyn of Blickling was owner. At this time, Augustine Steward was a prominent Norwich merchant and, in his Will of 1571, left money "to repair of Swardeston church where my manor of Gowldethorpe is..." he also gave it to his son, William, and heirs. Unfortunately, Thomas (Augustine's grandson) 'fell on evil days' and Thomas Berney, of the Reedham family, acquired the hall of Julian Gawdy, probably, in 1628. In 1823 the hall was once more acquired by a Steward, John, from Thomas Trench Berney. This information can barely do more than intrigue a dedicated archivist and hopefully someone in the Group will feel moved to attack the archives to make a record of the ownership history of this house.

The house's building history is no less complex. It has three major building periods in the sixteenth, seventeenth and early twentieth centuries and is now of brick throughout, although the early sixteenth century wing was timber-framed. There are crow-stepped gables and pedimented windows, and a formidable stone porch which carries a date of 1574. The three major builds range parallel to each other, the earlier two having two storeys and attics, and are linked by corridors. It was perhaps the stair turret, similar to the one the Group have seen previously at near-by Ketteringham, said to be a later sixteenth century addition, and its magnificent door, which caught our attention and curiosity. The four-centred doorway with treble roll mouldings

and spandrels carved with the Styward crest and arms opened off the link corridor; but if this was a later addition to the first wing (which has now lost two bays of its original six) where was the original stair and why was it felt necessary to add the turret which does not now open into the wing itself? The treads of the stair had decorative stops at the newel, a feature which we have seen at Yeoman's Cottage, Wacton (*see page 2*).

The two ground floor rooms of the seventeenth century, central, wing were divided by a cross-passage which continued the linkages between the sixteenth and twentieth century corridors. But was there originally a cross-passage splitting the two large rooms, both heated, but one with a large 'cooking' hearth with large, timber, mantlebeam, and the other with a stone surround and a spice or salt cupboard adjacent? With so many rooms, the circulation within the hall and the social structure of its occupants over the centuries would make for a fascinating study.

Sadly our time ran out and members were left to give thanks for the generosity of our hosts who provided an endless supply of wine and smoked salmon sandwiches whilst putting up with our questions and musings. Thanks too, to Tony Wright, who set up the visit. For myself, I was left wondering about the fire place in the attic which had beside it a two-level cavity with openings on two different faces of the brick surround: was it an oven, a drying area, or simply a sixteenth century microwave for re-heating the food that had been brought some distance from the kitchen?

References

- Norfolk Archaeology 24, pt II, p. xxxviii
Blomefield, **Norfolk V**, 1806 pp 50-1
Pevsner and Wilson, **Norfolk 2: North-West and South**, Penguin, 1999
www.imagesofengland.org.uk



This is said to be the earliest build and was originally timber-framed. Two bays on the garden wall side are missing; the remaining range has wrap-around brick gables, and there is an impressive ashlar-faced porch with a date stone of 1574.

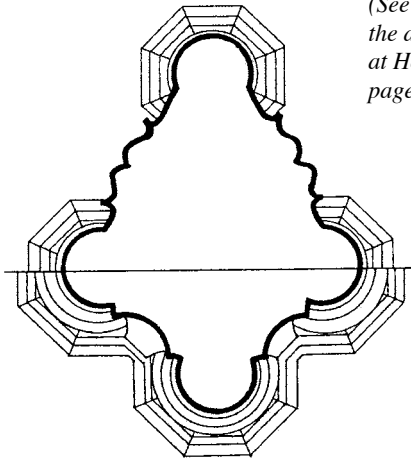
(photos: Rosemary A Forrest)

NHBG Church and Chapel sub-group

Asymmetric – Carbrooke & Horsham

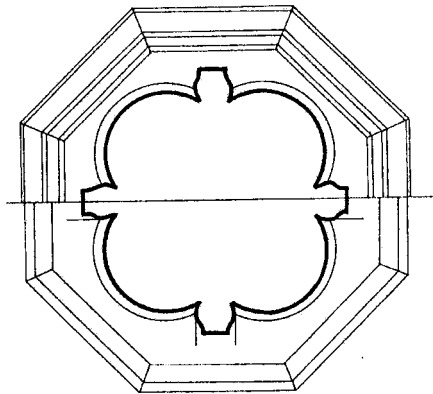
CAP

(See photo of the arcade post at Horsham on page 17)

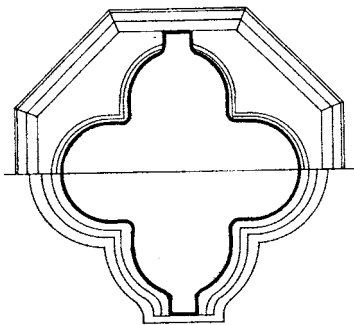


BASE

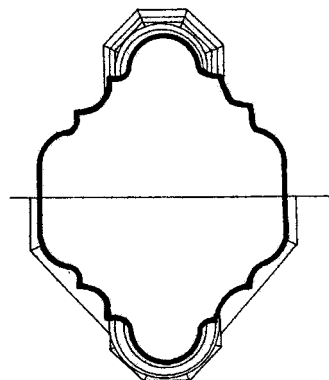
Quatrefoil set diagonally – Brockdish



Half filleted – South Lopham



Just very odd – Old Catton



The small group of members who call themselves the *Churches and Chapel sub-group* have had two meetings to discuss the group's aims and objectives. We have also spent several busy days in the field surveying Norfolk's unique church heritage.

Aims

The group should act as an informal federation of people interested in church research, each of whom would be welcome to undertake research of their own or join in with work being undertaken by others. The ultimate aim would be to encourage any research with the goal of publication, either in the NHBG Newsletter or in the bi-annual Journal.

At the same time, the sub-group should act as an educational tool, encouraging members with a general interest to learn more, and providing interpretational services for others outside the group.

Objectives

1. Undertake research with the aim of publication, eg:-
 - An arcade survey of 130 aisled churches in Norfolk with Quatrefoil piers. This will provide an interesting comparison with the work of Birkin Haward in Suffolk
 - A database of Norfolk chapels, updating "Halls of Zion"
 - An analysis of Victorian church faculties
 - A comprehensive list of the masons operating in Norfolk, hopefully spotting links with the arcade survey
 - Assembly and analysis of Alan Carter's notes on church architecture held by the Centre of East Anglian Studies
 - Analysis of Norwich Survey photos held by CEAS
2. Undertake archival research on other church subjects
3. Help in the interpretation of individual churches for parishes that request assistance
4. If required, organize a "recording" practical day school for the NHBG Summer Programme.
5. If required, organise a Church day for the NHBG Summer Programme – covering church development, with visits to local churches to illustrate the alterations to churches over the centuries.

Birkin Haward's comprehensive survey of 110 Suffolk arcade piers resulted in a classification of 18 broad types and the periods in which they were built. As might be expected in a county famed for doing things differently, our survey of the first 30 of the 130 aisled churches in Norfolk with quatrefoil arcade piers has already thrown up five separate examples that cannot be classified by the types identified in Suffolk, including two churches (Horsham and Carbrooke) with an overall pier shape which is shaped like a kite and is completely different from anything seen in Suffolk - these are shown here.

Are these five piers an aberration? Or are they reflecting a different pattern in Norfolk? Perhaps there are many more different ones still to be found, revealing completely separate patterns in the two counties?

If anyone else is interested in joining in, either in the field or in the Record Office, or has any suggestions for the future, please let Ian know, (ian.hinton@tesco.net/01502 475287) or George Fenner on 01603 620690.

The Ancient House, Thetford

Serena Kelly has traced ownership of this property back to 1790 when it figured in the will of John Tyrrell woolcomber, probably nephew and heir of Robert Tyrrell, and has established that the Tyrrells were a prominent family in Thetford as far back at least as the mid 17th century (Report held by the Ancient House Museum). The earliest member of the family found during a quick search in the Norfolk Record Office is John Tyrrell gent. for whom there is a probate inventory (NRO DN INV44/68) and a will (NRO, NCC wills 1638, 174 Smythe). Because the relevant Thetford parish registers do not begin until 1653 it has not been possible to link John Tyrrell of 1638 with Robert Tyrrell of 1790 and absolutely to prove that John Tyrrell's house was the Ancient House. However, his dwellinghouse was a building of status and was in the right parish, that of St Peter. The inventory relates to the dwellinghouse only, which the will makes clear was then called the Cross Keys (the symbol of St Peter); the will also covers his other inns and the rest of his property. He was a brewer and inn owner and presumably also innkeeper of considerable wealth.

The inventory is lengthy. It is dated 11 April 1638 and the contents of these rooms are listed – parlour, hall, hall chamber, gatehouse chamber, knights chamber ('kings chamber' cancelled), kitchen chamber, cucumber chamber, London chamber, green chamber, Norwich chamber, kitchen, brew-house, yard, stable, barn, pantry, cellar, parlour chamber, maids

chamber, another chamber by, granaries. Total value, including plate and good and desperate debts, £343 8s. 6d. Three of the chamber names presumably reflect their hangings or other décor. No waster of space, John Tyrrell had beds in all the downstairs living rooms except the hall and kitchen and in the upper chambers. There were twenty-two beds in all, variously described as livery, trundle, turned, posted and field, and seven of the chambers had hearth equipment and were presumably heated. The only sign of culture is three books, titles not recorded, in the hall.

The will is dated 10 March 1638, and was proved 31 March following. To his wife Mary he left for life the messuage in which he then dwelt called the Cross Keyes in the parish of St Peter, with all its office houses, gardens, orchards and yards, then it was to go to his son William and his heirs. He also left to Mary absolutely land in the field of St Mary, and Dovehouse Close, which she was to bequeath or convey to the most deserving of his children. To his other sons and their heirs he left: to the eldest Henry a messuage in St Peter's parish sometime purchased from one Talbott, where Daniel Harmon and Thomas Rooper then dwelt, to his son Thomas a messuage known by the sign of the Maydshead and Leaden Hall, and a messuage adjoining lying together in St Mary's parish, to his son Richard a messuage lately purchased from Henry Brotherwicke in the same parish, occupied by one Plombe, to his son Robert a messuage and tenement called the signe of the Foxe lately purchased from one William Bull, parish left blank, and a messuage sometime called the Crowne lately purchased from William Syastine in the parish of St Peter, and to his son Edmond a messuage called Chequer lately purchased from Thomas Stalham in the parish of St Cuthbert. Richard was also to have £60 payable after his wife's death. To his son-in-law John Carke (sic) and Margaret his wife and her heirs he left a messuage lately purchased known by the sign of the Griffen in Bregate Street. His brother Richard Tyrrell gent. of 'Willon' (?Wilton), Norfolk, was to have a ring in remembrance of him and to aid and counsel Mary his wife his sole executrix, who was left his chattels, household stuff &c.

The hearth tax assessment for Thetford (M.S.Frankel and P.J.Seaman eds, Norfolk Hearth Tax Assessment Michaelmas 1664, Norfolk Genealogy vol. 15 (1983), p. 112) is unfortunately incomplete and names only Robert Tyrrell, in Bridge Gate Ward. The number of hearths is lacking.

Paul Rutledge



Horsham Arcade Post. See the Church and Chapel sub-group report on p 16. (photo : Ian Hinton)

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

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

Most members will have cover on their household insurance.

If a member feels the cover is insufficient for their needs, then it is their personal responsibility to obtain adequate cover.

It is worth pointing out that members have a "duty of care" in looking after themselves and others.

News and Views

We have had a busy summer of meetings, all very varied and very interesting, but taking place in some really mad weather, with temperatures fluctuating wildly between Arctic (Cromer) and Saharan (Swaffham). Let's hope for an Indian Summer for our remaining visits. Thanks to those of you who agreed to write up a visit or meeting, or who kept notes—it's such a help.

We have had thank you letters from the Mulbarton branch of the British Legion for our donation, occasioned by the generosity of our hosts at Gowthorpe Manor, who preferred that a donation be made to a charity of their choice, and likewise from the vicar of Burlingham St Edmund after our repeat visit to that lovely church.

A footnote to Sandy Heslop's masterclass on Swaffham Church: most of the extensive documentary evidence for the fifteenth century rebuilding is contained in the Black Book of Swaffham, written by the Rector (1435–74), John Botwright. Among other things is a Bede Roll of parishioners, listing who paid for what in this great parish enterprise. It is quoted in Blomfield, Vol. IV, 217–22, described by Rev. J F Williams in Norfolk Archaeology, Vol XXXIII, pt 3, 245–53, and there is a microfilm of it in the Record Office—catalogue MF/RO\1.

AF

Fifth Annual General Meeting

Held at Waxham Barn on 4th June 2005

Some 45 members (12 apologies) attended this meeting when the Chairman reported that membership then stood at 211, activities had been wide and popular, a Churches Study Group had been established, both Newsletters and a second Journal had met the Group's desire for publications, and there were two active recording groups. The finances were healthy with a surplus of £1,350.00 for the year, and the bank account held a balance of £4,687.90 at 31 March 2005.

Ian Hinton, Membership Secretary, the only officer due for re-election was returned unanimously, and the previous committee (George Fenner, Lynn Biggs, Susan Brown, Richard Coulton, Alayne Fenner, Rosemary Forrest, Adam Longcroft, Karen

Mackie, Mary Ash, and Paul Rutledge) was also re-elected, with the addition of Jill Napier. Jill will be taking responsibility for Publications and Public Relations; her contact details are: tel. 01508 489469; e.mail: jcnapier@hotmail.com.



New Buckenham Study Day: the feast, and the caterers toasting the cooks. (photo: Rosemary Forrest)

Courses and Events

UEA Continuing Education

Tel: 01603 593252 Fax: 01603 591433

Email: cont.ed@uea.ac.uk

Architectural History

Start: 5 October

Tutor: Vic Nierop-Reading Venue: UEA, Norwich

A comprehensive introduction to the history of architecture from pre-history to the modern day. The course is interdisciplinary and looks at buildings not just as objects of architectural or artistic expression, but as archaeological artefacts which shed light on the culture, environment, and history of different periods.

Fifteenth Century Architecture

Start: 26 April 2006

Tutor: Margaret Forrester Venue: UEA, Norwich

The work of architects from Brunelleschi to Brumante; attitudes to the buildings of classical antiquity as well as to other more recent structures; theories and treatises, the development of particular building types; the persistence of regional traditions.

East Anglian Vernacular Architecture

Tutors: Vic Nierop-Reading and Adam Longcroft

Venue: Lynn Museum, King's Lynn

Day School

Building the Town: Vernacular Buildings in the Urban Environment

Date: Saturday 25 February 2006

Tutor: Adam Longcroft Venue: UEA, Norwich

How were urban buildings influenced by rural ones? What impact did lack of space and over-crowding have on buildings in towns? To what extent did urban economies result in specialised urban buildings? How did construction methods change over time? These are just some of the questions to be considered in this day school which will draw on recent research into the urban buildings of East Anglia in order to explore the pattern of building in English towns in the middle ages.

Suffolk Historic Buildings Group

Contact: Pam Walker (01473 829774)

Venue: The Barn, Haughley Park. Time: 7:15 for 7:45pm.

Cost: Free to members, £2 for non-members

12 Oct The NHBG's New Buckenham Project

Susan & Michael Brown, Paul Rutledge

16 Nov

Suffolk Guildhalls

Leigh Alston

11 Jan 2006

From Snape Maltings to your Local Tesco

Douglas Evans

15 Feb 2006

Some Medieval Buildings Constructed for the Abbot of Bury St Edmunds

Philip Aitkens

8 March

The Skills of the Bricklayer - How they Developed in Suffolk

Roger Kennell

Essex Historic Buildings Group

Contact: Ken Aberdour (01376 563464)

Venue: Moulsham Mill, Chelmsford. Time: 7:30 pm

2 Oct

Tree-ring dating in Hertfordshire: Results and implications

Adrian Gibson

2nd Dec

The Buildings of Sandwich: Comparisons with Kentish Ports

Sarah Pearson

Book Review

Traditional Houses of Somerset by Jane Penoyre with contributions by John Penoyre, John Dallimore and Russell Lillford.
Published by Somerset County Council (2005)

I read this book with a combination of envy and delight; envy for the wonderful series of medieval buildings enjoyed by Somerset and delight at the way in which they are presented. A comparison with the recent book on Hampshire houses seems apposite, the two dealing very effectively with their respective topics in slightly contrasting manners. The Hampshire book (*Hampshire Houses 1250—1700: Their dating and development*. By Edward Roberts et al. Hampshire County Council, 2003) is a model of a systematic analytical approach to a tradition of building. The Somerset book is just as effective but the presentation, specifically in the drawings, has a particular appeal. It is the outcome of many years of work by the Somerset Vernacular Buildings Research Group (SVBRG), particularly the main author, Jane Penoyre and her husband, John, and this group is very much the equivalent of the NHBG.

The book sets the archaeological and historical scene in the opening chapters and subsequently discusses rural houses, features, high status houses, town houses, farm buildings and farmsteads and, finally, conservation. An appendix features four specimen house surveys.

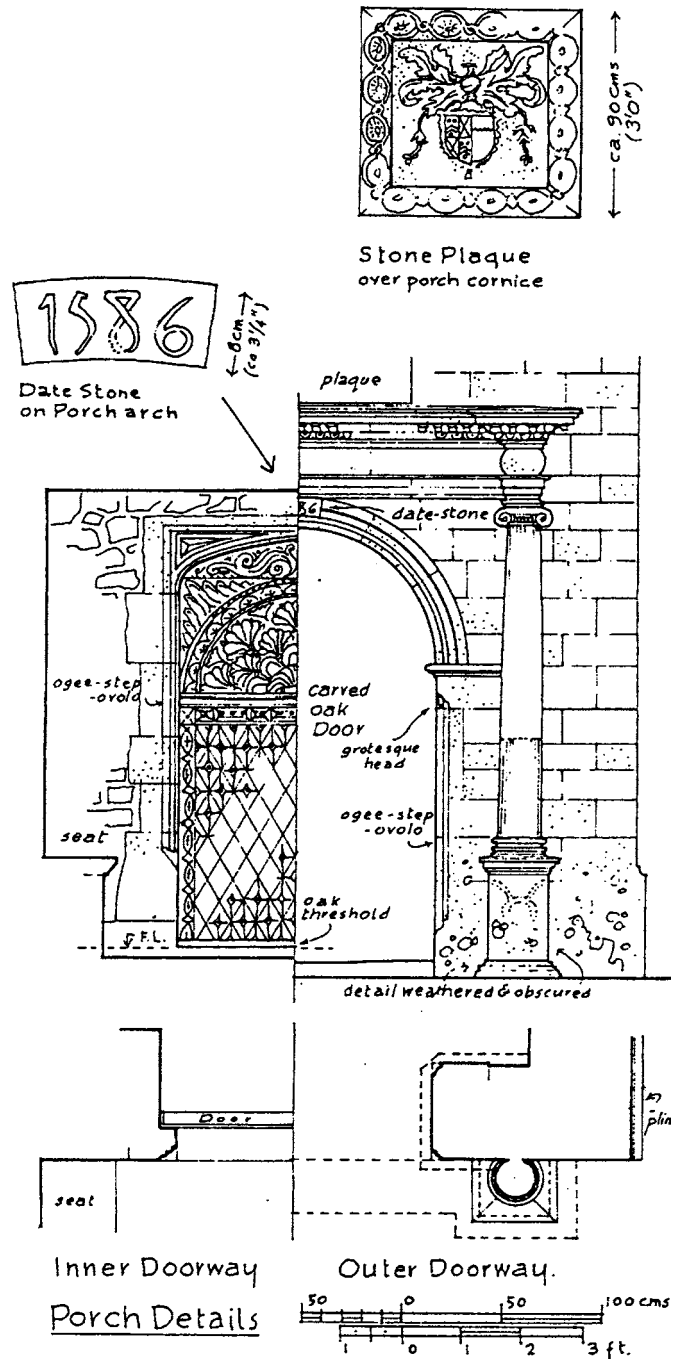
In contrast to most of our area, these houses are mainly stone-built or cruck buildings. Few fully timber-framed houses appear and these are mostly in towns, where timber was prestige material. Another tradition present in Somerset is the long house; though none survive, elements of the plan are found in existing houses. These contrasts are important in raising the key question, "If they do it that way, why do we do it our way?"

Many of the drawings have a completeness and personality which is becoming rare. Some details may seem to lack precision, but the drawings are remarkably engaged and engaging, a very sunny contrast with the impersonality of the computer-aided drawings which seem to be becoming the norm. (see figure).

The only disappointment is that it is usually not clear who had done which of the drawings out of the three contributors, Tom Manning, John Penoyre and John Dallimore. A bonus is that a number of the excellent photographs are by John McCann who was largely responsible for the formation of the EHBG (Essex Historic Buildings Group).

The material for an equivalent book on Norfolk houses is becoming available as research proceeds but we have plenty of work to do on vernacular buildings before we can match this. The survey of New Buckenham and the dendro dates obtained there have been a useful start, but the chart on page 102 of this book shows how far we still have to go, analysing as it does forty-two medieval roofs all dated by dendro!

Michael Brown



Bishop's Hull Manor House, Taunton.

Reading Suggestions

- Powell, C., (2003, first published 1984), *Discovering Cottage Architecture*, Shire ISBN 0-85263-673-3
- Hallett, A., (2004), *Almshouses*, Shire ISBN 0-7478-0583-0
- Guillery, P., (2004), *The Small House in Eighteenth Century London*, Yale University Press
- Brunskill, R.W., (1981, 3rd edn 2004), *Traditional Buildings of Britain: An Introduction to Vernacular Architecture*, Weidenfeld & Nicholson ISBN0-304-36676-5 £25.00 207pp, 135 illustrations
- Eaton, R.B., (First published 1917 onwards, New Edn, 2004), *Building Construction Drawing*, Donhead
- Upton, C., (2004), *Living Back-to-Back* (Phillimore)



NHBG Winter 2005/2006

I do hope that most of you were able to attend at least one Summer Event of your choice. It has been noted that we are struggling to get members to write up our excursions. I do urge you to contribute to the Newsletter: reports, praise, critical comment, and new ideas. For those unable to go on trips, the Newsletter keeps them informed of the Group's activities.

My thanks to all the organisers (Karen Mackie, Penny Clarke, Tony Wright, Roger Crouch), including Mary Ash who has arranged the winter lectures as well as taking over Swaffham. Winter meetings will again take place in the Elizabeth Fry Building, UEA, at 7.00 for 7.30 pm, with the exception of the March meeting which will be held at the new Community Centre in Swaffham. There is a wide range of topics covering large buildings and small, techniques, documents, and the detail of fixtures and fittings. Our speakers come from near and far and I do hope that you will come along and bring friends to what promises to be a wide-ranging winter programme.

Remember: admission is free to members but non-members are most welcome for a £2.00 fee. There is a car parking charge at UEA.

Remember : I am very happy to hear from any member with comments or suggestions for future lectures or visits.

Rosemary Forrest

tel: 01603 742315

e.mail: roakief@yahoo.co.uk

A Laser Survey of Norwich Cathedral

...Philip Thomas

Date: Friday 7 October 2005
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Elizabeth Fry Building,
University of East Anglia, off
B1108 Watton Road, Norwich

Philip Thomas is Clerk of Works at Norwich Church of England Cathedral and, as part of his duties, has made a laser survey of that structure. For many of us, this will be not only an introduction to modern recording techniques but also will provide an opportunity to find out more about a building with which we are all familiar.

Arthur Pells, Beccles Architect

...David Lindley

Date: Wednesday 7 December 2005
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Elizabeth Fry Building,
University of East Anglia, off
B1108 Watton Road, Norwich

The work of Arthur Pells covered forty years around 1900 and ranged from residential to chapels, schools and industrial sites principally in Suffolk. The speaker, David Lindley, is a former head of art at Wellington College whose appreciation of Pells' work brought him to live in a house designed by that architect and to become, in effect, Beccles' town historian.

Fixtures and Fittings

Linda Hall

Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Date: Thursday 9 February 2006
Place: Elizabeth Fry Building,
University of East Anglia, off
B1108 Watton Road, Norwich

The NHBG has, to date, concentrated on buildings. As the author, with Nat Alcock, of the Council for British Archaeology's *Fixtures and Fittings in Dated Houses 1567-1763*, Linda Hall's expertise in capturing fixtures, fittings and decorative features in pen and ink will take our attention from peg holes to the more attractive things in life. Her knowledge of Norfolk styles and dates is limited but she is anxious to extend her knowledge; bring along your photos.

The Historic Use of Brick in Norfolk

...Paul Drury

Date: Wednesday 9 November 2005
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Elizabeth Fry Building,
University of East Anglia, off
B1108 Watton Road, Norwich

A wide experience as chartered surveyor, archaeologist and architectural historian, in both public and private sectors including English Heritage's London Region and the Council of Europe Cultural Heritage Committee, will undoubtedly have provided Paul with much material for this talk.

Members Evening

Date: Tuesday 10 January 2006
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: Elizabeth Fry Building,
University of East Anglia, off
B1108 Watton Road, Norwich

Talks about::

The research of the Churches and Chapels sub-group;

Norwich houses 1450—1700;

Reepham Buildings;

Exploration of a family house in Breckland.

Do come to this evening and hear what individuals are doing for themselves. It is also an opportunity for members to talk to the Committee about the Group.

The Houghton Archive: Building Plans and what they tell us

...David Yaxley

Date: Tuesday 7 March 2006
Time: 7.00 pm for 7.30 pm
Place: **New Community Centre,
Campingland, off White
Cross Road, Swaffham**

As many will know, David is the Houghton Hall archivist and owner of Larks Press, which publishes many local books including his own recent, *A Researcher's Glossary of words found in historical documents of East Anglia*. In particular, he has been asked to discuss drawings which are to be found in the archive and which relate to a variety of estate properties.