

# Norfolk Historic Buildings Group



Non members  
£2.00

# Newsletter



Number forty-five  
Spring 2022

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This last two years have been difficult for all organisations that incorporate proximity and contact. Our winter lecturers, summer visits and house surveys have all been difficult or next to impossible since lockdown started two years ago.

Like most organisations we have adapted. Winter lectures have been over Zoom (who had heard of Zoom two years ago?), and, although they are not to everyone's taste, or indeed capability, zoom-based talks have meant that we have been able to keep in touch. They have also provided opportunities for some form of contact for members based further away.

Summer visits have been more difficult, although we have plans for an almost-normal programme this summer, and owner-requested house surveys are beginning to spring up again.

Unfortunately, the NHBG's chance to show off Norfolk to VAG members with the planned three-day spring conference has been commuted to a one-day, on-line Zoom meeting and a limited one-day visit to King's Lynn. VAG meetings are for members only, but there may still be tickets for the on-line day - see [www.vag.org.uk](http://www.vag.org.uk)

The final part of getting back to normal is the dendro analysis of the houses in Hempsall, which was paused at the start of lockdown. This may now have been completed and the results eagerly awaited.

**Ian Hinton**  
**Chair, Norfolk Historic Buildings Group**  
**March 2022**

[ian.hinton222@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.hinton222@btinternet.com)

**Don't forget** - for those who don't pay their subscriptions by Standing Order - they are due at the end of March - £15 single, £25 joint. If you are unsure how you pay, email Membership Sec- [maggy6@btinternet.com](mailto:maggy6@btinternet.com)

## More "lockdown" walk photos

### Didlington



above:  
*the oddly-spaced, stretcher-only,  
 brick bonding*  
 left:  
*the reused lavabo, stoup or piscina  
 in the clerestory embrasure*

Les Scott has sent in two photos from a tour round the Didlington estate where he was shown the stables and told that they were rebuilt in red brick from white bricks; but as Les suggests, given that the bricks are stretchers only (therefore only half a brick deep), it was probably only refaced in red brick. Interestingly, the usual bonding of stretchers would have the joints between bricks centrally placed over the brick in the courses below and above. This would also have made the bonding at the corners easier to do, avoiding the need for the small queen-closers.

The Didlington church clerestory has, he was told, a reused piscina built into the window embrasure. It seems to be too deep for a regular piscina and more like the lavabo or stoup that was often placed in church porches to be used by the congregation to wash their hands on entry; nevertheless an unusual place for either vessel.

### NHBG principal contact details

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### Swaffham

On another walk, Les Scott noticed this gable end wall of a pair of cottages in Northwell Pool Road in Swaffham had suffered a collapse.

The front wall appears to be built in 9-inch-thick brickwork, but the gable ends appear to be of flint, but it is only a skin. This has partly collapsed and revealed a clay-lump core to the wall. Flint is an unusual facing to clay lump, as it is more difficult to tie the lumps securely to the outerskin of flint, than to regularly-coursed bricks where ties can be better anchored by the brick courses. Perhaps this is the reason for the failure.



Coincidentally, a similar problem was noted when Lynne Hodge and I were surveying 33 Back Street (see p 19) - the house opposite had had a bonding failure of its flint gable wall. Unfortunately it was too close-scaffolded and protected to be able to be photographed.

*Ian Hinton*

Please keep sending in your photos to share interesting buildings or features with members

Cover photo:  
 Castle Street entrance to the Royal Arcade, by David Bussey



# Summer Programme

Booking - by **POST** using the forms provided OR by **EMAIL** to [ian.hinton222@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.hinton222@btinternet.com)

Payment - by **CHEQUE** (please send with your booking form - one for each event booked)

OR **BACS** (do NOT send money until you have been told your place is confirmed)

Tickets will be sent by email, unless a you send a stamped addressed envelope with the form

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

## VAG On-line Conference

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April

VAG members only, although there may be tickets for non-members, if all 300 are not taken up - see [www.vag.org.uk](http://www.vag.org.uk).

Six zoom-based talks on aspects of vernacular architecture in Norfolk that would have been covered in the original planned 3-day conference - Norfolk Landscape and its effect on the vernacular, Timber-framed houses, merchant houses and smaller houses in Norwich, Buildings in Diss, two Norfolk churches and domestic wall paintings

### Pump Farm, Bunwell N16 1AB Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> May

*Time:* 2:00-4:00  
*Meet:* Pump Farm  
*Cost:* £10  
*Limit:* 30 (members only)  
*Walking:* Stairs and garden  
*Contact:* Ian Hinton  
01603 431311  
[ian.hinton222@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.hinton222@btinternet.com)

A seventeenth-century timber-framed house with an interesting building history and many extensions. Home to Sarah Spooner and Jon Gregory - tutors of UEA Landscape History courses - it is set right on the edge of what was part of the large Bunwell Common.

### Rectory Cottage Fritton Common NR15 2QS Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June

*Time:* 2:00 - 5:00 pm  
*Meet:* Rectory Cottage  
*Cost:* £10  
*Limit:* 25 (members only)  
*Walking:* Stairs and Garden  
*Refreshment:* Tea & cakes by the owners  
*Contact:* Ian Hinton  
01603 431311  
[ian.hinton222@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.hinton222@btinternet.com)

A early-sixteenth-century single-storey timber-framed cottage, with an inserted floor in the hall using moulded beams dating to around 1550, greatly extended in the C17 with a thatched two-storey parlour end. It is home to two recent members of the Group and featured on the cover of Newsletter 43 (Summer 2021). It is located at the northern neck of the still-existing Fritton Common.

### Wangford Hall, Wangford Road, Lakenheath, Suffolk (nearest postcode IP27 0SJ)

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> July

*Time:* 2:30 pm  
*Meet:* Wangford Hall - details with ticket  
*Cost:* £10  
*Limit:* 30 (members only)  
*Walking:* Stairs  
*Contact:* Ian Hinton  
01603 431311  
[ian.hinton222@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.hinton222@btinternet.com)

A very rare chance to visit this 'high quality' timber framed house of which the earliest 'hall house' part is believed to date from the 15th century but with many subsequent additions. Many of its original features are still there such as the crown-post roof. Long on the 'at risk' register it is now in new ownership and we shall be privileged to see it with much of the internal timber framing exposed and in the process of restoration.

### Mileham Village Walk Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July

*Time:* Walk starts at 11:00 am and completes after the AGM  
*Meet:* Mileham Village Hall  
*Parking:* on street  
*Cost:* none  
*Limit:* none  
*Walking:* Mostly roads and pavements  
*Refreshment:* BYO Picnic  
*Contact:* Dominic Summers  
07709 028192  
[d.summers1@btinternet.com](mailto:d.summers1@btinternet.com)

We will be shown round Mileham by Susan and Michael Brown, Mark Stoney and Peter Wade-Martins, taking in the Church and the castle site

### Dragon Hall videos

After his talk to us about Norwich Guildhall in October, Richard Matthew alerted members to a video on the Dragon Hall website, entitled "**Building with timber in the fifteenth century**".

Three videos made by Richard Darrah using his wonderful model of Dragon Hall can be seen either direct from the site -

<https://www.dragonhallnorwich.org.uk/pages/films.html>

or on Youtube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jl-5iQx8gc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFrSLSCHdCA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9N-2mHBKYoo>

BACS Account - (a business account)  
Nat West Norwich Gentlemans Walk (B) branch  
Norfolk Historic Buildings Group  
Sort Code - 54-21-06 AC- 93397364

### including the AGM @ lunchtime - Mileham Village Hall, The Street, Mileham PE32 2RA

Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> July

Lunch: 12:30 pm - with your BYO picnic  
AGM: 1:00 pm

Mileham village walk continues afterwards

AGM Papers to follow nearer the date.

### Church Day Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August

*Time:* 10:30 - 3:30 pm  
*Meet:* Pulham St Mary **IP21 4RE**  
*Parking:* on street  
*Cost:* £10  
*Limit:* no limit (members only)  
*Walking:* Churchyards  
*Food:* BYO picnic  
*Contact:* Ian Hinton  
01603 431311  
[ian.hinton222@btinternet.com](mailto:ian.hinton222@btinternet.com)

A visit to three churches in south-central Norfolk; each of which has features which are exceptional or very unusual.

- Pulham St Mary, with its elaborate porch and screen, repainted font and extensive Victorian stained glass.

- Tivetshall St Margaret with its unique Elizabethan-period over-painted chancel-arch tympanum and many, sadly-damaged, figurative mediaeval bench ends.

- Tibenham All Saints, with its grand pulpit and sounding board, and its raised aisle-pew.

## The Mills of the Broadland Marshes (July 21<sup>st</sup> 2021)

Alison Yardy

The large group of surviving drainage windmills in the Broads is second only in number to the Netherlands. The Broadland mills were usually located on the main rivers or major water courses. Their purpose was to take away surface water off the grazing land over the winter months which improved and extended the quality of the grazing season. Each mill formed part of a 'Level' of marshes under the care of a marshman. These comprised a system of smaller drains and dykes which fed into a long mill dyke that led to the mill. When tides were favourable, the working mill was then able to move water from the marsh level into a higher-level outfall to the river by means of the turning action of a waterwheel known as a scoopwheel or a centrifugal pump known locally as a turbine.

Around 250 sites have been traced from map and documentary evidence and around 70 mills survive in recognisable form although there are many lesser remains in the northern Broads, often now lost within fen vegetation.

### Origins

Drainage mills were probably first established in the Broads in the late seventeenth century, although the evidence is very limited. Certainly, by the early eighteenth century they start to appear on estate maps. The strongest evidence comes from the second half of the eighteenth century, particularly the 1760s onwards. From that time, private individuals with significant landholdings or groups of individuals set up drainage agreement, cut drains and erected a mill. Faden's map published in 1797 provides a snapshot of coverage in the Broads by the late eighteenth century.

### The Parliamentary Enclosure Mills

Several mill sites on the main Broadland rivers date from that busy period of parliamentary enclosure during the Napoleonic Wars. Many Broadland parishes obtained an act of parliament and established a drainage commission to oversee the drainage of their wet common. Surviving examples of mills from this period include those at Upton, Thurne and Potter Heigham.



*A parliamentary enclosure mill*

### The arrival of steam

Steam as a power source for drainage was increasingly adopted in the Broads from the 1840s. Unlike The Fens where steam replaced wind power, in the Broads it tended to be used as an alternative when wind was not available rather than a replacement. Many of the steam engine houses in the Broads were lightweight timber or later corrugated iron affairs which have now disappeared although some landowners took pride in constructing decorative brick engine houses (those at Herringby and Strumpshaw survive). There were more comprehensive drainage schemes on the River Waveney which did eradicate a number of windmills but more commonly a wind/steam partnership was the norm in the Broads.



*Polkey's Mill and steam engine house*

From around 1900 paraffin, and later diesel, engines were used and from the 1930s electrically powered pumps were installed. There was a local reluctance to give up windmills but incentives to invest in new plant and WWII material and labour shortages meant that most gradually ended work in the 1930s and 1940s.

### Form of the mills



*Tower mill at Tunstall, an earlier form of mill*

What survives has tended to be the brick towers which almost invariably had boat shaped caps (like an upturned clinker construction boat) of often the towers had a weatherproof coating of tar (a by-product of local gas works) however the work of the Norwich School artists (and some early photographs) suggest there were once a number of timber 'smock' mills too.

Alison is a Senior Historic Environment Officer with Norfolk County Council.  
Her MA Dissertation was on The Technical Development of Broadland Drainage Mills.  
She is involved with the Norfolk Windmills Trust and asked for her fee for this talk to be donated to them.  
Her talk will not be available on our Youtube channel for copyright reasons



Another type of drainage mill found from a relatively early date are now known as hollow post mills (a term probably coined by mill historian Rex Wailes) but in their day were one of a variety of forms known as skeleton mills. These were the mills of individuals and smaller landholdings and drained only a limited area. Clayrack Mill at How Hill, Ludham and Palmer's Mill, Upton (relocated from Acle) are examples.



*Humphrey's Mill, Wroxham House estate, later swallowed up by bungalow development*

Englands of Ludham – appears to have grown out of a village wheelwright's business and by the early nineteenth century said to have worked with William Cubitt to fit Cubitt's first patent sails. The firm built quite distinctive mills (Martham, Somerton, St Benet's Level, Thurne and Hardley) and many local achievements in millwrighting were claimed by them including the development of the boat shaped cap and the introduction of the turbine pump in place of the scoopwheel.



*England's yard, Ludham*



A lightweight timber skeleton form of tower mill emerged in the later nineteenth century, often on the less stable peat soils of the northern Broads and closely associated with Englands the Ludham millwrights.

*Hobb's Mill, Horning*

### People who built the mills

A number of early millwrighting firms developed in Norwich and Great Yarmouth but during the nineteenth century firms also became established in larger well-placed settlements around the Broads (Englands of Ludham, Rusts of Stalham and Martham, Smithdales at Acle, Barnes of Reedham, Martins at Beccles).

One of the best-known names to have worked as millwright in the Broads is William Cubitt, knighted for his work on the Crystal Palace at the Great Exhibition of 1851. In his early career he worked as a millwright in Horning Lower Street and aged only 22 he patented his design for self-regulating windmill sails. His obituary also refers to his 'tripod design for draining the marshes', suggestive of the form of hollow post mills.

Two firms we know more about are Smithdales, originally from Norwich later Panxworth and latterly Acle, and Englands of Ludham.

Thomas Smithdale started as a foundryman in King Street, Norwich in the 1840s and a hallmark of his firm's work is the extensive use of cast iron, often in place of wood e.g for windows. Their fine ironworks building at Panxworth survives as well as Cadge's and Lockgate mills and Strumpshaw steam engine house on the River Yare.

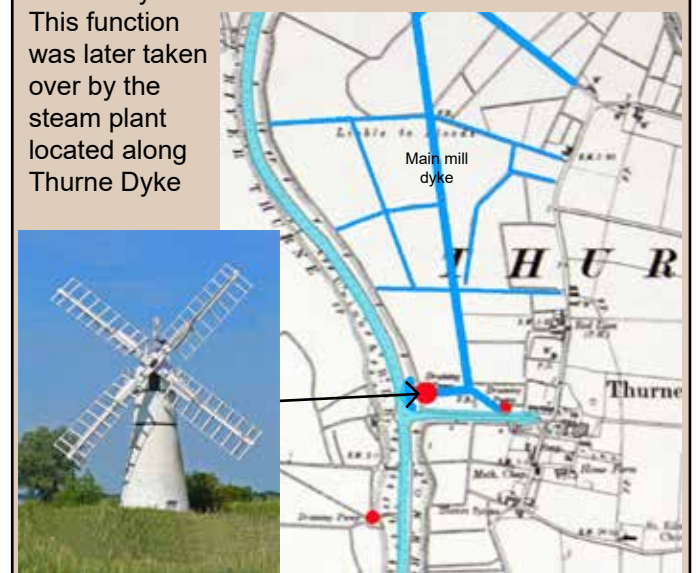
### The situation today

Sixteen of the Broadland mills are in the care of Norfolk Windmills Trust, an independent charity, supported by Norfolk County Council. Windmills are popular but costly and challenging to maintain and the Trust is reliant on grand aid, donations and admissions to carry out their work. Follow the Trust's Facebook, Twitter and YouTube channels to keep up to date with restoration news and mill openings.

### How the system operated

The marshes of Thurne right up to the parish boundary with Repps were drained into the main mill dyke. The pump at Thurne lifted the water up into the river with a scoop wheel driven by the wind and the mill machinery.

This function was later taken over by the steam plant located along Thurne Dyke



## The Work of George Skipper (September 13<sup>th</sup> 2021)

### David Bussey

Although George Skipper lived until nearly 92 and practised as an architect for over 70 years, his finest buildings were almost all constructed in Norwich during one decade in the middle of his life. He was the son of a building contractor in Dereham and his breakthrough came very early, at the age of 23, when he won a competition to design Shepton Mallet hospital. This led to other commissions in Somerset, several of them for the Quaker shoemaker, W. S. Clark, in the town of Street. They reflect contemporary interest in a comfortable revival of Tudor domestic style and demonstrate Skipper's ability to create interesting modelled façades in local materials (stone in this case), but without the striking originality of his Norwich work.

*Skipper's design for estate houses in Doulting, Somerset*



The next stage in his career came with victory in another competition, this time for Cromer town hall, a sign of the resort's increasing ambitions as rail connections improved. Here he is moving from Tudor to a more Classical idiom, and in the absence of stone employs local Cosseyware moulded brick on the exterior. Unfortunate overpainting spoils this effect now, but the front of the Hotel de Paris, his only surviving hotel out of

several designed in the town, shows what can be achieved with this material.



*Cromer Town Hall*

*All images taken from David's Powerpoint presentation*

*Hotel de Paris, Cromer*



Throughout the early years George Skipper was also taking on smaller scale projects in East Anglia, and in 1896 he constructed new offices in Norwich's London Street – at first the right-hand bay; the left-hand followed in about 1904. These follow a new fashion for work in a Flemish manner, with an arch and oriel under a gable, and are absolutely saturated with Cosseyware detail, as if they were acting as a pattern book for future clients. A panel on the left shows Skipper with his family and a client; several of his buildings are in the background.

*right: Skipper's offices in London Street*



*below: one of the Cosseyware panels on the façade showing Skipper and some of the buildings he designed*



The architect's versatility came to the fore again in 1899, when he was asked to create the Royal Arcade on the site of the Royal Hotel, running from Gentlemans Walk to Castle Street. Sophisticated shopping was promised by shop fronts imitating Burlington Arcade in London's Piccadilly, and instead of decorative brick it is faced in glazed Doulton tiles. These are the work of W J Neatby, a much under-rated architectural ceramicist, who worked with Skipper to add organic designs inside the arcade. At the Castle Street entrance the extraordinary combination of architecture and decoration has been widely praised as the nearest we get in this country to Art Nouveau.

This talk of David's can be viewed on the NHBG Youtube channel by typing <https://youtu.be/frjpgq-lbPw> in your browser



*right:  
The atrium of the arcade  
(with modern lighting)*



*below:  
The Castle Street entrance  
to the Royal Arcade  
(see also front cover)*



*right:  
The portico of what is  
now The St Giles Hotel*



*below:  
The Edwardian Baroque of  
Surrey House*



Further tiled buildings followed. Haymarket Chambers (1901-02) has the air of an Italian Renaissance Palazzo. It is an intriguing design, part castle, part palace and part shop, with the different elements overlapping and interpenetrating. The upper floors were intended for the Norwich Stock Exchange, offering the illusion of palatial opulence and the security of a fortress, just as the impressive façade belies the building's very small interior.

This is some of his major work in Norwich. Before the First World War Skipper also had the chance to indulge in a lavish expansion of Sennowe Park for Thomas Albert Cook, grandson of the travel firm's founder. For the rest of his career, however, his work became much less interesting, though it contained worthy contributions to local authority housing and town planning. His son Edward joined and continued the practice, with George working almost to the end of his life.

*Haymarket  
Chambers*



*Skipper's extension to Sennowe Park in Guist*

Victory in a national competition organised by Norwich Union Life Insurance then gave George Skipper his chance to enter the world of Edwardian Baroque (albeit on a small scale) with the society's new Clipsham stone headquarters in Surrey Street (opened 1904). It echoes the Palladian grand houses at Holkham and Houghton, and beyond the entrance the famous Marble Hall could come from a Florentine Renaissance courtyard. Equally effective is the former Norwich and London Accident Insurance Association building, now St Giles Hotel. Its long façade is subtly modelled in three different stones, the porch enticing in its complexity and the skyline dramatic.

Since retiring to Norwich, David Bussey has been researching, writing and speaking on Norwich's Victorian and Edwardian architectural heritage. He is chairman of Norwich Society's publications working group.



## A Tour of Norwich Guildhall (October 21<sup>st</sup> 2021)

Richard Matthew

### History

It was the charter granted to the City of Norwich in 1404 by Henry IV that stimulated the building of the Guildhall. Hitherto Norwich was administered as part of Norfolk and had only one building for the conduct of civic and market business: the Tollhouse, situated just to the east of the present Guildhall and used for the collection of taxes and some small meetings. The new charter granted Norwich the status of 'the County of the City of Norwich' and made it separate from the county of Norfolk. It also provided for the election of a Mayor and two Sheriffs, a Mayor's Court of 24 aldermen, a Sheriffs' Court and a Common Assembly. So there was a need for a new civic building to house courts, meetings, prisons, administrative staff etc. Building began in 1407 and was only completely finished in 1453 with the glazing of the Mayor's Court Room. We know quite a lot about the building costs and the actual builders from the Chamberlain's accounts of 1410 - 11<sup>1</sup>. Masons were employed for about 120 days in this period, and the accounts show a total expenditure of £104.7.9½ which inflates to almost £128,000 at 2020 prices<sup>2</sup>. The digging of the vault took 228 labouring days at a cost of £3.16.0, which inflates to around £4,750.

### Introduction

Norwich Guildhall, a building of major historical importance, is in the heart of the city but amid the hustle and bustle of the shops, market and taxis, it is often taken for granted. This is partly because it is dwarfed by the huge City Hall of 1938 which replaced it as the centre of city government and partly because, since 1985 when the courts moved out to the new courts near the Cathedral, it has had no single purpose and has not been regularly open to the public for some years.

But for over 500 years it was the centre of city government and justice, including, later on, the new Norwich police force and the city fire service. It was, and remains, the largest medieval guildhall outside London; and for part of that time Norwich was the second city of England in size, wealth and population.



*The Guildhall at the north end of the marketplace, now dwarfed by the City Hall*



*left: The staircase down to the undercroft beneath the original tollhouse*

*above: The undercroft - later to become the dungeon*

*All photos: Richard Matthew*

### Inside

This tour is an attempt to let you see inside it and to explain its origins, how it has changed over the years, and how each part has been used. But what you will see today, for the most part, is not what you would have seen in the fifteenth century due to the many internal and external changes.

Firstly, the dungeon, originally the undercroft of the earlier Tollhouse, the only part of the building which pre-dates the Guildhall, and which is more or less unchanged.

1 A Fabric Roll of the Norwich Guildhall, 1410-11" Norfolk Archaeology, vol.15 (1904), 174-89

2 Bank of England at <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator> - accessed 22/10/21



There are also police cells in the basement area, Above are two court rooms, one Georgian and one late Victorian; the Mace Room where the city's regalia was stored, and the Mayor's Court Room - a fine example of a Tudor room.



In the Mayor's Court Room is a fine, but rather random collection of stained glass, some of it fifteenth-century Norwich glass from the workshop which produced some of the glass which can be seen in St Peter Mancroft church.



above:  
This room has been  
The Open Prison,  
Yarn Hall, Georgian  
Court Room &  
Britannia Cafe in  
succession.

left:  
Stained glass  
window containing  
glass from the 15th  
to 19th century, in  
the Mayor's Court  
Room



Close-up  
panels showing  
St Barbara  
(from the  
demolished  
chapel) right,  
and Queen  
Elizabeth's  
Arms - left



## Outside

Outside is the fine Tudor Bassingham doorway in the south elevation, moved here to provide a new entrance for the judges from Mr Bassingham's house in London Street when it was demolished in 1857.



Richard's talk can be seen on the NHBG youtube channel by typing <https://youtu.be/OAWmWdjUdM> in your browser

The fine flint flushwork chequerboard pattern of the east end gable is thought to indicate that it was The Exchequer. It now has the mid nineteenth-century clock at the top.



Ninham's painting of 1861, before the porch was rebuilt

left: The Victorian rebuild

On the south wall is the porch that was rebuilt in the mid-nineteenth century (shown above) when the Guildhall became the police station. Also shown is the Ninham painting of 1861 of the original porch.<sup>3</sup>

Due to constraints of time the tour concentrates on the actual building rather than the many dramatic events and interesting people who were involved with it, including Robert Kett who was held in the dungeon prior to his hanging in chains from the castle. Also of note is Thomas Bilney, held here prior to his burning in Lollards Pit as a Protestant martyr, only two years before Henry VIII's break with Rome. The Mayor's Court minutes alone provide a wealth of material to illustrate how the city was governed and how it faced a number of crises over the centuries, including insurrections, major fires, floods and of course outbreaks of plague.

3 Norfolk Museum Service - <http://norfolkmuseumscollections.org/collections/objects/object-3235323261.html> - accessed 20/10/21

Richard Matthew is a retired teacher whose involvement in local history started at Dragon Hall where he has been a guide, speaker and researcher. He is the author of 'Robert Toppes – Medieval Mercer of Norwich' about the builder and owner of the fifteenth-century trading hall. He was also a guide at the Guildhall when it was run by HEART.

## The Development of the medieval Church and church buildings in Norfolk (November 16<sup>th</sup> 2021)

Ian Hinton

This is a brief introduction to some of the changes that have been made to church buildings in Norfolk over the centuries, and the reasons for them.

### The Church

The development of the medieval Church contains many aspects which are unexpected. Unlike the current strong centrally-organised church, local churches, from the late eighth century onwards, were privately built by landowners, partly as a way of making money. The ownership of the church gave the landowner the right to receive the tithes of his tenants. This process started at the top, with the Saxon Kings, Ealdormen and senior thanes building churches on their estates which later had an element of control over, and income from, the smaller local churches built by lower-order thanes on smaller estates. This is particularly noticeable in Norfolk, with its good soil, which was able to support multitudes of small estates. More than 1000 churches have been recorded at some time or other in Norfolk, of which at least 620 still exist today. This compares with current figures of 72 medieval churches in Cumbria and 170 in Wiltshire<sup>1</sup>.

Parish boundaries were beginning to be formalised during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, some of which have been subsequently amalgamated, as manors were combined through marriage and sale. It leaves Norfolk with many parishes which have two, three and even four churches in them, many as ruins.

### Church Buildings

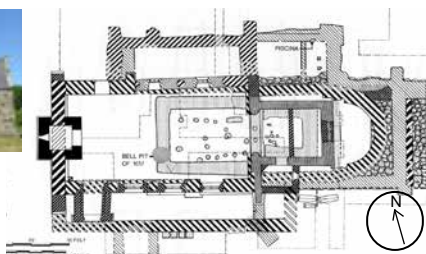
The Norman Conquest brought the start of stone church-building to lower social levels in Norfolk, which is slightly ironic as the Normans who stayed in Normandy were still building wooden churches alongside new stone ones<sup>2</sup>.

All of these local churches were small, catering for small local communities. As the population grew steadily after 1066, churches were no longer large enough to accommodate their congregations. They were enlarged over the centuries in many different ways.

In the vast majority of cases, the current church is still on the same site as earlier versions, so we are unable to assess what changes have been made to the building, other than those that reveal themselves in the existing fabric. Wharram Percy, a North Yorkshire village depopulated in the fifteenth century by the Percy family, whose desire to make more money raising sheep, has meant that the church there has been fully excavated. This has revealed at least 11 separate stages, ranging from a tiny eighth-century earth-fast-post church to a late-thirteenth/early-fourteenth century building which was almost twice the size of what is there now<sup>3</sup>.



The eleven main phases of St Martin's, Wharram Percy<sup>3</sup>




- Hinton, I., 2012, The Alignment and Location of Medieval Rural Churches, British Archaeological Research - British Series 560
- Alibert, D., 1997, Chrétientés Médiévals VII-XIe Siècles, Atlande
- Bell, R. & Beresford, S., 1987, Wharram Percy: The Church of St Martin (1987) Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph 11
- Wade Martins, P., 1980, Fieldwork and Excavations in Launditch Hundred, Norfolk, EAA 10
- Newman, J., 2005, Survey in the Deben Valley, in *A seventh-century princely burial ground and its context*, (ed) M Carver, 477-488

We know from work in Norfolk, particularly in the Launditch Hundred by Peter Wade-Martins<sup>4</sup>, and by John Newman in the Deben valley in Suffolk<sup>5</sup>, that most of the churches there are sited in Middle-Saxon pottery scatters, and by inference, M-S settlements, thus possibly mirroring the situation at Wharram Percy more closely than might be expected, but without the ability to excavate the churches. Similar work in more than a dozen sites elsewhere in Norfolk points to this situation being perhaps the norm here. (See Hinton 2012, p92 for a list).

### Changes of church size for population reasons


The population trebled between 1086 and the 14th century, so extensions were made to churches by various methods to expand their internal space for the growing congregation.

- Add a new narrow aisle 

A narrow aisle was added to some churches in the late 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> century, such as at Threxton. They increased the floorspace slightly, but may have been more to facilitate processions round inside the church. They were usually built under an extension to the nave roof, in a similar way to the contemporary medieval residential aisled hall. Most have been replaced by wider aisles in later periods, although the redundant church at Barmer still has one.



Threxton north aisle

- Widen the nave by rebuilding one wall 

This leaves the axis of the nave out of line with the chancel and/or tower, and was taking place at the same time as the addition of aisles (above). There are nine examples in Norfolk, all bar one of which involved the rebuilding of the south wall. (see below)

Other examples can be found at Blundeston, Brampton, Burlingham St Peter, New Buckenham-St Mary's chapel, Norton Subcourse, Salhouse & Shelfanger (as well as Wheatacre's north wall)



Fritton, St Edmund off-centre chancel.

Ian's thesis, awarded in 2010 was published in 2012, considered the location of rural churches. This talk can be seen on the NHBG youtube channel by typing <https://youtu.be/XKt5LLEv4v8> in your browser



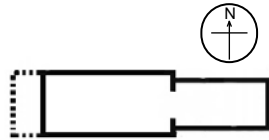
### 3 Extend the nave westwards

This was often done in conjunction with the building of a tower. Most towers were built from the fourteenth century onwards by adding them to the existing building.

Extending the church this way adds floorspace whilst allowing the church to remain in use until the new part of the building was ready to be connected to the nave, then demolishing the original west wall.

Occasionally, the original quoin of the building is still visible, but sometimes the freestone has been removed and it is just indicated by a change in the fabric, along with a relocated doorway. The moving of the doorway seems to have been done to retain the relative positioning between the door and the high end of the church (the chancel), in the same relationship as in a contemporary house, between the cross-passage entry at the low end and the dais and high table at the high end of the hall.

There are over twenty examples still visible in Norfolk, including Stratton St Michael and Langham, shown below.



There are further examples of eastward extensions at Bircham Newton, Gateley, Thuxton, Toftrees & Twyford



### 5 Add larger, wider aisles

Over 150 churches in Norfolk have two aisles now, and a further 107 have a single aisle. These are almost all built under their own lean-to roof, unlike the narrow early versions. In most cases the nave walls were heightened at the same time in order to create space for a clerestory to allow in extra light. There are at least two examples in Norfolk which appear to be multi-phased - where there is more than one clerestory - the original small windows added to by taller windows in a wall which has been raised further.

Documentary records show that aisles were still being built new in the early sixteenth century.



Beeston-next-Mileham

## Church Changes for religious reasons

### 1 Extend the chancels



In addition to changes required for a growing population, the tenets of Christianity were also developing over the same period, most of which required the existing buildings to be altered in some way, or extended.

The concept of Transubstantiation, codified at the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, brought about the celebration of Mass, requiring more celebrants and space for the service. This resulted in the rebuilding or extending of existing chancels over the next decades. No doubt the difficulties and costs involved delayed the process in some parishes in rural Norfolk until later in the thirteenth century.

Vertical joins can be seen in many chancel walls revealing their original extent, and others were rebuilt completely - many on different alignments from the nave of the church (400 of the 2100 in my thesis survey<sup>1</sup>) in some cases by as much as the 15° found at Lammas in the Bure Valley.

Framingham Earl - south chancel wall



There are many other examples in Norfolk, including Rockland All Saints, Saxlingham, Saxthorpe, Scoulton, Stratton St Michael, Tibenham, Tuttington, Warham All Saints & Yelverton

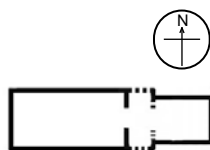
### 4 Extend the nave eastwards

This is a more difficult exercise to gain space unless the chancel is being rebuilt at the same time, as the extended nave takes over part of the chancel space. The fact that added difficulty is involved is probably an indication that in most cases that the tower already existed when this work was done, thus fixing the west end of the nave and preventing a westward extension. Although this was not the case at Barton Bendish, where archaeological investigation dates the tower to a later period. This probably confirms that the extension there was coincident with the chancel rebuilding.

Some churches, such as St. Mary's Kenninghall, had the chancel arch moved eastwards within the church in order to gain space, indicated by the different shapes of the arcade piers, but masked by later work on the external walls.



South wall - Barton Bendish St Andrew



## 2 Install a sedilia and piscina

The celebration of Mass also resulted in the building of sedilia and piscina in the south wall of the chancel. The piscina was used for washing the Mass vessels and the celebrants hands, whilst, adjacent to the piscina, was the sedilia – usually of three seats – which was to allow the clergy to rest during the long services. Many are height-graded with the elevation reflecting the position of the priest, deacon and sub-deacon/acolyte. The range of complexity and decoration of the sedilia is enormous, from the simplest, which are just lowered sills in a window embrasure, to elaborate fourteenth- or fifteenth-century examples in the Decorated or Perpendicular style.



above:  
the simple sedilia at  
Banningham church



left:  
elaborate  
fourteenth-century  
sedilia at Briston

## 3 Build Chantry chapels and guild chapels

Purgatory was defined at the second Council of Lyon in 1274. After this there was an increase in the number of donations of church rights and incomes to religious institutions such as Monasteries, in exchange for prayers to be said for the donors' souls by the monks. The Black Death of 75 years later must have increased the urgency for such intercession. The desire for assistance through Purgatory also manifested itself in the growth of Chantry Chapels - built by the wealthy - also endowing a priest to say masses for the donor. Some were built as additions to the existing church building and others were established in the church, usually at the east end of an aisle. Poorer people banded together for a similar reason. Unable to endow a priest themselves, they grouped together in a guild allowing them to share the costs.

## 4 Add Rood stairs

The installation of The Rood (cross) on a beam across the chancel arch above the screen was established in most local churches in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, often atop the already-installed screen. High-level access was required to keep the candles in front of the cross and the statues of Mary and John the Baptist alight permanently. In churches built after this date, the access could be planned within the structure, whereas inserting access into older buildings often left weaknesses in the wall, or required an external turret for the stair.



left:  
External  
rood-stair  
turret at Acle



right:  
Internal stair  
built within  
the structure at  
Coston

## 5 Install Squints/Hagioscopes

Squints were installed in some churches which had multiple altars. Originally squints were thought to provide a sightline so that the celebrants at subsidiary altars could synchronise the elevation of the Host during Mass. It is now thought they may have performed the opposite function - to avoid synchronicity. In either event, they are still a rare find; did most churches manage without, or did more exist that have been blocked-up when no longer needed?



Multiple squints  
at Woodrising



above:  
view from the north aisle to  
the high altar at Ludham

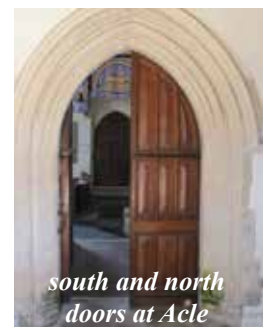


below:  
view from the altar in the  
south aisle to the high altar at  
Hindringham

## 6 Allow Processions

Processions have taken place since the earliest times, but became more regular, even at a local level, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some processions were inside the church, requiring additional internal space. Other processions circled the church up to three times, but remained on consecrated ground, and others went outside the churchyard. Two or more doors were useful to allow the procession to leave and enter by different doors.

Both doors were also used during the baptismal service to let God in from the south and the Devil out northwards.



south and north  
doors at Acle

## 7 Create Tunnels/access ways

To remain on consecrated ground required the procession to remain in the churchyard. This is difficult in some urban situations where churches often fit their yard, such as at Diss, and St John Maddermarket and St Gregory in Norwich, where tunnels have been created through the tower or under the chancel, but only two examples exist in rural Norfolk to my knowledge; the tower at Metton and chancel at Walpole St Peter.



tower tunnel at Metton



## 8 Install Banner Stave Lockers

The Banners and Crosses used in the processions required storing in the church. Every church probably had a locker, but few of them remain. It seems to be a north-east-Suffolk and south-east-Norfolk tradition to retain them, with nine existing in Suffolk and three in Norfolk - at Halvergate, Catfield and Strumpshaw. Almost all of them are in the south wall adjacent to the door. The one at Barnby in Suffolk is thought to be the only original door remaining in the country.

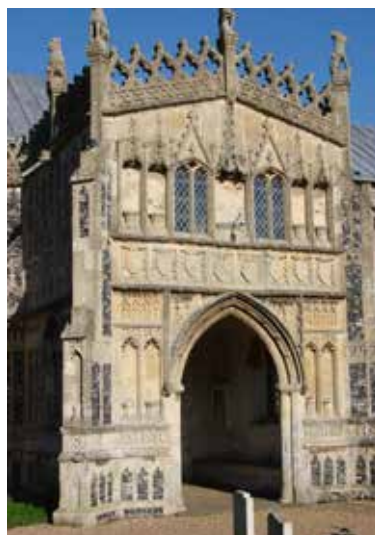


## 9 Build Porches

As Helen Lunnon explained in her Zoom talk to us last year, many church services started at the door, including baptism, confirmation, marriage, burial and the churcing of women after childbirth, so in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, most churches had porches built. Of the 556 Norfolk churches I surveyed for my thesis, only 43 had no porch, and some of those had had one in the past<sup>1</sup>. They vary in size, style and decoration from basic shelters to grand decorated statements with image niches and space for heraldic instruments. Many were two-storeyed, providing space for the Sunday school, the curate's lodging and for the storage of vessels and records etc..



above:  
The smallest Norfolk porch at Beetley,



right:  
one of the most ornate at Pulham St Mary

## 10 Insert a priest's door

After the chancel was closed off to the lay congregation during the early thirteenth century after the fourth Lateran Council when the clergy were required to protect the sacrament, doors were inserted in most churches in the chancel wall. These usually-simple openings allowed the clergy to enter the chancel without going through the nave and having to open the chancel screen, also adding to "the mystery". Many of these have been blocked up after the Reformation when they were no longer needed.

## 11 Install Low Side windows

Low side windows are openings, usually small, in the south chancel wall close to the chancel arch, occasionally paired with one in the north wall. Speculation as to their use has been rife since the Ecclesiologists of the mid-nineteenth century attempted to ascribe all sorts of frankly-ridiculous reasons for them. Nothing has ever been written about their original purpose, but the two most reasonable uses appear to be either for ventilation of the smoke from multiple lights, or for ringing the sacring bell during Mass, when The Host is elevated, to enable those in the fields to genuflect. The NHBG is still researching their extent in Norfolk, uncovering over 140 examples, with the aim of later publication.



Low side windows take many forms - some are below a transom in a larger window as at Postwick (above right - also showing the priest's door), or as separate square or arched openings, such as Hargham (l) and Acle (r)



## Post-Reformation Changes

Much of the detail that we see in church buildings today is the result of changes made after the Reformation in the 1530s, and are the latest iterations in a 1,000-year process. There is insufficient space to display photos of all of them here, but they affect all parts of the church:-

### Chancels

Changes in church services - such as the use of the pulpit and communion table in the nave instead of the chancel to conduct services has meant that some chancels were demolished.

The removal of all images and Catholic paraphernalia meant that chancel screens, rood lofts and stairs were also removed or dismantled, not always tidily.

### Chapels

The sequestration of chantry endowments and of religious guilds meant that most chapels fell into disuse and were demolished as their structures deteriorated, with no funds left to maintain them.

### Naves

The repeal of compulsory church attendance in 1650, and the increasing numbers going to Non-Conformist chapels, meant reduced congregations and therefore reduced income for building maintenance of the communal parts. It also meant that in many cases the additional space created for the growing congregations was no longer needed. As a result, galleries disappeared, many aisles were demolished when extensive maintenance was needed and some damaged or partially-collapsed naves were not rebuilt.

### Doors and Windows

North doors were blocked as they were no longer in use and some complex window tracery also suffered from decay or lack of maintenance, so was either fully or partially blocked up.

## Conclusion

Church buildings in Norfolk provide a detailed record of aspects of social and religious change over the last 1,000 years, reflecting changes in population and church attendance, and the position that the Church held in the community. At the same time, they also indicate the patterns of a blossoming and shrinking of church ceremonies - all revealed in details of their structures.

## The Loddon Parish Study: A community project (December 15<sup>th</sup> 2021)

Jan Bensley



*left:  
Loddon from the  
church tower*

*right:  
Norfolk  
Cottage*



The Loddon Parish Study was, and to some extent, continues to be, a community based local heritage project. The aim of the project was to create a greater understanding of the history of Loddon and an appreciation for the surrounding heritage. Most importantly, providing health and safety allowed, any activities required to carry out this further research would be open to all, anyone who volunteered could try their hand at anything, and all information collated would be freely and easily available. The hope was, that enough people would want to volunteer and join in. Fortunately, they did.

The main components were to be archaeological test-pits, document research and compiling building reports with the main focus on areas which are generally overlooked such as back gardens and outbuildings. It has been said, our project was the archaeology of hidden places, and it often was. With support from The Heritage Environment Service and community archaeologist Dr Richard Hoggett, Dr Ian Hinton and Susan and Michael Brown from the NHBG and Heritage Lottery Funding the Loddon Parish Study officially began in 2013.

When the final report was submitted to the HLF in 2016, 57 test-pits had been excavated, but nearer 80 now. Finds from the pits were cleaned, dried, sorted by type of material, counted and weighed. Pottery and flints, or unusual metalwork, were sent to Gressenhall for identification. As expected a significant amount of late and post Medieval pottery appeared but also enough Ipswich ware to suggest the settlement was middle rather than late Saxon as previously thought. A highlight was discovering Bronze-Age, Beaker-People pot and two areas, close to a subsidiary of the river Chet, that may also indicate areas of Medieval settlement.

Sitting on the market place, behind the more familiar houses that face Church Plain is Norfolk Cottage and the owner kindly allowed us to use it for a training day.

The building was measured and photographed, a written

*below left: test pitting*

*below centre: some of the finds on display*

*below right: 1 High Street - C16 rubble-built with stone vaulted cellar*

description was made and all forms, as requested by the heritage environment service were filled in. It fitted the remit perfectly, the 1950's frontage concealing the remains of a timber framed open hall. And, when it became known we were interested in recording evidence of past industries, people invited us into their houses and outbuildings to see various fixtures from bread ovens to stables now lost from view.

Document research is not so inclusive but a team of volunteers put countless hours into sorting and transcribing relevant material. The Record Office was very supportive but of course, we were also looking for material that was not listed on a catalogue. We weren't disappointed, deeds and various other papers were generously loaned to us. In order to preserve as many as possible, some documents were returned to their owners in archive boxes while an uncountable amount (three car loads!) were deposited at the Record Office.

Initially, we had intended to do a more in depth investigation using the main components in just a few areas, but for most people it was all about the social history aspect; who had lived where, what was their occupation, what was life like in Loddon in the past. Linking the physical evidence with written references helped complete the story.

Supported by the Norfolk community archivist, Loddon has been included in the programme to record sources held by local groups. Volunteers have been re-indexing and entering a description of every item in our archive, onto spreadsheets, so the catalogue will be accessible online. The archive itself is presently being relocated but should be open to view before too long. The archaeological finds are already on the Heritage Explorer website.

Different people have contributed in different ways and people who had not met before formed groups and worked together. We would certainly encourage other groups thinking of embarking on similar community projects, but be warned, we originally intended to complete the Parish Study in three years - we should have known better. The latest undertaking is to produce maps showing past ownership and field names which will be displayed in the village.

Jan's talk can be seen on the NHBG youtube channel by typing <https://youtu.be/KGzcWgeyw1U> in your browser





## Some houses of Norwich Cathedral Close (December 15<sup>th</sup> 2021)

### Anne Woollett

The Prior's (and later the Dean's) Lodging has a long history. In 1284 a large open hall with service areas and a solar was built, lit by windows with plate tracery, two of which remain. Although modest compared with the residence of the Priors at Ely or Durham, this hall was larger than those surviving in the City. In early C16 there was a major refurbishment: a ceiling was inserted into the hall, severing the tracery of the windows, and a chamber was created above the hall approached by a stone staircase.

After the Reformation Norwich Priory was transformed into a secular community and this is reflected in changes to the houses. Between 1660 and 1670 there was yet more remodeling of Dean's Lodging when the distinctive crow-stepped gables were added as well as other changes. So while the Prior's Lodgings changed its form, it remained the office/residence of the Cathedral's senior manager.

Other buildings changed in both form and function, with some pulled down and others modified. The granaries (Nos 51-55 on North side of the Lower Court) were subdivided and made into residential accommodation. The monastic brewhouse and bakehouse, (now Nos 31-33 on East side of Lower Close) was leased out as a tavern, leading to many complaints, but in 1682 it was remodeled with a substantial front range added to create two houses with mirror image plans and a central staircase.

Six new houses were built for the prebends. No 71 dating from 1626-1628 is the only one remaining. Later let to lay tenants it is now part of Norwich School. Other houses were built to lease. One which survives is No 69 Baret's House, from 1549, next to Carnary chapel. It was built in brick and flint with a timber framed jettied upper storey (the curvilinear gable came later).

After 1660 and the restoration of the monarchy, The Close was increasingly gentrified and became the residences of upper clergy, city residents and rural gentry (see No 32-33 and No 50 constructed in 1664 with columns at the front). The Almonry, which dispensed alms to the poor of Norwich, was given a makeover. An L-shaped flint and brick house was built with two curvilinear gables on its north and east sides (No 6), a three storey red brick house of 11 bays was built in 1701 for a mayor of Norwich Jeremy Vine and his wife Susan (Nos 3-4). The workhouse at No 2 was replaced in the mid C18 by a three-storey house in red brick, with a central doorway, two Ionic columns and a pediment. This is now another Norwich School Building.

Reused stone was employed as a building material in No 6, No 56 and The Prior's Lodging, but brick was used increasingly for facades and the whole height of a building from the C17 (eg Nos 33 & 34 (1682), Nos 3-4 (1701)). Brick was also used to create the decorative curved gable pediments (eg on Nos 6 and 69).

Smaller houses were also changed over time; Nos 27-30 on the road to Pull's Ferry were heightened from one storey to two, and there were brick additions. No 29 has an early C19 two-storey, grey-brick range, in front of an earlier C16 or C17 building of flint and brick.

Houses in The Close, as well as the City, were generally built with two storeys, although modified later with additional storeys. The ceiling over of the Hall in the Prior's Lodging in about 1520 and the change in the use of the space is similar to what was happening in the city, following the fires of 1507.

There are, however, many more symmetrically planned houses with central doorways, such as No 32-33 and No 2 in the Close, than there are in the City. One of the few examples in the city is Samson and Hercules House - built in 1627 by Christopher Jay whilst Mayor of Norwich. Several houses in the Close are also built gable-end-on, which is also rare in the city. Do these, and the Prior's large Hall for example, suggest that the design of houses in the Close look toward the houses of Norfolk's country gentry, rather than towards the City?

Roberta Gilchrist: *Norwich Cathedral Close* (Boydell & Brewer, 2005)  
Chris King: *Houses and Society in Norwich 1350-1660: urban buildings in an age of transition* (Boydell & Brewer, 2020).

George Plunkett has a wonderful collection of photographs 1930s to 1980.  
<http://www.georgeplunkett.co.uk/>



*The two remaining plate-tracery windows in the Prior's Lodgings*



*The remaining Prebend's house (No 71) of 1626, next to Erpingham Gate on the right*

*Baret's House (No 69) built in 1549 with a rubble ground floor and timber jettied upper storey - with a later brick gable. (photo: Plunkett collection)*



*One of the smaller houses (No 29) on the right, with a C19 brick range added to a C17 flint building*



*The increasing use of brick. Numbers 32 and 33, built in 1682 and symmetrically planned*

Anne's talk can be seen on the NHBG youtube channel by typing <https://youtu.be/TI-GfgWzVrQ> in your browser

## Medieval houses in the Maldon District, Essex. (February 8<sup>th</sup> 2022)

Tim Howson

This talk provided an overview of the medieval houses which survive in the Maldon District, Essex, with a focus on variations of form and layout and rates of survival. There are 105 houses in this part of Essex known to pre-date the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century. Two of these houses are brick and the rest are timber framed. Over 1,060 taxpayers are recorded in the District in the Lay Subsidy returns of 1524. If we assume that each taxpayer is a householder, then the number of medieval houses which survive today is around a tenth of the number which existed in the 1520s.

Surviving medieval houses in the Maldon District fall into three broad categories: 1) open-hall houses with in-line ends, normally single storey or 1 ½ storeys in height; 2) open-hall houses where there is a 2-storey cross-wing at one or both ends; and 3) fully floored, 2-storey houses. The talk presented to NHBG considered each of these types in detail, but this newsletter note focusses only on aspects of open-hall houses with in-line ends. These are the smallest houses. At the time they were built such houses would have accounted for over half of the rural housing stock (61.4% according to the well-known maps of Essex made by the Walkers of Hanningfield between 1586-1631). But smaller medieval houses have a lower rate of survival than the larger houses, mainly because they were less easily adapted to post-medieval first-floor living. Only 12 of the surviving 105 medieval houses in the Maldon District are known to have had both ends in-line with the open hall. Clearly, a much smaller proportion of in-line open hall houses survives than once existed.

Figure 1  
Water Hall, Little Baddow

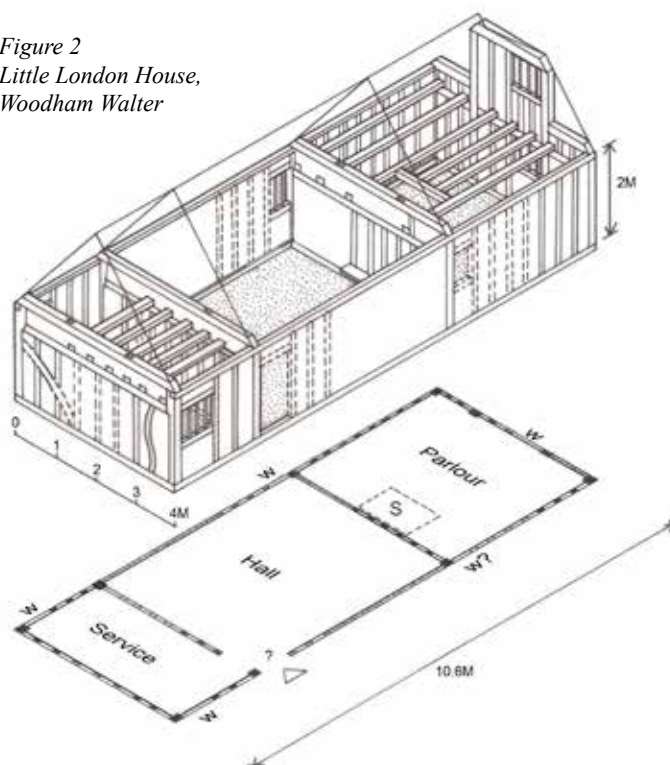


Water Hall, Little Baddow, is the most complete 3-cell in-line hall house so far discovered in Essex (Fig. 1). All the original doorways survive. Opposed front and rear doorways define a cross entry. Two doors, each leading to service rooms, are placed in the middle of the low-end wall of the hall. The door to the parlour was placed at one end of the high-end wall of the hall in order to avoid the bench which was fixed to the centre of the high-end wall. The bench is evidenced by a low row of peg holes and mortices for a draught screen next to the

doorway. This pattern of doorways reflects the most common arrangement seen in the medieval houses which survive in the District. The windows are all unglazed with diamond-section mullions and served by internal shutters. There are large front and rear windows occupying the high-end bay of the two-bay hall, illuminating the high-end bench and table like a stage set. In all these ways Water Hall is typical, although it has one unusual aspect in that the high-end room was open to the rafters. There is soot-blackening on the roof timbers above this room, indicating the room had its own open hearth. It may have functioned as a kitchen rather than a parlour.

Water Hall is effectively 1 ½ storeys in height. Nine times out of ten, in-line open-hall houses in the Maldon District are no taller than this. Six instances have so far been found of single-storey hall houses in the District where if there was an upper storey, it was almost entirely in the roof space, with the floor structure level with the eaves. Little London House in Woodham Walter is an example of an in-line hall house which is 1 storey in height (Figs 2 and 3). Unsurprisingly none of the single-storey houses retain their original roof structure; all their roofs have been replaced to provide more space at first-floor level. For this reason, the survival of a small medieval house is rarely evident from the outside. Little London House is smaller than most of the houses surveyed for the recent book *The Medieval Peasant House in Midland England* (Alcock and Miles, Oxbow, 2013). The suggestion in that book that ‘smaller and simpler medieval houses’ in East Anglia are ‘too rare to provide a detailed picture of the houses of more modest peasants’ (p. 5) is open to question. Remarkably small medieval houses do survive in Essex, but they are well hidden. Essentially, these houses observe the same hierarchical principles of the 3-cell plan embodied at Water Hall, but certain deviations occur.

Figure 2  
Little London House,  
Woodham Walter





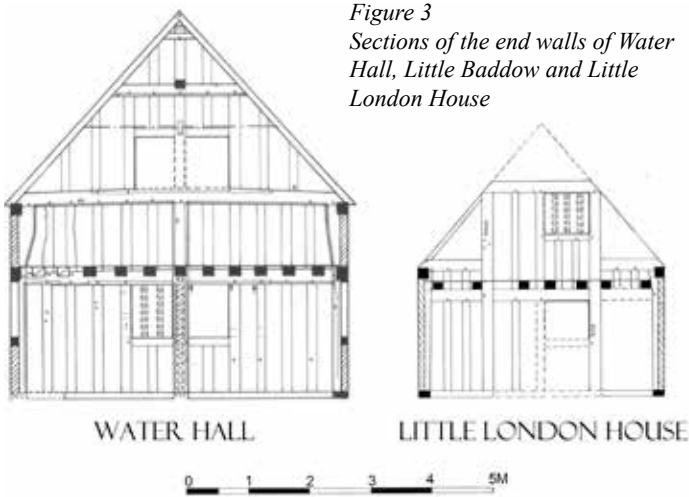


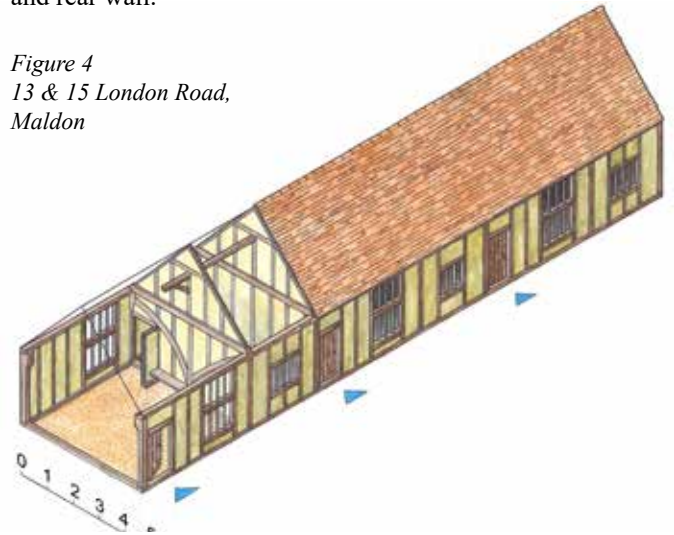
Figure 3  
Sections of the end walls of Water Hall, Little Baddow and Little London House

Instead of having two rooms at the service end – as in the paradigm represented by Water Hall – it is actually slightly more common for in-line service ends to have just a single service room. Each of the single-storey houses had just one service room, usually accessed from the hall by a roughly central doorway. At Little London House all one finds is a very narrow service room accessed, unusually, by a doorway positioned adjacent the front wall. The ceiling joists over the service room are rough and waney edged, whereas the joists over the high-end room are good quality and straight edged. Thus, even in the smallest houses, the quality of materials and finishes reflects the hierarchy of different parts of the building. The front and rear walls at Little London House have been altered and what survives is largely obscured by plaster, making it unclear whether it had the typical central arch-braced tie-beam defining two bays. Unlike Water Hall, Little London House had a comparatively

small window with a dropped head on the rear wall of the hall providing light to the high table. The gable-end wall at the high end of Little London House has what is known as interrupted tie-beam construction. This is very common on the end walls of in-line hall houses and is a strong way of making a half-hipped roof. Three houses in Essex with interrupted tie beams for half-hipped roofs have so far been dated by dendrochronology; one to 1417, one to 1446 and one to 1446/7. Of course, the service gable-end wall at Water Hall shows that there were other ways of constructing a wall that supports a half hip.

Finally, there are a minority of houses, among those which survive, which are of only 2-cells. These are sometimes called single-ended houses because the ancillary rooms only occur beyond one end of the open hall. All the surviving examples are in urban or nucleated settlements. Nos 13 & 15 London Road, on the edge of Maldon, represent the remains of a row of at least three 2-cell houses, each comprising a hall and an in-line high-end room (Fig. 4). They are among the smallest houses to survive from the medieval period. But just like much higher status buildings, the hall still featured a bench fixed to the high-end wall, where the owner and his family would sit at their table, illuminated by large mullion windows on the front and rear wall.

Figure 4  
13 & 15 London Road, Maldon



Tim is Conservation Officer for Maldon District Council. This talk can be seen on the NHBG Youtube channel by typing <https://youtube.com/watch?v=AHJU-Is4IS8> in your browser

## NHBG Research

### Hempnall dendro sampling

The sampling of the properties in Hempnall, which has been delayed for so long by the pandemic, is now underway and may have been completed by the time you read this.

At the time of writing (mid February 2022) three properties have been sampled - two of which provided sufficient rings to be able to provide a date if they match the database - 16 samples from The Chequers and 4 from Spring Mead Garage - but unfortunately the 7 samples from Krons Manor proved to be typical of so many sites in Norfolk - too fast grown to provide sufficient rings, even, unusually, in the latest phase of the house.

Robert Howard and Alison Arnold of Nottingham Tree-ring Dating Lab are working on the samples that they have already taken and will be revisiting in March to take cores from another house and to assess one or two more.

Ian Hinton



## A summary of Poor Relief through the ages

Ian Hinton

### Poor Boxes in churches

On the back page of this newsletter are photos of a number of Poor Boxes still located in Norfolk churches. Every church once had one; many of them are dated to the middle of the seventeenth century - a period when treatment of the poor changed significantly. A few consist of basic tree trunks, some appear to be re-used timbers (the example at Fishley has empty mortices and that at Ashby has chamfers with shield stops), but some are carved boxes, three dated 1639 and one dated 1685; with exhortations to "Remember the Poore". Almost all have the same three characteristic straps and locks as parish chests, one for the vicar and one each for the churchwardens.

Assembling these photographs made me think about the process of poor relief more generally - what follows is a short review of the methods of "supporting" the destitute over the centuries.

### Before the Dissolution/Reformation

Prior to their dissolution, the Monasteries were the prime providers of charitable relief for the elderly and infirm via hospices and spitals.

At a local parish level, we will never know whether the parish of Morebath in Somerset, as interpreted from the parish accounts by Eamon Duffy<sup>1</sup>, was typical in its pattern of charitable giving, but in addition to specific collections for particular events such as marriages, parishioners there were often encouraged to make small donations for more general circumstances, either individually or as part of local 'stores', or funds.

### Tudor Poor Laws<sup>2,3</sup>

Tudor legislation attempting to deal with vagrants was started by Henry VII in **1495**, requiring them to be placed in the stocks for three days on bread and water, and to be sent back to their Hundred of origin afterwards.

Henry VIII increased this punishment to whipping in **1530** and called idleness "the mother and root of all vices". He also had JPs assign specific areas where the 'impotent poor' could beg; outside this area they were liable to imprisonment.

A compulsory Poor Rate was set up in **1547** by Edward VI to be collected in churches.

The Vagabonds Act in **1547** also raised the punishment levels further; two years in prison and branding with a V; death on the second offence.

In **1552**, Edward VI's Poor Act designated a Collector of Alms in each parish and begging was forbidden completely.

In **1563**, Elizabeth introduced the Act for the Relief of the Poor, requiring all residents to contribute to collections.

In **1572**, Elizabeth altered the punishment for begging to burning through the ear for the first offence and hanging for the second.

Also under Elizabeth, towards the end of her reign, two acts in **1597** and **1601** brought things together and for the first time

recognised the existence of the "deserving poor". These were the first attempts to replace punishment with "correction" through work.

The poor relief system was parish based, as it was thought that the local overseer would be able to distinguish between the idle poor and the deserving poor. At this time, poverty was considered necessary as it was felt that the fear of it would make people work.

### Later Laws

By **1662**, the Poor Relief Act of Charles II restricted relief only to established residents of a parish, either by birth, marriage or apprenticeship. Unfortunately this led to people refusing to leave their parish to find work elsewhere, owing to the possibility of losing their right to relief. It also led to the start of temporary contracts for work - of one day less than a year - so not allowing incomers to become eligible for relief in the parish, to which a one-year contract would have entitled them.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century some parishes started setting up their own workhouses and by 1830 most parishes had one, many as part of Unions with other parishes, with the aim of spreading the financial load.

### The future?

This was all 400 years ago, and one has to wonder what someone looking at Britain's current system in 400 years time will make of it; with its "hostile environment", the Windrush scandal, repatriating asylum seekers, trying to turn back boats of refugees, benefit caps, punitive benefit reductions for not seeking work, the widespread increase in zero-hours contracts and the gig economy with reduced rights, and the treatment of the disabled with so many farcical privatised PIPS appeals etc..



*The seventeenth-century Poor Box in Gooderstone church, roughly fashioned from a tree trunk, with fittings for three locks*

- 1 Duffy, E., 2001, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*, Yale UP
- 2 Spicker, P (2021), *British Social Policy 1601-1948, An introduction to Social Policy*, <http://spicker.uk/social-policy/history.htm>, (accessed 6/9/21)
- 3 The Old Poor Law, <http://www.workhouses.org.uk/poorlaws/oldpoorlaw.shtml> (accessed 6/9/21)

### The Manor, Ludham

The Manor is sited close to the church and in a very large plot. It was owned by the Bishop of Norwich as Lord of the Manor until the nineteenth century.



The main range faces south with two wings behind and a further nineteenth-century extension. The main range and wings are thatched and the south wall is ashlar rendered. The fenestration is Victorian. Extensive

renovations revealed that the south wall once had four Georgian sashes. The roof structure is fully seventeenth century with double in-line butt purlins.

Inside there are remnants of a substantial timber frame, but most of the walls are now brick and the brick gables may be original. The gable end stack is separate from the wall which shows it to be a later addition. The front door is not symmetrically placed, so it is possible that this was once a tripartite house, heavily revamped in the eighteenth century and again in the nineteenth.

*Lynne Hodge & Ian Hinton*



## A Digest of Buildings Visited Since August 2021

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. Lynne Hodge

### Church Farm, Hempstead

Church Farm appears as a three-celled building of brick and flint with an off-centre chimney stack with four flues. There is an in-line building to its north, now residential but was probably once the farm dairy. Both the front and rear facades have had an eaves raise of around 15 courses. The axial principal joists are of a considerable size with plain chamfers. The common joists are flat laid and soffit-tenoned into the principal. The stairs were originally between the lobby entrance door and the chimney stack but were accessed from the hall rather than the lobby.

The third ground floor room (services) was once a step down according to the owner. This and the vertical join in the brickwork point to an original house of two cells.

The size and quality of the downstairs joists suggest a late sixteenth- or very early seventeenth-century date, but the bricks around the openings are definitely later. It is possible that these timbers were originally in a predecessor of this later seventeenth-century version of Church Farm and were both valuable enough, and of good enough quality, to reuse.

*Ian Hinton*



refacing which has blocked all openings towards the street. Inside is a timber frame with a mid rail and axial principal joists of substantial scantling, with flat-laid joists, probably of the late-sixteenth or early-seventeenth century. The modern roof consists of sawn-square pine built as a king-post truss.

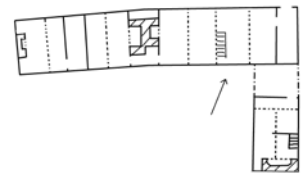
*Lynne Hodge and Ian Hinton*

### 33 Back Street, South Creake

This house is built gable-end on to Back Street and is split into two phases, which do not align exactly. Together they are made up of eight bays. The earlier half is back from the street and built of flint and clunch, and the later one, which may be a replacement for an earlier building given its position, was built at the same time as the south-facing brick facade seen above, which covers both phases. The later part has an entirely clunch-built back wall. The earlier half is dated by its roll-moulded principal joist and mantle beam to the mid-sixteenth century and the later half to the early eighteenth century by the decorative burnt-brick headers, the three-course platband and extensive use of pine for the major timbers internally.

There is a stack as part of each gable end and a deep stack at the join of the two phases, but which only has two flues; there was no heating upstairs. The sash windows are replacements even though they are built in the early form, with sash boxes set flush with the wall surface, as blocked earlier window openings can be identified in the brickwork upstairs. The roof must once have been thatched as the angle is steep and there are deep upstands on both gable ends.

*Lynne Hodge and Ian Hinton*



### Pump Farm, Bunwell

Pump Farm has three cells in line, with later extensions to both north and south facades. The timber framing between the hall and service cells appears once to have been the external wall with multiple braces and a window upstairs, meaning it was originally of two cells. The stack has only two flues. The eaves have been raised by almost 1.8m (6ft) from a single storey to two full storeys. The hall/services frame still exists upstairs and shows the original roof was a single in-line butt purlin roof with clasping collars and diminished principal rafters above the purlin. The stairs are built into the service bay extension, so presumably this was when the eaves were raised and the floor inserted. None of the principal joists are framed in. The parlour (west end) has been rebuilt in clay lump and the timber framing in the parlour chamber has slight primary bracing.

The roof structure points to a seventeenth century date for the house, extended and floored later in the century, with the rebuild of the parlour in the early nineteenth century.

*Ian Hinton*



### 3, Castle Drift, Mileham

Set within the grounds of the former castle, this house presents a misleading appearance externally. The front and rear walls are of eighteenth-century brickwork, but in English Bond. Its true age is indicated by the flint work forming the exterior of the western chimney stack which includes squared stones and sections of colonnettes; no doubt from the castle ruins.

The western room has a ceiling of flat-laid common joists with a transverse principal joist which has ogival (lamb's tongue) chamfer stops. The large eastern room with its own chimney stack seems to be a later addition, no doubt as a parlour in the later seventeenth century. The timbers of the ceiling are regular and well finished.

Flemish-bond brickwork above the level of the upstairs window cills suggest that the house had a roof raise. This may also be the date of the two truncated principal trusses found on the first floor, similar to the ones found in Walsingham.

*Susan & Michael Brown*



### The Barn House, South Creake

The Barn house is built parallel to, and up against, Back Street and linked to 33 Back Street by a modern first-floor link above the carriage entrance. The house consists of two rooms and appears to be of the nineteenth century with a flint and brick wall facing away from the street and a twentieth-century brick







1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11

### Sixteen Norfolk Church Poor Boxes

- 1 Ludham
- 2 Gooderstone
- 3 Watton
- 4 Ashby
- 5 Barton Bendish
- 6 Attleborough
- 7 Loddon
- 8 Cawston
- 9 Fishley
- 10 Mileham
- 11 Tunstead
- 12 Outwell
- 13 Walpole St Peter
- 14 Wilby
- 15 Upton
- 16 West Dereham
- 17 Outwell detail

Photos: Ian Hinton



12



13



14



15



16



17

