

# NHBG Newsletter



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Norfolk Historic Buildings Group



*Who can this determined person be? Let us hope the roof revealed some more clues!*

*(photo: R A Forrest)*

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# CHAIR

Welcome to the newsletter of the Norfolk Historic Buildings Group. I am delighted, once again, to be able to pass on more good news. In the last copy of the newsletter, I reported that a bid had been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a dendrochronological survey of New Buckenham. The bid was successful and work is already underway on the dendro-dating of key buildings in the village. Ian Tyers (University of Sheffield Dendrochronology Laboratory) has already spent an entire weekend in New Buckenham with Sue and Michael Brown (our Building Recording Co-ordinators), and has identified a small group of buildings which look most likely to date. Ian will return soon to start taking 'samples' which he can analyse (and hopefully date) in his laboratory. Some of the money from the bid will be used to fund a series of lectures in the village hosted by the NHBG (see page 4 for more details). We hope that many NHBG members will attend in order to show their support of the project. The grant will also off-set the cost of producing the second volume of the Group's Journal.

The money granted by the Scole Committee for surveying equipment has already been spent so our recording teams will have nice shiny new tapes and profile combs to play with! Sue and Michael have been busily training up new building recorders but need more volunteers. Those of you who fancy getting 'up close and personal' with buildings and developing new skills in recording methods should contact Sue and Michael on 01362 688362. And remember,

surveying old buildings can be great fun (see the picture on the front cover for proof of this)!

The programme of winter lectures has been another roaring success. Most were very well attended indeed and I am particularly grateful to Mary Ash for her efforts in pulling this programme together. Thank you Mary. Thanks also to Alice Leftley for organising refreshments. Alice has sadly had to leave us due to a change in job and she will be greatly missed. If anyone would be willing to take on this role, do please let me know.

The first volume of the NHBG Journal appears to have been very well received by members. I have had many messages saying how much people enjoyed reading it and how impressed they were by the standard set by all the contributors. Not surprisingly, the original print run was quickly snapped up, requiring a second to be commissioned.

On a personal note I can report that I will be standing down as Chairman of the Group in June 2004, although I hope to remain on the Committee. It has been an enormous privilege to lead the group through its formative years and to see it go from strength to strength has been a source of considerable pride and pleasure. Working with such an incredibly talented and committed committee has been a joy – they really are the 'unsung heroes' of the Group and I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of them, past and present, for the valuable contribution they have made to the Group itself and to promoting the study of historic buildings in the county. A new Chair will be elected at the AGM in June and I look forward to seeing many of you then. If any members wish to serve as committee members, please let me know.

*Adam Longcroft*  
01603 592261/e.mail: a.longcroft@uea.ac.uk

## Skirting Boards made from Tiles

These skirting board tiles were found in a house in the west of the county. They are 11 inches by 8 inches and made from a fine white clay (possibly terracotta). They have a profile typical of Victorian pin skirting board and probably date from alterations to the house in the mid-to-late nineteenth century. Has anyone seen similar tiles? Why were they used? Are they to compensate for a poor damp course, or are they a forerunner to the quarry tiles used later in kitchens and wet areas?

*Sue Brown*  
*Woodlands*  
*Bylaugh Park*  
*Norfolk NR20 4RL*



(photo: Michael Brown)

## Visit to The Octagon Chapel Virginia Gay

On a roasting afternoon in August we met under the portico of The Octagon Unitarian Chapel in Colegate for Vic Nierop-Reading's guided tour of the Chapel and the Old Meeting House nearby. Once inside The Octagon, our learned guide urged us to "Feel the Building!"

The Octagon Chapel is an easy building to feel. You are struck immediately by the effects of its simplicity and light. The Corinthian columns are the chapel's sole vanity. That afternoon it was cool and tranquil, a shelter from the hot and smelly bustle of Magdalen Street, as perhaps it has always been. Vic drew our attention to the rhetoric of the building: the rib vaulting; the significance of the open, egalitarian octagon design; the centrality of the word, as made plain by the location of the pulpit at the heart of the building.

It is Thomas Ivory who is generally credited with the design of the Chapel, but after a brisk survey of Calvinists and Arminians, Presbyterians and Independents, Vic began to argue that we should instead consider John Taylor, who became minister in 1753, and his son Richard, as the true authors of the Chapel's octagonal plan.

The Old Meeting House too provided the material for intriguing speculation. It was built after the Toleration Act of 1689, and belongs to an earlier time than that of the Octagon Chapel. Its design is rectangular, with the pulpit in the middle of the long side of the building.

Vic's thesis was that the Old Meeting House should be understood as a return to temple architecture. He noted the Corinthian pilasters which decorate the front elevation of the Meeting House, and likened them to the detail of the Temple of Jerusalem to be found in Villalpando's Commentary on Ezekiel.

As if these pleasures were not enough, Vic then kindly led us across the street for an extra treat – a consideration of the Broads Authority Building and its neighbour in Colegate. It was a delightful afternoon, for which much thanks.



*The Octagon  
: interior and  
detail of Corin-  
thian column*



*The Old Meet-  
ing House:  
Corinthian pi-  
lasters, detail  
and interior*

*(photos:  
RA and AR  
Forrest)*



## Dendrochronology

Ian Tyers

At first we were not sure how many chairs (or refreshments) to put out, but New Buckenham Village Hall soon filled up. It was gratifying to see the large number of locals, all curious to find out just what dendro could do in dating their houses, as well as our faithful NHBG members.

Ian Tyers of Sheffield University is an expert in dating timbers by the study of tree rings, which are the result of trees having a single growing season and a single resting season a year. The growing point of the trunk is the layer under the bark - the cambium layer - so each year's growth is on the outside that of the previous year, the oldest rings being in the middle.

To date a timber it is drilled to get a core sample, and the width of each successive ring is measured. This pattern of wide and narrow rings is then compared with reference chronologies built up from previous work in a similar climatic area. There is a tree ring chronological index for oaks for the British Isles going back, amazingly, 7,000 years.

There are snags, however. After a tree has been felled and shaped into a beam the cambium layer has usually been removed, and with it therefore the date of the felling. In some cases it is difficult to find enough rings to match the index. The timber has to have a minimum of 50 annual rings, though it is often necessary that at least some samples for a building have more than the minimum.

There were many questions from the audience and much further discussion over glasses of wine afterwards. We look forward to the results of the New Buckenham project which will be reported in the next Newsletter.



*Ian Tyers talking to Group members and New Buckenham residents. (photo: Adam Longcroft)*

AF

*Taking a core at Long Stratton, Old Rectory. Sadly there were not quite enough rings for a result. (photo: Michael Brown)*



### New Buckenham Dendrochronological Survey

[Sponsored by a grant from Awards for All (Lottery Grants for Local Groups)]

#### Public Lectures

Friday 4 June 2004 Overview:

Documentary .....Paul Rutledge, Archivist

Landscape.....Adam Longcroft, Landscape Historian

Houses in South Norfolk....Stephen Heywood, Conservation Officer, Norfolk County Council

Friday 24 September 2004 Results of Survey .....Ian Tyers, Sheffield University

**New Buckenham Village Hall, Moat Lane, New Buckenham**

**7.00 for 7.30 pm**

**FREE ADMISSION**

**(For information contact: Susan Brown 01362 688362)**

## Thomas Ivory (1709-1779) Architect of Genius? Vic Nierop-Reading

Stanley Wearing in his 1926 book 'Georgian Norwich and its Builders' claimed that Thomas Ivory was the architectural genius of mid-eighteenth century Norwich. However I believe that a closer examination of Ivory and the buildings associated with him hardly justifies this claim. In the first place, although newspaper references, including his obituary, refer to him as an architect, in his will of July 1775 he describes himself as a builder and timber merchant. Later, in 1782, two years after Thomas's death, his son William, writing in the Theatre Committee Book 'as a Momento to honour his father's memory with a feeling of gratitude to a deceased parent', described him as 'a public spirited man, with great activity of mind and a great knowledge of his business as a master builder .... being considerably employed in the profession of a Merchant in Exporting the Norwich Manufactures....'

In the eighteenth century it was usual for craftsmen to elevate themselves to architects, the Norwich bricklayer, Robert Brettingham, for example, advertised in 1753 that, as he 'is leaving off his business of Mason, he intends to act in the character of an Architect, in drawing plans and elevations, giving estimates, etc'. Thomas Ivory as a master builder certainly made designs for work he carried out, (in the present day fashion of 'Design and Build') but he obviously considered it secondary to his contracting. His son William is a different case. In the mid-1760s he worked as a designer with his father, making drawings for work at Blickling and, in 1770, gratuitously designed the Norfolk and Norwich hospital. In 1777 when Thomas was paid £2,790 for the construction of the Wicklewood House of Correction, William was paid £150, presumably for the design.

The drawings for Blickling attributed to Thomas and a drawing in the Norfolk Record Office by him are crude and simplistic, while the signed Blickling drawings by William and the later Ivory buildings, for example Ivory House at All Saints Green, presumably drawn by William, show some architectural ability. However, inheriting his father's considerable estate, marriage to a rich heiress and a commission in the Militia allowed William to abandon pretensions to Architecture and live the life of a Gentleman after his father's death.

Early Ivory buildings, like his own house at the Great Hos-



1771 — Ivory House, All Saints Green, Norwich,  
(photo: Vic Nierop-Reading)



1756 — Great Hospital House, Norwich. (photo: Vic Nierop-Reading)

pital, the Theatre and the front of the Assembly Rooms, are dull blocks decorated by a simple central pediment. The stylish interior of the Assembly Rooms, rightly praised by Wearing, are now known to be by Sir James Burrough, the Cambridge academic and amateur architect. A re-examination of the Building Committee minutes and drawings for the Octagon Chapel in the Record Office shows that the exterior, with its amateurishly proportioned entrance pediment, is an anonymous design, probably by the Minister's son, Richard Taylor, influenced by designs by the Norwich sculptor/architect Thomas Rawlins and the London architect Robert Morris, not as Wearing asserts, by Ivory.

Provincial craftsmen in the eighteenth century were guided by pattern books published by metropolitan educators and architects such as Batty Langley and James Gibbs. The architectural historian John Summerson noted the influence of James Gibbs on the interior of the Octagon for which Thomas Ivory was responsible. Perhaps we should celebrate his genius in recognising and adapting Gibbs's published design.

## 2 Willow Road, Hampstead, London: a Different sort of Historic House

Penny Clarke

In 1992 the National Trust acquired 2 Willow Road, Hampstead, for them a very atypical property. It is the central house in a small terrace of three designed and built in the late 1930s by the Hungarian architect Ernő Goldfinger as his family home.

It is historic, and so its protection is important, because it is a good example of Modern Movement architecture. This style is under-represented in the UK – hardly surprising with the outbreak of the Second World War shortly after the house was completed in 1939 and the restrictions on building and building materials that followed soon after.

It is also important, indeed probably unique, because it still has all the furniture that Goldfinger designed for it. Some of the designs, in tubular steel and moulded plywood, still seem modern, so they must have been quite startling in the 1930s. Though the support for the dining table – the base of an industrial lathe – is definitely a one-off!

Modern Movement architecture is characterised by its emphasis on the rectilinear qualities of a building, the use of modern materials, the manipulation of space and by trying to link a building's interior with the world outside, especially through the use of large windows. In addition, wherever possible, the structural elements of a building are in evidence and not hidden away, as is traditionally the case.

2 Willow Road has good examples of all these characteristics. Externally, although apparently built of brick, it is, in fact, a concrete building faced with brick. Seen from the front, the house is uncompromisingly linear, with a wide white-painted concrete lintel around the horizontal window that takes up much of the first-floor façade. Although these first-floor windows are large, they are not as large as Goldfinger had originally hoped, because the London County Council (LCC), the then planning authority for London, turned them down on the grounds of fire risk.

At the rear of the terrace the rectilinear quality of the design is not so apparent, largely because the site drops very steeply at the back and there is an extra garden floor. However, the interior of the house is linked to the outside at both garden and first-floor levels. The glass wall of the garden-level rooms slides back to allow direct access to the garden from each room and French windows open from the



*Close view of front elevation showing structural concrete pillars and photobolic screen (National Trust)*

first-floor sitting-room onto a balcony.

Inside the house the manipulation of space is demonstrated most notably on the first floor. Instead of fixed walls between the dining-room, studio/study (at the front of the house) and the sitting-room (at the back), there are full-height partitions. These are hinged, so can be used to create two or three rooms or one huge open space.

On the top floor the space that was originally used as the nursery had similar partitions (some since removed). By fixing

the screens back against the wall during the day there was a play-space that ran the full length of the house. At night the partitions could be brought across so that each child (the Goldfingers had two sons and one daughter) had a separate sleeping area.

Throughout the house the most modern contemporary materials were used, from the concrete from which it was built to the industrial flooring in the hall. Similarly, the use of obscured glass in the screen around the front door was also exceptional, as such glass was intended for industrial, not domestic, buildings.

Some of the building's structural elements are very evident in the dining room. The front of the terrace is supported by concrete pillars from the ground to the first floor. For the remaining floors structural support is provided by RSJs. In the dining room these RSJs are painted a deep blue-green to make them stand out (and behind them run the lagged pipes to the upper floor). Similarly, the main beam supporting the terrace runs the full length of the room (and the same rooms in Nos 1 and 3 Willow Road).

At the back of the house there are no RSJs, instead support is provided by concrete pillars to the building's full height. Only on the top floor are they partially built into the rear wall. On the other floors the pillars are free-standing within each room – wonderful for children to play hide-and-seek or 'he' around!

2 Willow Road is certainly historic, even if it is not old.



*View across living room to studio showing steel framed fireplace (National Trust)*

## Godwick 'Barn' by Ian Hinton



West front of the barn

(photo: Ian Hinton)

### Context

The Deserted Medieval Village of Godwick was located high on the clay of the county watershed, with poor drainage and a deep water table. Godwick Hall itself was built in 1586 and the estate sold to Edward Coke in 1590 who let the majority of the parish to two farmers who continued the depopulation of the village in favour of sheep runs. The Hall was demolished in 1962. This barn was built sometime after 1596, possibly as part of the same landscape scheme which saw the 'ruined' church tower built a few hundred yards to the west. Perhaps significantly, visitors to the Hall had to pass close to the front of the 'barn'.

### Survey

The doors and windows of the building seem out of keeping with an agricultural use, so our brief survey concentrated on the features of the west 'front' wall, to try and throw light on its previous use, and to examine more closely the so-called vertical join near the south gable that had been mentioned in earlier work.

The building is built of brick, in English Bond with narrow bricks of variable colour commensurate with an early seventeenth-century date. The windows are infilled with irregularly bonded brick which was built separately from, and not bonded to, the cut-brick mullions. The infilled areas were apparently rendered and may have been painted black to complete the *tromp l'oeil* effect. Where the infill has been removed, it can be clearly seen that there were no rebates in the mullions or jambs for glass or wooden sub-frames.

The central barn door opening can be seen to be a later insertion into the wall, unlike the large opening in the rear wall, as the lack of 'closers' in the brick bonding shows that it was not original. There cannot have been a window here instead as

there is no evidence of a removed pediment, perhaps there was a small door similar to the one at the left end.

Closer examination of the 'vertical join' shows it not to be an indicator that the south gable was rebuilt, but to be the right jambs of a blocked pair of 'fifth windows'. There is also an equivalent, though less obvious, join matching the position of the windows' left jambs. A small section of the original window mullion and cill are still evident between the two 'joins', behind the infill.

The tops of both gable ends appear to have been rebuilt in characteristic eighteenth-century 'tumbling-in', perhaps replacing the original stepped gables, which would have been more in keeping with a seventeenth-century build.

### Conclusions

This building was apparently not built as a threshing barn as originally there was only one large door (at the back). Neither was it ever residential – as the windows are fake, there are no rebates in the mullions for wooden sub-frames or for glass, and the extensive earlier documentary research has not revealed its use as a Manor Court house.

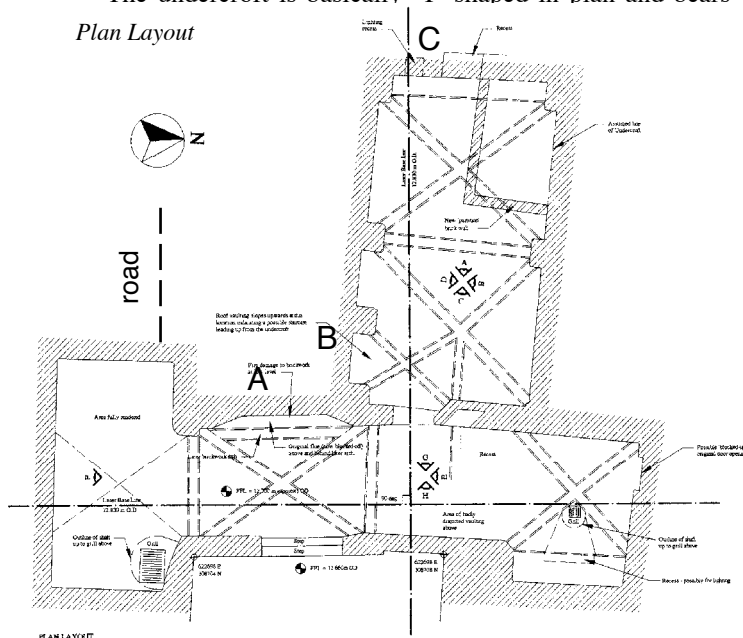
Was it used as a stable, with a granary or hay storage above? Was the north doorway of the west front always a dummy? Was there another in the centre of the front wall? If it was used as a granary, it leaves a question "where was the threshing done?" Discussion after the meeting raised the possibility that it may have been used as a wool barn.

Maybe the massed pairs of eyes and opinions during the Group's visit to Godwick on Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup> will sort it out.

## A Norwich Undercroft Bill Wilcox

Acting in my professional capacity as a structural engineer, I became involved in the remedial work to one of Norwich's medieval undercrofts about two years ago. This involved the rebuilding of a brick pier and the removal of a plug of concrete protruding from one of the spandrels. For health and safety reasons, the concrete had to be removed from above and the brick vaulting plus original covering of the undercroft reinstated. It was during this work that I obtained permission from the owner to carry out a survey on behalf of the NHBG Having no artificial and very little natural light in the undercroft I decided to use a laser level to carry out the survey. This apparatus enabled me to project two level laser lines at 90 degrees to each other within the gloom with which to measure both horizontal and vertical offsets from the laser beam. A plan showing the relationship between the undercroft and buildings above plus a general layout plan along with elevations of each wall were subsequently produced.

The undercroft is basically 'T' shaped in plan and bears  
*Plan Layout*



runs under the road and there is a shaft leading up to the pavement with a grille over. It has been constructed using 50mm thick by 100mm wide by 250mm long very soft bricks in a lime mortar. Some of the walls and spandrels were originally rendered although this has fallen off in many places and on one wall this has revealed earth (not brick) behind. The floor of the undercroft is loose earth that has not been examined. The entire structure was originally covered with a matrix of broken bricks in a lime mortar that formed a flat ground floor surface (presumably on which was built a timber framed house). Judging from the construction, the undercroft appears to date from the mid 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Along one side of the undercroft is a large fireplace (A) with a flue leading up to just below street level. The arch supporting the front wall of the fireplace is proud of the main sidewall and is wedged between two main diagonal brick arches, thus appearing to be a later introduction. To the rear of this fireplace is a bricked up door to a staircase (B) with piers either side plus a contra sloping spandrel between the brick arches in front that disturbs the pattern of the main vaulting. Therefore, I speculate the possibly that the fireplace and staircase were a later alteration to the undercroft and that the close proximity of the staircase forced the fireplace towards the middle of the undercroft.

Various bricked up doorways and local tradition suggest that there were originally further basements (or undercrofts) connected to this one. The fireplace plus a lighting recess imply (C) that the undercroft was not just used for storage but that some form of human activity took place, possibly domestic.

During the removal of the concrete plug at ground level a 30mm thick layer of charcoal was noted over the flat surface of the undercroft. Whilst this indicates a past major fire (possibly the original timber framed house), there is no evidence to connect it with the great Norwich fire of March 1507.

Unfortunately, inspections of the S.M.R & U.A.D plus a cursory search at the N.R.O has not revealed any further details on the undercroft although an excavation report of nearby undercrofts has provided tantalizing suggestions.



*View of the  
Fireplace  
(drawing and  
photos:  
Bill Wilcox)*



*General view of brick vaulting plus the lighting recess on the rear wall*



## Norfolk Anglo-Norman Castles: Form and Function

### Report on a lecture by Sandy Heslop

Dr. Heslop began by referring to the well known tenet that the form of a building is usually determined by its function, suggested that in the case of several Anglo-Norman Norfolk castles this was not so and embarked on a most interesting examination of five or six castle buildings.

Consideration of Castle Acre built by William de Warenne, part of which is the earliest surviving castle in Norfolk, sets the tone for others that follow. Excavation in the late 1970s revealed a largish square building which over time had existed at different heights in different places; for example the front section had been removed and the back had not; the back was very high and the front was depressed. Joist holes indicated that there had been a wooden floor upstairs, supporting grand rooms, with a fireplace in the rear chamber, latrines and large first floor windows.

There were oddities. The ground floor windows were also quite big, both inside and out, and the excavation revealed a large door opening in the original structure, all of which indicated that defence was not a priority. Post holes suggested that there had been a platform and staircase to the first floor.

What the excavation revealed was a proto-keep with a first-floor hall and adjoining heated chamber. It was 77 feet long with an off-centre spine wall supporting a double pile roof with a valley gutter. Though lacking architectural detail, it was clear that the chamber was very grand indeed. The building was entered through a gate in a mighty rampart, which would originally have been topped with a palisade, which had been heightened many times.

At some later date there were drastic alterations: the ground level was filled in, thus turning the first floor into ground level and all the walls were thickened to double thickness. The back half was built on, the front half was not, the walls were heightened and gradually it became a tall-towered keep with battlements, half the depth of the original building. This was illustrated with slides of the original uncrenellated square country house with ground-floor door and windows on both floors and its transformation into this massive fortified keep dominating the surrounding countryside.

A charming reconstruction of the castle in the 1370s, sitting within its many moated ramparts, showed its relationship to its landscape of planted town, parish church and Cluniac priory beyond. The Peddars Way originally ran through the site but it was rerouted round via the priory to make a stage-managed approach, rather like the way the D'Albinis positioned their castle across the road at New Buckenham, thus controlling the traffic and extracting revenue.

In the bailey of Castle Acre was once a big building, now just humps in the grass but visible on air photos. It is 60 feet long and looks like a hall/chamber block with kitchen and latrine blocks. Weeting castle in south Norfolk, standing within its moat, is the same shape and arrangement. It is 40 feet long and belonged to the de Plaiz family, tenants of the Warennes. Before the Conquest it was an Anglo-Saxon lordship site and indeed excavation has revealed earlier, timber, foundations. Is the prototype at Castle Acre the same as Weeting?

Weeting had a square aisled hall with timber arcades. The fabric was flint, there were storied solar and service ends and there were no battlements. The private part of the building was

quite separate from the hall, whereas castles usually have access to the chamber at first floor level. Bits of a late twelfth-century carved head give a date to what is probably the earliest hall house in Britain. It was probably a manor house.

It seems that by the 1170s Castle Acre also had a hall/chamber block in the bailey which was lived in while the tower dominated the landscape. Will future excavations confirm this?

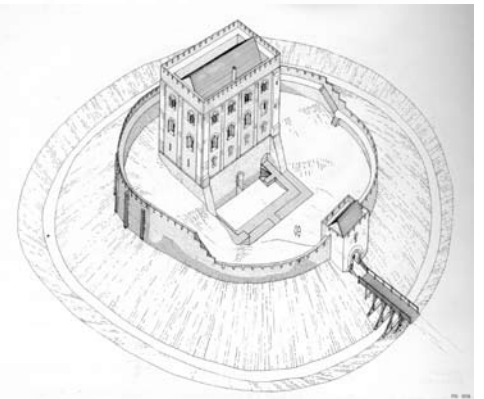
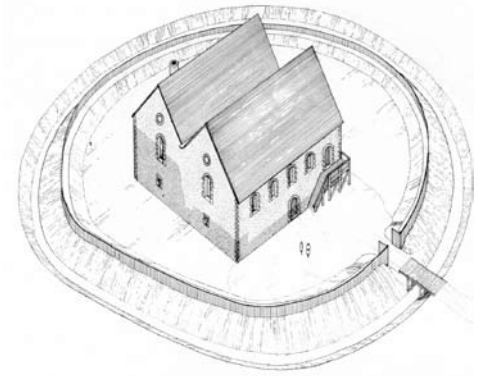
The move from a first floor to a ground floor hall also happened at Sulgrave, Northants. It is a beguiling thought that though the Normans imported the castle keep in 1066, they went on to take over the Anglo-Saxon house type: pre-Conquest thane's hall, post-Conquest castle, then manor house.

William d'Albini (there were many of them) built Castle Rising c. 1138, and later New Buckenham Castle. He had just married Alice, the young widow of Henry I and it appears that, like the original building at Castle Acre, it was not primarily a fortification. It did have a defended entrance to a first floor hall, but had big windows overlooking the deer park, very fancy vaulting plus blind arcading behind the dais and a large kitchen. However in form and layout it is very like Norwich Castle.

At Norwich the doorway to the first floor hall was once lavishly decorated (like the William Rufus doorway at Westminster) and the whole building appears to be a model for the layout of Castle Rising. The function however was quite different.

Norwich was a royal castle—indeed Henry I and his child bride stayed there after their marriage in 1121—so it was for the use of the Sheriff and had a garrison of forty knights at any one time. It was a major government building in the heart of the city.

Castle Rising, on the other hand, has no evidence of a garrison, and appears rather to be a pleasure palace in the countryside adjoining hunting grounds. Why has it such similar forms to Norwich? Dr. Heslop advanced a rather romantic theory that it was nostalgia on the part of the Countess Alice for the splendours of her sojourn at Norwich Castle as Queen all those years ago, nostalgia for the prototype rather than the functions, so her new husband built her a country house just like it. AF



*The development of Castle Acre. (The Archaeological Journal, Vol 139, The Royal Archaeological Institute, 1982.)*

## Mathematical Tiles

George Fenner

Articles on mathematical tiles usually begin by saying that most people have never heard of them, or that they had seen them and not recognised them for what they were because they performed their function so well. They are in fact clay tiles designed to imitate bricks, and Figure 1 is the most common pattern.

At various times and in various places they were also known as brick-tiles, geometric tiles, rebate tiles or weather tiles. Christopher Hussey defined them as “flanged tiles so made as to present, when hung on a vertical face, an appearance which is scarcely distinguishable from brickwork”.

They could be made to imitate stretchers, headers, closers, and even corner tiles. The standard tile was the easiest to make. The bottom of the mould would form the shaped side, and, after the clay was pressed in, the flat back could be made by levelling the top of the mould. Compared with brick, tile-making required a more thorough grinding of the clay to give a finer body, more akin to terra-cotta.

In 1981 a Symposium was arranged by Maurice Exwood and Alec Clifton-Taylor after the latter discovered that he and most other building historians had been misleading their readers by quoting Nathaniel Lloyd’s ‘The History of English Brick Work’ of 1925, which stated that the main function of mathematical tiles was to avoid Brick Tax. This has subsequently proved to be nonsense. Since 1981 there have been many references to mathematical tiles in the VAG and many other Journals.

The early history of mathematical tiles is a little vague but they probably made their first appearance in the late seventeenth century in a building in Surrey, unfortunately demolished in 1979, and then perhaps in 1716 when a building in the Isle of Wight may have been clad with them. We are on more certain ground with a sixteenth-century timber-framed house in Westcott, Surrey, fronted with mathematical tiles, one of which bears the date 1734 and at Farnham, where two cottages have tiles fixed on the first floor, one of which is neatly cut ‘E. Bradley 1757’.

The most intensive use of mathematical tiles seems to have been from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century, but there are more modern examples. Clifton-Taylor’s ‘Pattern of English Building’ has a picture of mathematical tiles being fixed to the front of The Railway Arms in Croydon in 1950. Even later, a contributor to the Symposium recalled that in 1958 the Consortium of Local Authorities Special Programme (known as CLASP) asked Keymer Brick and Tile Company at Maidenhead to produce mathematical tiles to clad their pre-fab buildings. Many hundred of thousands of tiles were fixed to such buildings as schools, hospital, libraries, fire stations and even

naval bases all over England and Wales. Are they any of these buildings still standing in our area?

The major concentration of buildings clad with mathematical tiles is in south-east England, south of the Thames. In 1981, the score was: Sussex 357 (with Lewes as its mathematical tile capital with 87 buildings); Kent 229; Surrey, Wilts and Hunts about 30; Berks, London, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, and Norfolk 6 or 7; with odd appearances in Lincolnshire, Wales, Northants and Shropshire.

It will be obvious that mathematical tiles mostly occur in those counties which already had a vernacular tradition of tile-hung walls, which Alec Clifton-Taylor says first appeared towards the end of the seventeenth century and has always remained a speciality of Kent and Sussex. Their purpose was to afford protection against bad weather, especially driving rain, and they came in a variety of patterns.

It would be easy to assume that mathematical tiles were just another variety of wall-tiles, but they were more difficult to make and therefore more expensive, and if their only function was to keep out the weather then one of the other sorts of tile would do the trick. The other factor here was fashion. The Royal Proclamations introducing the building regulations for London after the Great Fire stipulated that new building could not be timber-framed but must be constructed of stone or brick. The rest of the country, in their own time followed the capital, and a timber-framed building, apart from being a fire hazard, began to look old-fashioned when compared with the smart new brick houses. Confirmation of this attitude can be found in the diaries of Celia Fiennes in which she recorded journeys which took her all over England between 1685 and 1703. For example: Purbeck: “Lady Larence...this is a pretty large house but very old, timber built.”

Worcester: “My cousin Fiennes New House—which contrary to its name was an old built house of timber work; but by his alterations and additions of good brick walls he has made it look well; itts in sight of severall houses, but all old buildings”

Sandwich: “This is a sad old town all timber building...but its run so to decay that except one or two houses its just like to drop down the whole town.”

Colchester: “...their buildings are of timber of loame and lathes and much tiling...old buildings except a few houses build by some Quakers that are brick and of the London mode”

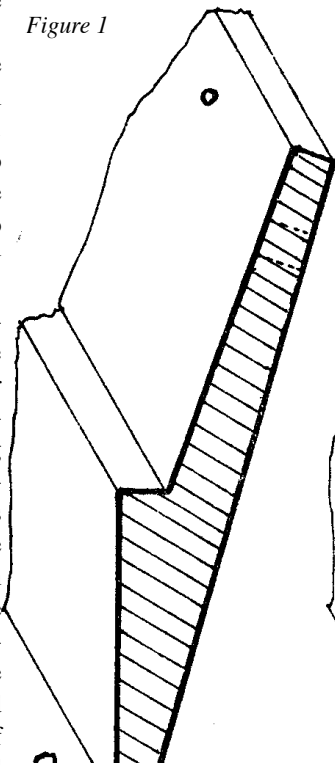
There are more examples and one gets the drift: timber-framed bad and brick good.

Nearer to home:-

Norwich: “...but all their buildings are of an old form mostly in deep points and much tiling as has been observed before and their building of timber, and they playster on laths which they strike out into squares like broad freestone on the outside...but none of brick except some few beyond the river which are built of some of the rich factors like the London buildings.” (Colegate for example.)

It appears therefore that by the latter part of the seventeenth century timber-framed buildings were definitely passé. Brick

Figure 1



**Continued on page 11**

**Continued from page 10**

was in, as were sash windows, symmetry, and all the other features that make the Georgian style.

There were a number of ways of fixing the tiles to the buildings. It might be thought that they would, like other tiles, be nailed to battens but this was not the only method. In many cases the mathematical tiles were bedded onto lime putty which in the case of timber-framed walls was applied direct on to the old surface. In the case of buildings designed from scratch to be faced with mathematical tiles, the walls would be covered with wood and the putty applied to the wood and the tile to the putty. In these cases one or two nails would be used to hold the tiles while the putty hardened.

The use of mathematical tiles can be divided into three building categories. The first has already been mentioned, that is the cladding of timber-framed buildings to keep out the weather, and to disguise the structure as a nice, modern, brick building rather than a grotty old timber-framed one. There was a snag however with the tiles at ground level as they were liable to accidental damage from passers-by, carts and barrows in narrow streets. The answer was to clad the ground floor with solid brick up to the jetty and use matching mathematical tiles on the first and second storeys. There were two alternatives for bricking the ground floor: either to cover the wall with a skin 9 inches thick, or to build a wall level with the outer edge of the jetty, to produce an absolutely flat façade.

The second category is the new vernacular building which was intended to be built with timber and designed to be covered with mathematical tiles. Segmental bays on upper storeys were fashionable about 1800 and these timber bays on upper storeys could only support cladding in tiles.

Thirdly we come to the posh end of the market where we find that mathematical tiles turn up in the most surprising places. We know that Isaac Ware, an influential writer on architecture, declared in 1756 that red brick was 'fiery and disagreeable' so that fashion from then on demanded white brick. Thus it was that when Samuel Wyatt was charged by Coke to revamp the Holkham farm buildings he used white brick but on Leicester Square Farm at East Creak and the Steward's House at Holkham he used mathematical tiles. At Althorp, Henry Holland persuaded the second earl to cover the whole of the red-brick Elizabethan house with white mathematical tiles. Horace Walpole visited the



*Muspole Street, Norwich: timber framing, medieval mullion windows, and modernising mathematical tiles. (Photo: B Fenner)*

house in 1793 and wrote, "I am sorry that the pretty outside is demolished and that Mr Holland has so much of the spirit of a lucrative profession in him as to prefer destroying to not being employed." The mathematical tiles are still there.

A few last words about the Brick Tax. To begin with, mathematical tiles were in use long before Brick Tax was introduced in 1784; in fact, the act introducing the tax reads, "For and upon all tiles other than such as are hereuntofore enumerated and described by whatever name or names such tiles now or hereafter may be called or know a duty of 3s per 1000 and so in proportion" which means that tiles, including mathematical tiles, were intended to be taxed at the same time as brick.

Excise Records at the PRO confirm that the law was rigorously enforced and there is no doubt that tax was collected.

Many thanks to Adrian Parker, Rosemary Forrest and Vic Nierop-Reading.

*Bibliography*

- Lloyd, Nathaniel, The History of English Brickwork, London, 1925*
- Clifton-Taylor, Alec, The Pattern of English Building, Faber, 1972*
- Clifton-Taylor, Alec, Six More English Towns*
- Fiennes, Celia, The Journeys of Celia Fiennes, Faber, 1972*
- Brunskill, R and Clifton-Taylor, A C, English Brickwork, 1977, Ward Lock*



## Welcome to Pip's Cottage

Anna Kettle now has a permanent home at  
Pip's Cottage, The Street, Pakenham, Suffolk IP31 2JU  
Tel 01359 230642

Anna@kettlenet.co.uk and 07976 649862 remain the same.

Lime plasterwork, plaster conservation, ornamental plasterwork,  
freehand modelling and pargeting.

Pictures of my work are on [www.kettlenet.co.uk](http://www.kettlenet.co.uk)



## Two Ornamental Cornices

### Anna Kettle

I recently cleaned and repaired an unusual 18<sup>th</sup> century decorative cornice for an NHBG member and I also visited the Norfolk Club in Upper King Street where there is a similar cornice in the entrance hall. The cornices are so similar that they must have been created by the same plasterer.

#### Old Catton

In 1758, the Mayor of Norwich Robert Rogers built himself a house in the leafy suburb of Old Catton. He called it his Capital Mansion House and it is now grade II\* listed.

We can see the rise of Robert Rogers from “Worstead Weaver of the City of Norwich” when in 1747 he bought a rood of copyhold land called St Margaret’s Well, and another acre and a cottage. In 1758, his Mayoral year, he was called ‘Merchant of the City of Norwich’ when he bought an acre and a half with outbuildings and started to build his Capital Mansion House.

There is fine gypsum plasterwork in several of the rooms; plaster panelling in the parlour, a decorated cornice in the hall and on the landing a splendidly ornamental ceiling which the listed building report describes as “fine almost Rococo” and Pevsner calls “exuberant”.

In this piece I shall be looking at the cornice in an upstairs room. It was described in a valuation dated 1913 as “a small boudoir with register stove” so it was probably designed for Robert’s wife Anna to use as her entertaining room.

The cornice consists of panels, each about 40 inches long, alternating around the top of the wall. One panel has a scrolled ornament with leaves and flowers and the next panel has a diamond design, which the listing report calls “quilted”.

The background area of the cornice was originally painted green which is unusual, cornices would usually have been plain white. The green was built up in three layers, a pure lead white base, a dull green undercoat of Prussian blue, yellow ochre and lead white, followed by a bright green topcoat of verditer, orpiment and lead white.

#### The Norfolk Club

This grade II listed building in Upper King Street was built some time in the 18th Century and was the headquarters of the Harvey and Hudson Bank until 1866.

In 1961 the Norfolk Club applied for planning permission to demolish the building and replace it with offices, but Norwich City Council refused permission. The Norfolk Club appealed to the Minister who was at first inclined to give permission, but at the protests of the Norwich Society there was an inquiry. A report was prepared for the inquiry which said “The main rooms are pleasant enough but not of outstanding interest” and permission for demolition was granted. No mention was made of the plasterwork.

The Norfolk Club was never demolished, perhaps because the members decided that the demand for offices was not all that great. Two similar blocks of offices had recently been built and one was still unlet at the time.

The listing details do not mention the plasterwork in the hall and landing, which is similar to the cornice at Old Catton.

It is covered in numerous layers of paint so much of the detail



*Cornice at the Norfolk Club*



*Cornice at Old Catton*

has been lost. The cornice at Old Catton has been partly cleaned so fine detail and the original green paint finish is visible.

The basic shape of a decorated cornice is run in situ. Decorations are then cast in moulds and planted onto the basic shape.

The unusual feature of the Old Catton and the Norfolk club cornices is that after the scrolled panels were planted into position, the quilted panels were created in situ. The plasterer must have worked very quickly to have laid down the plaster, run a shaped tool through it to create the diamond shapes and put dowels into the plaster to create a regular pattern of small holes (which have filled up with white paint since then) while the plaster was still workable. There is evidence of this high speed working as the quilting is not evenly done.



*Irregular quilting: The diamond shapes are almost square on the left and very elongated on the right*

The dowels could then be removed and cast petals added at leisure to complete the quilted panels.

The scroll panels at the Norfolk Club overlap the lower runwork in places. I suspect the overlaps were cast separately and then stuck on as a finishing touch.

The quality of the workmanship is variable. The cast panels have been beautifully modelled and make very attractive sets. The quickly modelled quilting is slapdash in parts. The finish in some of the corners is poor where no care has been taken to

**Continued on page 11**

**Continued from page 12**



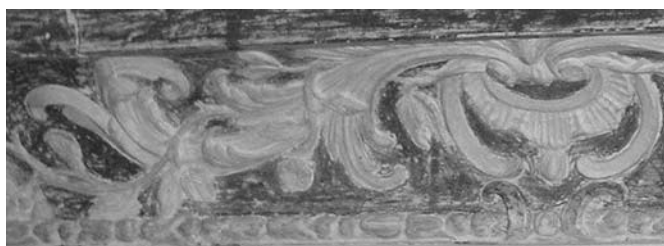
*Asymmetrical finishing in a corner keep the symmetry.*

The scroll panels at Old Catton appear to be all different, but on close inspection, two of them are from the same mould, with one broken and squashed to fit in a smaller space.



*'Perfect' moulded scroll pattern. The same scroll pattern but squashed up to fit above the 'horns'*

The thin stems have been freehand modelled and the small leaves and flowers have been cast and added later.



*(which show traces of gold leaf)*

The scroll patterns in the Norfolk Club are more obviously cast in a set of moulds though a completely different set of moulds to that used at Old Catton.

**Who was the plasterer?**

I have no firm information as to who the plasterer was, but he is likely to have been one of the top local craftsmen. The only one I know who was working in Norwich at that time was William Wilkins of St Benedict's parish.

When he moved there in about 1754 he was already married with at least two children. He and his wife had eight more children over the next twelve years and buried six. Until it was

bombed in the last war, William's gravestone in St Benedict's churchyard read "In memory of William Wilkins (late of this parish Plasterer) who died February 8<sup>th</sup> 1783 aged 63 years". To have afforded a gravestone the family must have been successful.

This was confirmed when two of his sons were made Freemen of Norwich. William Wilkins the younger became an architect and James Wilkins was a plasterer like his father. Until it was bombed, James' gravestone in St Benedict's churchyard used to read "For more than fifty years an eminent plasterer in this parish".

In the Norfolk Record Office are two letters written in 1757 by Edward Spelman of Westacre in which he discusses the workmen and techniques he had used in building his house. He says

"The cornices are of stucco for which I paid one shilling per foot for the plain and eighteen pence per foot for those that are enriched".

Interestingly, his cornices were coloured like those at Old Catton. "For the painting 6 pence per yard three colours or instead of the first colour drying oil which I chose" and he also said "I know of no turpentine being used either in the drying oil or in the two subsequent colours. You may be assured that stucco both takes and retains paint as well as wainscot without turpentine".

Spelman's plasterwork is not the same design as that at Old Catton and the Norfolk Club, but it is possible that there was a local fashion for coloured cornices because Robert Rogers grew up at Little Dunham, which is only six miles from Edward Spelman in Westacre.

**References**

*Records of the Norfolk Club 1864–1977, Norfolk Record Office*  
*Catton Court Books 1647–1875 Norfolk Record Office*  
*Mayors of Norwich, Norfolk Record Office*  
*Blomefield's Norfolk, Norfolk Record Office*  
*Pevsner's Norfolk, Norfolk Record Office*  
*Norwich Freemen 1752 Norfolk Record Office*  
*Card Index Norfolk Record Office*  
*Unpublished report Andrea Kirkham and Catherine Hassell*  
*Decorative Plasterwork of Great Britain by Geoffrey Beard*  
*Parish Records of St Benedict's, Norwich*  
*Listed building records www.imagesofengland.org.uk*

**Anna has issued the following invitation**

An opportunity to venture just into Suffolk. Pip's Cottage is a 16thC timber framed house and its crowning glory is a carved oak ceiling. Find out what is under the vinyl wallpaper and chipboard floor! I'm holding an open house for any NHBG member (and friends) who would like to visit on 27th March when I hope spring will be on its way. Turn up any time between 11.00 am and 4.00 pm and I will welcome you with a cup of tea or a glass of wine.



Anna Kettle  
01359 230642  
The Street  
Pakenham  
Suffolk

# Budgen's Car Park—Home to one of Cromer's Oldest Houses

Andy Boyce, Cromer Preservation Society



Figure A

Almost hidden in a corner of Budgen's car park is a partly rendered brick and flint house (Figure A), thought to be one of the oldest buildings in Cromer. It is unusual in that it still preserves some of its original appearance. Its original, ornate, shaped gable on its cross wing is easily identified on early paintings and drawings of the town. The earliest known view of Cromer, possibly from the 17th century (Figure B) which shows a higgledy-piggledy group of buildings near the church, includes this gable. Part of the house may be even older, however, building work carried out in 1981, within the adjoining, largely-reworked Hanover House (Figure C), uncovered part of an oak ceiling and carved beams dating to between 1480-1600, and it is possible that its neighbour might date from this early period too.



Figure B

The diagrams show the front, or west elevation.

1. Early 18th century. At this time (if not earlier), the building probably had a T-shaped ground plan, consisting of a hall running east-west, with a cross wing at the north end. (Hall façade not clear on old pictures, so positions of windows and door here have had to be suggested on the diagram).
2. Late 19th century. Illustrations from this time show the house set within a garden which stretched down to Garden Street. It

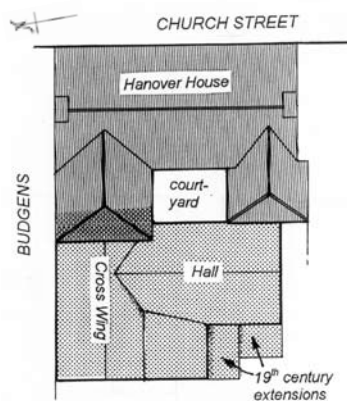


Figure C

## Postscript

Since 2001, this building has been used as a storage area and workshop by one of the businesses in Hanover House. As a result, three large ventilating units have been installed on the gable wall, and the late Victorian doors covered by sheets of metal and wood.

In October 2003, following a request by Cromer Preservation Society, the building was inspected and Grade II listed, along with the adjoining Hanover House. The Listed Building Description notes that there are "18th century 2-panel doors leading to the rear room facing the car park and the windows here have window seats with raised and fielded panelling". Facing the internal yard are early/mid 19th century sash windows including two with unusual slight bows."

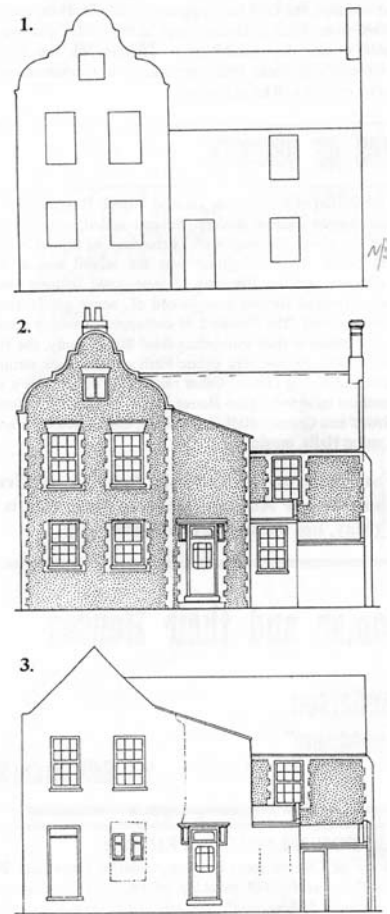
Although it was not noted in the article above, the surviving 12-pane sash windows do not have horns, suggesting (according to most sources I have seen) a date prior to C.1840. The oldest sash window with horns in Cromer which I have been able to date is from 1838, fitted to the Bath House Hotel on the Promenade. Unfortunately this was removed during recent rebuilding work.

was large gardens such as this which gave the street its present name. The house can be seen as built of flint with brick dressings, such as around the windows and door. The main doorway is now in the two-storey extension on the south side of the end gable, which may be 18th-early 19th century, and is similar in style to the rest of the house. Other small extensions, in brick, are later. Certainly by the late 19th century the house had sash windows, as shown in pictures. The northern ground floor window in the gable end may have been converted to a door, as it is now (area is not clear in early pictures).

3. Late 20th century. The building served as an annexe for the shops in Hanover House facing Church Street in 1963, the gable was rebuilt to a simpler design (3). At some point, the end gable was rendered, the chimneys removed and a ground floor window replaced by two small ones.

## References

1. The original picture is in Felbrigg Hall. The date is either 17th century (see back cover, in *Cromer, Chronicle of a Watering Place*, by M. Warren, Poppyland Publishing, 1987) or 18th century (p. 16, in *About Cromer* by M. Warren, Alan Sutton Publishing, 1995. The illustration reproduced here as Fig 2 is based on a copy of the Felbrigg painting in Cromer Museum.
  2. Notes by M. Warren Cromer Museum
  3. Notes by Mr Warren and C Crawford Holden in Cromer Museum
- Thanks to Cromer Museum and Rochelle Mortimer Massingham for assistance.  
This article first appeared in Cromer Preservation Society Newsletter



## Priory Farm, Rushall Paul Rutledge

The flooring over of open halls in the 16th and 17th centuries is commonplace, but it is seldom actually recorded. However, a recently-discovered document among the Frere MSS in the Norfolk Record Office shows this happening. It is an agreement dated 18th January 1574 relating to a house in Rushall (1). Bassingborne Gawdy esquire of West Harling was the owner and the tenant was Henry Cowper yeoman. They agreed

“That they the said Bassingborne and Henry....within three yeres next following....at their equall costes and charges shall make or cause to be made and laid a newe plancher [floor] over the hall belonging to the messuage wherin the said Henry now dwelleth in Ruysshall aforesaid, he the said Henry taking sufficient stuff upon the groundes belonging to the said Bassingborne as one dormon [a great beam, presumably the bridging beam] and other timber meete and necessary for the doing of the same at the appointment of the said Bassingborne....And also at their like equall costes and charges at such tyme as the said Henry.... shall thinke meete shall cause to be lengthened and set upp and annexed unto the sowthend of the bearne belonging to the said messuage so much newe worke of suche lenght and height as the said southend frome the litle dore of the said bearne unto the said end doth now contayne and further at their like equall costes and charges within two yeres next following the date hereof shall amend and repare the old neates howse [cowshed]....where most nede shalbe, saving that the said Henry....shall have and take in and upon the groundes belonging to the said messuage at the appointment and assignment of the said Bassingborne.... suche and so much timber as shalbe nedefull to be occupied about the said newe worke and old neates howse and eyther of them, and saving also that he the said Henry....at his only costes and charges shall bestow and find aswell all the thatch and strawe nedefull to be occupied in and about the covering and amending of the said newe worke and old neates howse and eyther of them, as also laie or cause to be laied by the said newe worke and old neates howse and eyther of them all such claye as shalbe occupied about the same and eyther of them.”

Later, in 1590, Gawdy sold for £40 to Cowper fifty oaks standing on his Rushall property so further alterations may have been carried out then (2). The house, identified as the Priory, later Priory Farm (3), alas no longer stands, but its big square moat survives.

That this was a joint agreement between landlord and tenant serves as a reminder that the responsibility for building and repair may be complex. One may also have to pursue the tenant – and tenancies are notoriously less easy to document.

### References

- (1) *Norfolk Record Office, Frere MSS NAS 1/1/4/113.*
- (2) *NRO, NAS 1/1/4/118.*
- (3) *F.Blomefield et al., History of Norfolk (1805-10), V, 340-1. Bob Limmer kindly confirmed the site for me.*

## News and Views

Welcome all of you to our 7th Newsletter – Spring 2004 – well the crocuses and daffs are poking bravely through the sleet as I write. You will see that we are flagging up several meetings and conferences to be held in the summer and autumn as well as our own trips and training days. This year our AGM will be an afternoon meeting at the delightful Oulton Chapel (near Blickling) with Mike Knights returning as guest speaker, plus (I bet) a nice tea. I’m sure you’ll be impressed with the list of buildings that have been visited, reported on or recorded. On Friday 4 June at New Buckenham Village Hall we shall have the second of our public meetings connected to our Lottery Grant for a dendrochronological survey in that village. We hope to have an interested audience of locals as we did in September, plus a goodly number of our members, so see you there.

I was very glad to have two contributions to this Newsletter from members. If you have some interesting point from a book or some quote or observation or criticism – or joke! – I’d love to hear from you.

*Alayne Fenner*  
*Editor*

01603 620690

[a.fenner@macunlimited.net](mailto:a.fenner@macunlimited.net)

### Book Recommendations

N W Alcock, **Documenting the History of Houses**, (British Records Association, Archives and the User No 10, 2003)

James Ayres, **Domestic Interiors: The British Tradition 1500–1800**, (Yale University Press, 2003)

Edward Robert, **Hampshire Houses 1250-1700**, (Hampshire County Council, 2003)

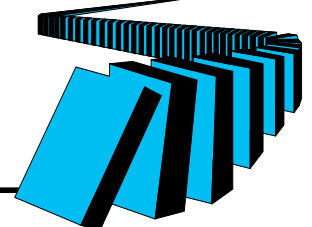
Hans Van Lemmen, **Ceramic Roofware**, (Shire Publications, 2003)

E Harris, J Harris & N D G James, **Oak: A British History**, (Windgather Press, 2003)

Eric Mercer, **English Architecture to 1900: The Shropshire Experience**, (Logaston Press, 2003)

Nina Jennings, **Clay Dabbins: The Vernacular Architecture of the Solway Plain**, (Cumberland Antiquarian Society, 2003)

Amanda Laws, **Understanding Small Period Houses**, (Crowood Press, 2003)



## New Buckenham History

“New Buckenham, a planned town at work 1530–1780” by Paul Rutledge has just been reprinted. Paul tells me that it will be on sale at NHBG meetings for £8 or from:

Paul Rutledge  
The Pleasance, Queen Street  
New Buckenham NR16 2AL

tel: 01953 860372;  
e-mail: Elizabeth@erutledge.fsnet.co.uk

Please add £1 for postage and packing

Another chance to get a copy of what is rapidly becoming a classic. It contains a wonderful map of all the buildings in New Buckenham with the owners and dates between 1530–1780 and has become the handbook for Sue, Michael and the Group’s surveying work there.

## Letters

This e-mail recently winged its way through the ether and only goes to show how far flung some of our correspondents are!

I came across your group site and am very interested in the LeGrys Farm located in Wacton, Norfolk County. The subject was covered by Adam Longcroft. My great grandfather, Thomas LeGrys, was born Feb.16, 1828 in Wacton and baptised March 2 1828 in Wacton. Several of his siblings were also born there. In all, 9 children of John LeGrys and Mary Ann (Leggett) who farmed in that area. I would be very grateful if you would pass this on to Adam and to thank him in advance for any information he could pass on to me concerning this farm. In those days the family name was also spelled LeGrice.

Thank you.

Warren LeGrys Jr., Mesa, Arizona



*Tacolneston  
A recording group, with  
owner, at lunch—it is not  
all hard work—but look  
out for the drawings when  
they come!*

*This is one of Michael  
Brown’s favourite build-  
ings to date; he feels it is  
“complete”.*

*(photo: RA Forrest)*

## Useful Web Sites

On the recent visit to the new Norfolk Record Office it became apparent that some members were unaware of the opportunities for initial research offered by the web for both local and national archive catalogues. What follows is a very brief summary.

[www.hmc.gov.uk/mdr](http://www.hmc.gov.uk/mdr)

Court and account rolls, manorial surveys and other records for the Norfolk section of the Historical Manuscripts Commission (HMC).

[www.noah.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.noah.norfolk.gov.uk) (Norfolk Online Access to Heritage)

Norfolk Online Access to Heritage is your key that opens the door to the combined on-line collections of Cultural Services at Norfolk County Council. It does this by searching across the collection of records of our archives, libraries and museums, showing images where they are available.

[www.a2a.pro.gov.uk](http://www.a2a.pro.gov.uk)

This website gives access to the NRO records currently available on line and also has other national and local records.

[www.census.pro.gov.uk](http://www.census.pro.gov.uk)

You can search the database (index) for free. You can use this site to search the data for details of individuals, places, vessels and institutions. You can then view digital images of the original census pages and transcriptions of the data from the original pages. Certain images are free to view but for others you will need to pay.

[www.vag.org.uk](http://www.vag.org.uk)

Two activities which are currently under review:

- (i) Index to the Tree-ring Date Lists. This has been produced on a five-yearly basis (with the third index in Vernacular Architecture 29). Since then, the complete lists have been made available on-line (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>—enter and click on *Special Collections*) (and individual copies of the data base can be provided for anyone particularly wanting a copy themselves). The on-line database is searchable using all four components of the printed indexes: place, county, type of building and type of structure, and, of course, it covers the complete set of tree-ring lists, rather than just the most recent five years.
- (ii) The Bibliography. VAG (Vernacular Architecture Group) have printed four volumes of bibliography, and the last two of these are also searchable on-line (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>—enter and click on *Library*).



## A Digest of Buildings Visited

This is a digest of all the Norfolk houses (excluding New Buckenham) the NHBG has been invited to look at and to prepare brief reports. **These are ALL private houses and NO contact may be made with the owners in any way except through the Committee.** This list is to inform members of the work undertaken on behalf of the Group and will not be printed on the Internet. Building reports by Susan and Michael Brown, Adam Longcroft, Ian Hinton, Rosemary Forrest and Vic Nierop-Reading.

### **Aldborough, The Old Surgery**

A late seventeenth to early eighteenth century house has been truncated and enlarged by wings in the nineteenth century, having been given a fashionable "Gothick" facade around 1800.

### **Aylsham, 18 Red Lion Street**

A sixteenth century townhouse/shop with deeply roll-moulded principal joists.

### **Aylsham, Spa Farmhouse**

An early seventeenth century farmhouse with brick cladding; a massive six flue chimney stack has only three hearths. Apparently the parlour end was never built.

### **Bacton, Alicia Cottages**

Eighteenth century building including an earlier flint boundary wall.

### **Banham, Home Farm**

A medieval house with possibly rebuilt parlour and a shop.

### **Braconash, Mergate Farm**

A sixteenth century timber-framed cross-wing and open hall with storeyed end has been extended in the seventeenth century, floored and re-roofed. Early dormers have involved the use of "upper crucks" to compensate for the cut rafters. An early dairy survives.

### **Brooke, Laurel Farm Barn**

*Survey drawings and report*

A seventeenth century timber-framed barn re-uses much of its timber, three distinct sets of carpenters' marks and extensive apotropaic symbols being in evidence.

### **Bunwell, Eagle Farmhouse**

*Survey drawings and report*

Parlour wing of about 1600 with close studding and integral stairtower and stair.

### **Burnham Ovary, Ostrich House**

Seventeenth / eighteenth century house enlarged later with conversion to a public house and back again.

### **Burston, Bridge Green Farmhouse**

Fifteenth / sixteenth century house with Queen Post roof (sooted).

### **Clenchwarton, The Beeches**

*Survey drawings and report*

This late eighteenth or early nineteenth century brick house with a double range, two storey extension was modernized in the Victorian period with "Tudor Revival" chimneys and in the nineteen thirties was further extended.

### **Denver, The Old Vicarage**

Seventeenth century house developed in the eighteenth century and modernised in Regency style.

### **Fornceit St Mary, The Old Hall Farm**

Seventeenth century house with outstanding moulded plaster ceilings and excellent original stair plus a possible 'long gallery'.

### **Fornceit St Mary, Yew Tree Farm**

Wealden House with superb cross-passage survival and carved service door heads. Fifteenth century or earlier.

### **Foulsham, A Farm**

A seventeenth century brick house on a tripartite plan contains elaborate floor joists and mantle beams. The elegant staircase and refined brick facade are late eighteenth century.

### **Harleston, 17 Broad Street**

Late seventeenth century house, possibly half of a single cell originally, Highly decorative principal joists.

### **Harleston, Delft Cottage**

Behind, and really part of, Delft House, this is an unusually complete early seventeenth century timber-clad town house with original decorative features and roof; a useful house for dating others. Now clad in white brick.

### **Harleston, The Merchant's House**

An impressive early sixteenth century timber-framed house with queen post roof, an important moulded oak ceiling (survey drawings and report) and interesting apotropaic marks.

### **Harleston, The White House**

An early seventeenth century house with eighteenth century and "Regency" additions, including good cast iron grates.

### **Harleston, White House Cottage**

A late eighteenth century house in brick, with a possible forge to the rear; said to have been the toll house.

### **Hevingham, A House**

The central section of a terrace of houses, this brick-built property seems to be late eighteenth century in origin, with an extraordinarily thick rear wall to resist a raised ground level.

### **Hindolveston, A House**

*Survey drawings and report*

A flint walled single cell house of about 1600 with an elaborate moulded ceiling and a high quality tenon purlin roof.

### **Horsford, Hall Cottage**

One of the symmetrical entrance wings of the Hall, possibly seventeenth century in origin re-built in the eighteenth century and re-roofed in the nineteenth.

### **Kenninghall, A Farmhouse**

A transitional timber-framed house with tripartite lobby entrance plan and interesting clasped purlin roof. Originally of the last quarter of the sixteenth century with a rebuilt parlour of a few years later.

### **Kenninghall, A House**

A tripartite timber-framed house of the early sixteenth century or before with open hall and floored ends has been "modernized" in about 1600.

### **Kenninghall, Trench Farm Barn**

Remains of a seventeenth century barn.

### **Kirby Bedon, The Old Rectory**

An impressive eighteenth century house with seventeenth century origins.

### **Knapton, Knapton Old Hall**

A sixteenth century tripartite house with lobby entrance has been given new wings in the sixteenth century and later, in the twentieth century, a high quality "Arts and Crafts" refurbishment was carried out.

### **Long Stratton, The Old Rectory**

*Survey drawings and report*

A late fifteenth century timber-framed "Wealden" house with elaborate crown-post and an external kitchen was extended in the seventeenth century and given a handsome brewhouse and dairy wing. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries further interesting outbuildings were added.

### **Ludham, 3 Johnson Street**

1 1/2 storey rendered house with gables of brick but rest of structure undetermined; date unsure.

### **Methwold, Crown House**

Seventeenth/eighteenth century original house largely demolished in the nineteenth century and rebuilt

as an inn with beer cellar and private room. Much evidence concealed by present decor.

### **Narborough, Narborough Hall**

Large sixteenth century mansion of the Spelman family expanded in eighteenth century and the parlour end rebuilt. A large bay-windowed room was built about 1800 and a second added soon after. Important panelled 'Spelman Chamber'.

### **North Walsham, A House**

A refurbished eighteenth century predecessor seems to be the origin of this Regency style house with a possible basement dairy and plastered attic cheese loft.

### **Old Catton, A House**

Classic mid-eighteenth century Merchant's House of high quality brickwork and decor.

### **Old Costessey, 68 The Street**

A late sixteenth/ early seventeenth century three cell house: brick 'wrap-around' gables: later three cottages.

### **Old Lakenham, 161 Mansfield Lane**

Early seventeenth century brick house with pedimental corridors.

### **Palgrave, A Cottage**

A late sixteenth century timber-framed house of high quality with parlour, hall and service rooms and a possible shop was refurbished in the early nineteenth century with a number of good quality Regency features.

### **Palgrave, A Cottage**

This is a middle sixteenth century timber-framed house of the tripartite plan, the open hall floored at the end of the century. Early in the seventeenth century the parlour end was rebuilt with the conversion to a fashionable lobby entrance by the chimney stack.

### **Pudding Norton, The Hall**

Late sixteenth century block with later alterations plus late eighteenth century block with later alterations.

### **Pulham Market, Church Croft**

*Survey drawings and report*

A remarkable timber-framed building of about 1600, this was apparently constructed as a barn with floored end, later upgraded to domestic accommodation.

### **Pulham Market, Julian House**

This late sixteenth timber-framed house on the tripartite plan was always floored throughout and now has a later side-purlin roof.

### **Shelfanger, Ventura Cottage**

This tripartite timber-framed house, probably of the sixteenth century, originally had a queen post roof. The service end was rebuilt later in that century.

### **West Somerton, Somerton Hall**

A brick-built tripartite plan house with service and parlour ends was expanded in the eighteenth century and the parlour end rebuilt. A large bay windowed room was built about 1800 and a second added soon after.

### **South Creak, Yew Tree Cottage**

Seventeenth century house (unfloored) with later roof raise and additions.

### **South Repps, Church Farm Cottage**

Seventeenth century building and contemporary garden wall. Single rom on upper floor suggests a non-domestic origin as a school, church room, etc.

### **Southery, Agricultural Building**

Apparently originally a stable for farm horses, this brick building seems to date from the seventeenth century with its use of English bond and forelock bolts.

Tibenham Farm"—Tibenham. Survey drawings and report.

This tripartite timber-framed house of the third quarter of the sixteenth century has a second phase of the middle seventeenth century.

### **Swaffham, Stratton House**

A 'Palladian' composition, possibly a banqueting house of the very late eighteenth century possibly converted from a maltings.

### **Tacolneston, Dower House**

Late sixteenth / seventeenth century two unit and cross-passage house of high quality and impressive preservation. The same carpenter as the Manor House.

### **Tacolneston, Manor House**

Late sixteenth/ early seventeenth century three unit house with two 'wrap-around' gables. Remarkably complete down to oriel windows with original sliding shutters. Same carpenter as the Dower House.

### **Tibenham, Tibenham Farm**

*Survey drawings and report*

This tripartite timber-framed house of the third quarter of the sixteenth century has a second phase of the middle seventeenth century.

### **Wacton, Wilderness Farm**

*Survey drawings and report*

House of late sixteenth / early seventeenth century with an extension soon after then additions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

### **Wacton, Yeoman's Cottage**

This property seems to be the parlour and chimney bay of a timber-framed lobby entrance house, probably tripartite in plan overall. The original stair has a possibly unique decorative feature and the original dormer window may have been an early example.

### **Wells, Newgate House**

Early seventeenth century house divided in the nineteenth century fronted by later shops to the street.

### **Wymondham, Cavick House**

House of about 1720 with earlier origins and later decorations including fabulous rococo plasterwork

### **Wymondham, 33 Damgate Street**

Small open hall house of early sixteenth century with a smoke bay and storeyed end with later brick chimney and roof raise. Later rear extension.

### **Wymondham, 14-20 Town Green**

Eighteenth and nineteenth century town houses developed from an early seventeenth century basis.

## Advance Notices

*At least two members from Norwich will be going to this Conference. Contact Rosemary Forrest (01603 742315) if you would like to fill up the car.*



Essex Historic Buildings Group and Essex  
County Council

The Crossing Conference 2004

### Brick in Eastern England

**Saturday 10th July**  
**Crossing Temple, Essex.**

As a major component of our built environment, brick is all around us and makes a significant contribution to our surroundings. Yet this everyday material comes in a great variety of forms, can be used with great sophistication in architectural compositions, and has a complex and fascinating history. This conference will look at the history of the manufactures and the use of brick in different parts of eastern England, will examine how it has evolved in post-medieval times, and will consider the role and future of hand-made bricks today.

The provisional list of speakers and subjects is:

Alan Cox	18th/19th C bricks and brickwork
Paul, Drury	The North Sea connections
Roger Kennell	Brick in Suffolk
Robin Lucas	Brick in Norfolk
Peter Minter	Making bricks by hand, today and tomorrow
Pat Ryan	Brick in medieval and early modern Essex
Terry Smith	The progress of brick in Stuart London
John Tibbles	Brick in Hull and the East Riding
Alan Vince	Brick in Lincoln

Cost: £17.50 Lunch £5.00 extra

For further details, contact Pauline Hudspith, Heritage Conservation, Essex County Council, County Hall, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1QH. Telephone: 01245 437672

E-mail: pauline.hudspith@essexcc.gov.uk

### Building Limes Forum Eastern Region

On 14th and 15th May at The Pleasance, Overstrand, this Forum will be holding two days of talks and demonstrations on the use of lime in building. More information should be available in the local press nearer the day or, failing that, phone Anna Kettle on 01359 230642

### England's Seaside Architecture Foundation for Future Prosperity

A Three-Day Conference  
October 22-24, 2004  
Cromer, Norfolk

Opening Address: Mark Girouard

Organised by the Strategic Information & Planning Unit, Anglia Polytechnic University and Cromer Preservation Society in conjunction with North Norfolk District Council

Conference Fees: NHBG Members £25.00  
Professionals £75.00

For details, please contact:

Tony Kirby  
The Strategic Information & Planning Unit  
Anglia Polytechnic University  
East Road, Cambridge CB1 1PT  
tel: 01223 363271 ext 2030  
e.mail: t.kirby@apu.ac.uk

**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.

## Report on the V A G (Vernacular Architecture Group) Winter Conference: Celebration and Speculation

This 50th Anniversary Conference in London brought together the great, the good, the experienced, and a sprinkling of the young, of vernacular building enthusiasts.

Bob Meeson, Chairman, opened the Conference with the hope that it would review the origins of the Group, its present approach, and where the Group might travel in the next fifty years. Ronald Brunskill gave a masterly summation of the beginnings of interest in vernacular architecture until the 1950s when the subject acquired academic respectability. Brunskill felt that current research was

primarily individual and fell between the disciplines of architecture and archaeology, although aesthetics were also playing a part.

Peter Smith and Christopher Currie favoured the broader approach to research: social, structural and geographic. Another influential early member, JT Smith, sought not so much better recording as a recognition of the social structure.

David Martin, in his turn, wondered who was generating ideas in the field and who was doing the work. The present financial constraints and planning statutes were constricting research work and

any that was undertaken was frequently isolationist in topic and researcher. The “bigger picture” was demanded with more publications.

The speakers spoke with conviction, and for the most part, hope for the future. This future may well lie with the amateur rather than the professional, but it should be broad in approach and published. It would appear that the young, mainly amateur, NHBG, in its current project in New Buckenham, is tackling many of the items on the wish-list of the early members of the VAG.

*RF*

# NHBG Summer 2004

This summer we have twelve events, including lectures at New Buckenham, and I am delighted that several members of the Group are helping with the organisation. My thanks to them and the lecturers who are giving up their time to share their knowledge. Every effort has been made to hold events at weekends and evenings, in some cases this has just not been possible. We have one repeat visit, to The Great Hospital, since it was very popular last year. The tickets will provide the final details. It is very difficult allocating tickets: events must be primarily for members, and then on a first come first served basis. **Please look carefully at the application forms and ensure that they are sent to the right person.** Several of you were unable to visit the New Archive Centre in Norwich. If there is anyone who would still like to go, please let me know and, if there are enough of you, I shall organise another trip.

I am always looking for ideas for both winter and summer events and would be more than delighted to hear from you. I am particularly hoping to hear from people in the west of the county, those of us in the east would welcome an opportunity to explore your territory.

*Rosemary Forrest (01603 742315 or roakief@yahoo.co.uk)*

### Diss Town Walk and Buildings

... David Summers

*Date:* Thursday 22 April  
*Time:* 10.30—3.30 pm ish  
*Walking:* Yes, a lot  
*Food:* Coffee  
Tea  
*Lunch:* Pub (not included)  
*Tickets:* £7 members/ £14 non  
*Limit:* 20  
*Contact:* Carol Nutt (01379 640007 or e.mail: carol.nutt@btinternet.com)

We shall hope to cover several centuries of the building history of Diss, interspersed with food breaks. The 17th century Saracen's Head will not only give us lunch but the Landlord is allowing us to explore its interior.

David is a local architect and experienced architectural guide.

### Hall Farmhouse & Church, Ketteringham...

Sue and Michael Brown, Charlotte Bar-  
ringer

*Date:* Friday April 30  
*Meet :* (1) At the Church  
*Time:* 5.30 pm  
*Meet:* (2) Hall Farm Cottage  
*Time:* 6.30—8.30 pm  
*Food:* light refreshments (included)  
*Ticket:* £5.00 members / £10 non  
*Limit:* 20  
*Contact:* Karen Mackie (01508 488467 or e.mail: alan\_mackie@tacolnes-ton.freerve.co.uk)

A member is generously opening her home for tutorial purposes. This is an interesting building with stair tower and early first floor corridor.

Alayne Fenner will be at the church from 5.30 pm for those interested in this Norman church which contains many mag-

nificent memorials of the Heveningham, de Greys, and Boileau families.

### Little Walsingham: Walk and Buildings

...Scilla Lansdale

*Date:* Tuesday, May 11  
*Time:* 10.00—4.00  
*Walking:* Yes, a lot  
*Food:* Coffee (included)  
Pub Lunch (not included)  
Tea (included)  
*Tickets:* £12.00 members / £24 non  
*Limit:* 20  
*Contact:* Penny Clark  
(01603 833280 or e.mail: Pennyc@4techonline.net )

Inside and out: timber-framed buildings, wall paintings, model prisons, court buildings, and opportunities to stand and stare.

**Continued on page 20**

# NHBG Summer 2004 (cont)

Continued from page 19

Scilla Lansdale has been a Walsingham Town Guide for a number of years.

**New Buckenham: Three Talks  
Documents, Landscape, Buildings  
Friday 4 June  
For details see page 4**

**Norfolk Historic Buildings Trust  
...Michael Knights,  
and Annual General Meeting**

*Date:* Saturday June 5  
*Place:* Oulton Chapel, Hall Road,  
Oulton, nr Blickling  
(Map Ref: TG1412943)  
*Time:* 2.30 pm  
*Food:* Tea and Scones (included)  
*Tickets:* Free  
*Limit:* None  
*Contact:* Rosemary Forrest  
(01603 742315 or e.mail:  
roakief@yahoo.co.uk)

We have to have an Annual General Meeting, so do please come along to this beautifully restored 18th Century Chapel. Michael Knights, Norfolk Historic Buildings Officer, will first tell us about the Norfolk Historic Buildings Trust; they have the money to buy and restore historic properties.

**Godwick, Deserted Medieval Village Barns and Tittleshall Church...**

**Ian Hinton, George and Alayne Fenner**

*Date:* Thursday June 17  
*Time:* (1) Church — 5.30 pm  
(2) Barns — 6.30 — 8.00 pm  
*Food:* No arrangements made  
*Limit:* 40  
*Ticket:* £3.00 members / £6.00 non  
*Contact:* Ian Hinton (01502 475287 or  
e.mail: ian.hinton@tesco.net)

Alayne Fenner will be at the Church from 5.30 pm for any members who would like to look at the most impressive Coke monuments. During the winter Ian opened a discussion about the history of this barn (*see p. 7*). Now is your opportunity to come and look at it and decide for yourselves. It has a similar roof structure, alternating hammer beams, to those more famous ones at Paston and Waxham. We shall also look

at a 19th Century concrete barn and the Deserted Medieval Village.

**Great Hospital, Norwich**

**...Carole Rawcliffe**

*Date:* Saturday June 26  
*Time:* 10.00am — 12.00 noon  
*Tickets:* £7.00 members / £14.00 non  
*Limit:* 20  
*Contact:* Rosemary Forrest  
(01603 742315 or e.mail:  
roakief@yahoo.co.uk)

An opportunity for those who were unable to join Carole last summer, to share her immense knowledge and love of this Medieval Hospital.

**Wattle and Daub / Clay Lump Day**

**...Richard Hyde**

*Date:* Saturday July 24  
*Time:* 10.00 am— 3.30 pm  
*Place:* Ovington, mid Norfolk  
*Lunch:* B—Y—O  
*Limit:* 12  
*Ticket:* £15 members / £30 non  
*Contact:* Karen Mackie (01508 488467  
or e.mail: alan\_mackie@tacolne-  
ston.freeserve.co.uk)

A real hands-on day to help you get to grips with the technicalities of playing in mud and repairing a building.

**The Old Hall, East Tuddenham**

**...Lynn Biggs**

*Date:* Wednesday July 21  
*Time:* 6.30 — 8.30 pm  
*Food:* Light refreshments (included)  
*Limit:* 20  
*Tickets:* £5.00 members / £10.00 non  
members  
*Contact:* Rosemary Forrest  
(01603 742315 or roakief@  
yahoo.co.uk)

The owner of this intriguing 16th/17th Century house, which has a good example of roll moulding, has kindly agreed to our visit. Do take this second tutorial opportunity to gain experience of seeking dateable features.

**Old Hall and Church South Burlingham**

**...Stephen Heywood**

*Date:* Tuesday Aug 3  
*Time:* 11.00 am — 3.30 pm  
*Lunch:* B—Y—O Picnic  
*Limit:* 20  
*Tickets:* £6.00 members / £12 non  
*Contact:* Rosemary Forrest  
(01603 742315 or e.mail:  
roakief@yahoo.co.uk)

St Edmund's is a Norman church with a scissor-braced roof. Peter Scupham and Margaret Steward are opening their house and grounds to us. The Old Hall has a fine Elizabethan porch and important 16th century wall paintings in a second floor 'gallery'.

**Old and New Hunstanton—a Seaside experience**

**...Adrian Parker**

*Date:* Saturday September 11  
*Time:* 10.30am — about 4.00 pm  
*Walking:* Yes  
*Lunch:* Pub (not included)  
*Limit:* 20  
*Tickets:* £7 members / £14 non  
*Contact:* Karen Mackie (01508 488467  
or e.mail: alan\_mackie@tacolne-  
ston.freeserve.co.uk)

Adrian has a general historical and recent knowledge of Hunstanton having been West Norfolk planning officer for fifteen years. No other 'planned' seaside in Norfolk was controlled by one family as was Hunstanton. The Old village has its Hall and parish church, but the fisherfolk were in cliff-top cottages, now amongst the 20th C's holiday homes. The New town was a rail travellers' middle class holiday resort, and especially displays West Norfolk carstone.

**New Buckenham  
Dendrochronology Results  
Ian Tyers  
Friday Sept 24  
For details see page 4**