



Dereham Heritage Trust

Bishop Bonner's Cottage Museum

and Town Archive

Autumn 2021 Newsletter

Volume 17 - 4

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Letter from the Chair Trevor Ogden



This summer a number of things have approached conclusion after many months of hard work. You will find more details later in this issue. They include:

- the Wayfinding panels being erected in various parts of the town
- the Ellenor Fenn Garden
- repair of Bishop Bonner's Cottages, and closer study of its history
- display on John and Ellenor Fenn and their connection with the Paston Letters

To the above list we can add the Town Plan for future development of Dereham commissioned by Breckland District Council. We are currently working on comments on the draft of this, and will report further about this in the next issue.

Several members have made significant contributions to these projects, but Sue Walker has used her knowledge of Dereham history and her artistic skill to make a major contribution to several of them, and the Society and town owe her a lot. Fortunately, her name appears on some of the displays, but on others an acknowledgement to Dereham Heritage Trust disguises what is largely her work. A big 'thank you' goes to Sue for her hard work and expertise.

At long last the exterior building work on Bishop Bonner's Cottage has been completed, with restoration of the pargeting by the specialist, Anna Kettle.



Anna Kettle about to reattach a large piece of pargeting

This has been put back to its original white limewash (we believe that it was first coloured in 1905) as recommended in a report on the history which we endorsed, and which was accepted unanimously by the Town Council. We will see how people respond to this, although it may take some time to get used to it. There has already been one protest on Facebook that “They have painted over our heritage”. There is still work to be done on the indoor brickwork, and as this involves natural drying, and maturation of the limewash, this is still likely to be in evidence next summer, but will not stop the Museum opening. The first set of contractors, who withdrew last year, used the downstairs north room for storage, without our agreement, and we will need to get this professionally cleaned.



This summer we have also been presented with copies of the first ten volumes of *Archaeologia* which Sir John Fenn originally owned. This is the journal of the Society of Antiquaries first published in 1770. There will be more about these volumes in our winter newsletter. In addition, we received a grant to purchase one thousand pounds' worth of display boards from the Heritage Lottery Fund, via the Paston Footprints project. These are first for use in connection with the Fenns and their work on the Paston letters, but the boards will be a long-term asset in mounting displays inside the Museum and elsewhere. From the same source we have been given finance for a programmable monitor for use in the Paston exhibition in the Museum next year, which we also hope to use to make a visit to the Museum a much better experience for people of limited mobility – the equipment formerly used for this became obsolete.

However, the last few weeks for DHT have been overshadowed by the sudden illness of Ken Hawkins at the end of August. At the time of writing (late September) Ken is now recovering at home. Our first wish is to see him completely recover his health and strength.

Ken is officially Treasurer and Membership Secretary of DHT, but his wisdom, experience, and willingness to help affect us in many ways, and in his absence several things have run less smoothly. He is also chair of Dereham Walkers are Welcome, and the town's official Footpath Warden, and he and Catherine are involved in other organisations as well. We are all feeling the draught, and we in DHT join with many others in wishing Ken a rapid, complete recovery.

One of the many jobs which Ken does is editing and distributing this Newsletter, including his summaries of the monthly talks. Robena Brown (Beanie) has taken on the editing of this issue – thanks, Beanie. We do ask patience for deficiencies in any area that result from Ken's absence, but if there is anything which you feel needs dealing with now, please email me at ogden@ogs.org.uk.

We continue to review the Covid situation from month to month. October's meeting will be online; we have yet to reach a decision about November, but we plan to hold December's meeting face to face. This is with the Hexachordia early music group (<http://www.hexachordia.com/>). It has been long-planned and is something very different from our usual meeting. To give us more space, this meeting will be at Wellspring Family Centre, 35 Neatherd Road, Dereham NR19 2AE. More details will be sent out later. It will be good then to finally meet up again.

New insights into Bishop Bonner's Cottages *Peter Wade-Martins*

If you haven't seen our "new-look" cottages, do go and see!

For far too long the cottages have appeared somewhat derelict, particularly after the contractors working on site last year caused us considerable concern and then left prematurely. The new contractors, Emmerson Critchley Ltd, who specialise in repairing period properties, have done a splendid job employing Anna Kettle, a real expert in pargeting.

Anna will be using the results of her research on our plasterwork towards a dissertation she will be writing on the whole subject of lime pargeting in East Anglia. The details of what Anna has found at Bishop Bonner's will be explained in a future Newsletter.

Dereham Town Council own the building and funded all the repairs, and they will be receiving a formal letter of thanks in due course.



We invited Susan and Michael Brown (seen here outside the building) to make a detailed study of the timber frame within the cottages. They have already studied more timber frames in Norfolk than the rest of us have had hot dinners, and their work has shed new light on the history of the cottages. We now aim to use their research, along with the study which Sue Walker White has made of the cottage over the years, together with the results of Anna Kettle's investigations, to prepare a colour booklet on the cottages for publication and sale at the museum.

The timber frame:

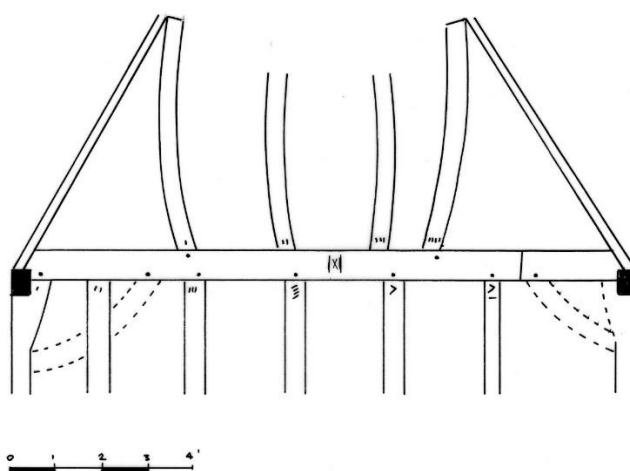
The "BBC", as we usually call the building, is a row of three cottages created by filling a gap to join two pre-existing structures together. I apologise if the next section contains technical terms for the timber framing, but there is really no other way to describe the building.

The south (jettied) building is narrower than the north (un-jettied) one, so when the area between the two was in-filled to make a third cottage the carpenters had to push out the north end of the jetty plate of the south cottage until it was in line with the front of the north cottage. The likely reason for this was to create a continuous surface onto which the remarkable pargeting could be applied. This suggests that the pargeting is the same date as the construction of the middle cottage.

When the two cottages were linked they were each single-cell (one room wide) on each floor and one and half storeys. Their roofs were of queen-post type where two vertical timbers stand on the tie beam supporting the roof purlins.



Queen post truss in the north cottage



Drawing showing carpenters' marks on Queen post truss

Queen posts were used from the Middle Ages through to the eighteenth century, so they are not in themselves a useful dating feature. In addition, each cottage now has a truncated principal truss, probably inserted at the time they were joined together sometime in the late seventeenth century. These latter trusses have "cranked", that is bent, timbers cut off higher up (or truncated) to support collar beams.



Bottom of principal truncated truss in north cottage

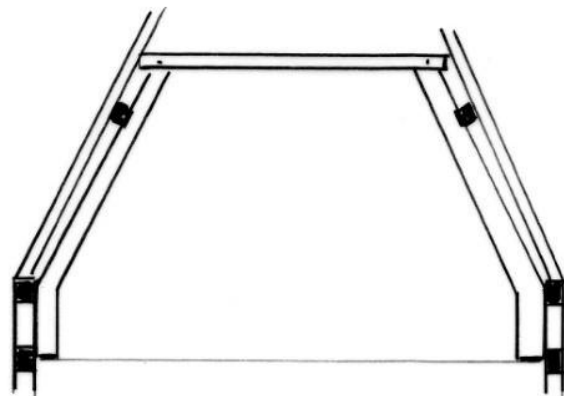


Top of truncated principal truss in north cottage

The trusses are a new discovery in Norfolk, and the idea may have been imported from the Low Countries. Here they sit inside the framework of the roof acting as an additional stiffening to the structure.



Top of truncated principal truss in south cottage



Drawing of truncated principal truss in south cottage

However, the chimney stacks provide better dating clues. The south building has an original external chimney stack in its north wall, later enclosed within the central cottage. Carved into the mantle beam over the fireplace is a *quasi-ogival shield chamfer stop* which could be late sixteenth century or a bit later. The combination of the jetty on the front wall, the remarkable survival of some holes for a diamond mullion unglazed window just visible on the underside of the jetty plate, and the shield stop on the mantle beam over the fireplace all suggest that the south building is the oldest and dates to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries. It is likely to be the earliest of the three cottages.

In the north building the fireplace and the stack were later additions to this timber frame. The evidence is the presence of mortice joints designed to take the vertical studs of the original north wall visible on the underside of the horizontal beam just in front of the fireplace.

In front of the stack on the first floor the bottom of a truncated principal truss is clearly visible in the winder stairway as shown:



The mantel beam over the fireplace has an *ogival 'lamb's tongue' chamfer stop* with a large notch suggesting a date after 1625 for this stack. But this stack is anyway not original and was added later to the timber frame, although the brick and flintwork looks eighteenth century on the outside. The core of this chimney stack is not much later than the timber frame since it incorporates the pargeting.

In the central building there are fewer datable features to help us, except for a sunk quadrant moulding on the frame of the dormer window which may be seventeenth century. (One complication is that at some stage the ground floor wall separating this from the north building was moved northwards a little to make more space for the central cottage.)

Conclusions

Therefore, the sequence seems to be:

- The south cottage with its external chimney stack was built in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.
- The northern one was erected perhaps fifty years later without a chimney stack, and the stack was then added.
- The central cottage filled the gap during the seventeenth century, and the three cottages then supported the decorative pargeting.

The only way we might be able to refine the dating still further is to try dendrochronology on key timbers. But that would be expensive and may not succeed. Nevertheless, we will look into that.

Footnote:

There is not enough space between the wall studs along the front wall of the south cottage for there to have been a doorway on this side. So, we had hoped that when the plaster on the south end was replaced during the recent renovations we might have found evidence for the doorway on this end. No luck. All the ground floor timbers, up to and including the horizontal beam supporting the jetty beam were replaced during major repairs in about 1993. We now need to search for any record which might have been made of the timbers during those repairs.

From the Archive Robena Brown

We are grateful to local historian Brent Scholes for offering us some old Dereham related items for our archive which we are delighted to accept because they comply with our museum collecting policy. The items were originally in the possession of Michael Burton, a well-known character, builder and local film-maker who passed away in 2020. Brent will be giving us a presentation of some of Michael's 1980s films taken in and around Dereham in December 2022 (yes, we do have to plan that far ahead) and we hope you will come along to enjoy them then.

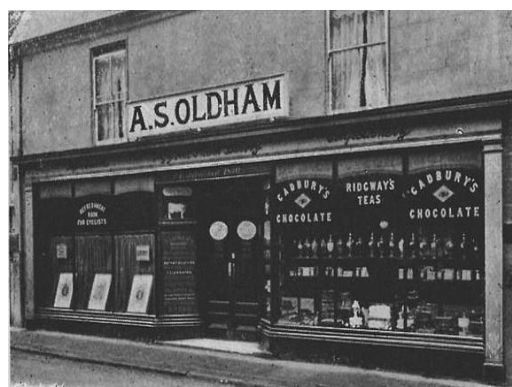
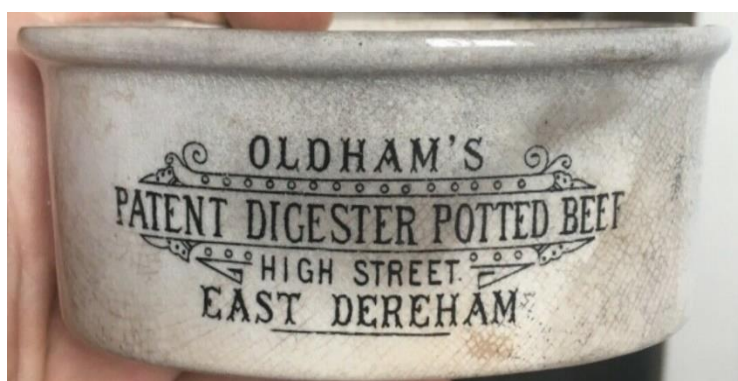
In the meantime, while we are in the process of archiving the items offered to DHT I feel I must share these with you now. Having always taken a great interest in the history of the zeppelin raid of 8 September 1915 I experienced goosebumps when I unwrapped two of the items as shown overleaf.

These pieces of shrapnel were encased in one of the many bombs dropped by zeppelin L14 as it passed over the town 106 years ago and they look as murderous today as the night the bomb fell with the intention of causing great harm. The smaller piece is roughly the size of a two-pence coin.



Of course, Michael wasn't born then, but his then ten-year-old father Alfred Burton whose family lived in Littlefields, was lifted up by his father to see the zeppelin pass over and the lad collected the pieces of shrapnel after the raid. It is easy to imagine children rushing to school the day following the raid to relate their zeppelin stories and compare pocket treasures.

...and something sold at auction



This old pot shown above was seen in an online auction. It is another survivor from the past albeit probably not rare or valuable but, nevertheless, an interesting connection to one of the town's well-known Victorian retailers. Though the pot may have been commonplace in its day, it is still an important vestige of Dereham's past.

Local advertisements of 1900 tell us that A. S. Oldham's shop situated at 4, High Street, Dereham, was also renowned for its 'celebrated' pork pies.

An Archaeological Find “in Breckland” Peter Wade-Martins

The chairman has asked me to write something about an import Anglo-Saxon discovery made recently, presumably by a metal detectorist, in Breckland. All I have to go on is the BBC on-line news item, dated 11th August, headed *Sutton Hoo-era Norfolk sword pyramid find 'lost by lord'*, which surely deserves some explanation!

The photo that accompanies the news item is illustrated here:



The find is a small early seventh-century Anglo-Saxon gold conical object inlaid with red garnets of Indian or Sri Lankan origin. These pyramid-fittings were probably used to attach a sword scabbard to a belt or sword harness. When they are found in Anglo-Saxon burials they are in pairs associated with the upper part of a sword scabbard.

The best place to look to find out more about these fascinating little objects is the magnificent volume published by the Society of Antiquaries in 2019 on the early seventh century Staffordshire Hoard of Anglo-Saxon war gear discovered by a metal detectorist in 2009. In this there are eight listed. It is a beautifully produced and well written book, and it is for sale on Amazon for £41, and it would make an ideal Christmas present for anyone interested in Anglo-Saxon archaeology.

This find will be subject to a coroner's inquest

Snapshot of a Norfolk village in 1896 - Worthing.

WORTHING is a village and parish on the river Wensum, near the North Elmham station on the Wymondham and Wells section of the Great Eastern railway, 4½ miles north from Dereham, in the Mid division of the county, Launditch hundred, Mitford and Launditch petty sessional division, Mitford union, Dereham county court district, rural deanery of South Brisley, archdeaconry of Lynn and diocese of Norwich. The church of St. Margaret is a small building of flint in the Perpendicular style, consisting of nave, south porch and a low round western tower, containing one bell: there are 100 sittings. The register dates from the year 1563. The living is a chapelry, annexed to the rectory of Swanton Morley, joint average yearly value from tithe rent-charge £784, with 28 acres of glebe, in the gift of Caius College, Cambridge, and held since 1896 by the Rev. Andrew Johnston Hunter M.A. of that college, who resides at Swanton Morley. Gooch's charity of £1 10s. yearly is distributed. The town lands of between 8 and 9		
acres were devised "for the maintenance and repair of the fabric of the parish church, inclusive of tower and steeple:" any surplus income arising from this source is applied as directed by the Charity Commissioners to the relief of the deserving and necessitous inhabitants of the parish. Edward Henry Evans-Lombe esq. J.P. of Melton Hall, is lord of the manor and chief landowner. The soil is light loam; sub-soil, gravel and clay. The chief crops are wheat, barley and turnips. The area is 817 acres; rateable value, £890; the population in 1891 was 148.		
Parish Clerk, James Neal.		
Letter Box cleared at 6.10 p.m. Letters through East Dereham arrive at 7.15 a.m. Elmham is the nearest money order & telegraph office		
The children of this place attend the National school at Swanton Morley		
Tax Collector—William Frow Wray, of Church st. Dereham		
Merrison Mrs. A. E. B	Golden Charles, 'Tanners' Arms P.H	Mayes John, farmer
COMMERCIAL.	Leeds William, farmer	Phillippo James, tanner, fellmonger,
Earl George, higgler	Loads John, The Swan P.H. & black-	wool merchant, skin dresser & farmer
Golden Alfred, shopkeeper	smith & farmer	& landowner

The entry for Worthing In *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk 1896*

Scoulton Gullery Robena Brown

While we may be aware of many large colonies of coastal breeding seabirds in the UK, a small agricultural parish in the heart of Norfolk gives little hint now to its former importance where gulls bred in such vast numbers as to have been a vital part of the local economy for centuries. Today, the stylised village sign shows the former nineteenth-century local land-owner, John Weyland, holding a basket full of eggs alongside black-headed gulls representing the activity that flourished there each year 'since time immemorial' but which sadly died out by the middle of the last century.



Scoulton village sign showing gulls and collected eggs



1946 aerial image of Scoulton Mere

Situated close to Watton, Scoulton village is briefly passed by travellers on the main road to Norwich who, in the summer months, have little or no view of the large body of water that sits behind the dense roadside screen of trees and colourful rhododendrons. This body of water, a wood-girdled lake known as Scoulton Mere, is not fed by river or stream as in the case of a 'broad' but is a hollow in the surface of the land constantly supplied by freshwater springs.

There are some small islands in the south-east area but in the centre of Scoulton Mere's 80-acre site, is a large island known from earliest times as 'The Hearth'. It is on this island that thousands of gulls, the black-headed (*Larus ridibundus*), chose to come every spring for centuries to breed and remain until August raising their chicks until parents and young left to disperse to richer feeding grounds elsewhere in the UK to return the following March.

Most of the early references to Scoulton Mere gullery are not to be found in history books but in the writings of those interested in natural history. Though not to be confused with the lapwing (peewit) the birds were often referred to as 'Pewit', 'Puit' or 'Puet' gulls - clearly a name sounding the same irrespective of spelling and Sir Thomas Browne (whose statue stands in the Haymarket in Norwich) wrote in the seventeenth century of *'Pewits in such plenty about Horsey, that they sometimes bring them in carts to Norwich, and sell them at small rates; and the country people make use of their eggs in puddings, and otherwise, great plenty thereof have bred about Scoulton Meers [sic], and from thence sent to London.'*

Many other naturalists and ornithologists such as Henry Stevenson and B.B. Riviere have written of the gullery and wondered at the sheer magnitude of the numbers of birds present on the ground, in the water and noisily filling the air. Richard Lubbock visited the Mere around 1840 and, according to William Dutt, was so impressed by what he saw there that he wrote of the gulls as being present in *'myriads'*. Broads' naturalists such as George Christopher Davies, and Arthur Paterson who knew the birds as *'Scoulton cobs'*, were also fascinated by the Mere and its annual visitors. Notably, Charles Dickens visited Scoulton Mere on more than one occasion and wrote knowingly about the gullery in his 1863 *'All the Year Round'*.

Dereham vicar and celebrated nineteenth-century diarist, the Rev. Benjamin Armstrong, remarked soon after his 1850 arrival to the town that *'there are some few 'lions' which serve as recreation to our visitors. Among the chief are Norwich Cathedral and Castle; the ruins of Castle Acre Castle and Priory; Scoulton Mere the favourite resort of tens of thousands of seagulls, vast quantities of whose eggs are sold in London for plovers' eggs; and Costessey Hall'*. It is almost unbelievable today to think of the present unremarkable lake being viewed and compared with the same fascination as attractions such as cathedrals, halls and castles.

There were many other inland gulleries in Norfolk over the years, such as at Horsey and Hoveton, and also at Twigmoor in Yorkshire, and Ravenglass in Cumbria, but Scoulton Mere was the largest and famous for being the most productive of all. The presence of many thousands of gulls that descended upon the mere and the surrounding villages in the spring and summer, particularly around Woodrising and its large, agricultural estate, had a major influence on the local environs and people.

Local farmers welcomed the arrival of the many thousands of birds each February and March. The gulls initially frequented the fields surrounding Scoulton Mere to feed on insects and larvae that emerged with early spring. By so doing, and depositing their droppings, they enriched the soil thereby improving crop yields. After the birds moved onto the central island on 17th March precisely (according to ornithologist F.B. Kirkman who spent months there studying the colony in the 1930s) they would spread across the fields daily to feed before returning to nests, eggs and chicks, as breeding progressed.



Black headed gull (*Larus ridibundus*) in summer plumage



Peaceful scene on the Mere with boat house

The 'black-headed' gull is a misnomer because the summer plumage of the bird is a chocolate-brown and not black head. Distinguishing features are also the colourful red legs and beak. Winter plumage shows a white head with a single dark spot near the eye. It is also known generically as a 'laughing gull' from its raucous 'kee-argh' call that sounds like a high-pitched laugh and is extremely noisy. When many thousands congregated together the noise was indeed ear-piercing. The sound of the gulls was said to be heard up to twelve miles away from Scoulton Mere in the spring and summer and it is not surprising that local people generally disliked the constant noise of the 'puits'.

After making nests, usually on the ground and close to other neighbouring parents, the usual clutch of three eggs would be laid over time and left daily while the adults went to feed. This is when the egg-collectors appeared twice-weekly carrying their large baskets to remove the first clutch laid and, hopefully for the birds, not to mistakenly remove the second three laid by the adults to replace those taken.

The eggs were certainly delicacies for the Victorians. It was indeed the fashion to breakfast upon plovers' eggs and few, if any, London folk would have been able to tell the difference between the eggs of a green plover (lapwing) and those of the black-headed gull.



Black-headed gull nest



Scoulton egg-collectors of the last century

Eggs were collected by keepers, packed in cool moss-filled wooden crates and transported by road and later by rail to London and wherever they were required. As time went on the demand appeared to outstrip the supply and the numbers of gulls coming each year to breed lessened significantly.



Scoulton Gullery by James William Walker (1831-1898)

Even by 1875, the Rev. Armstrong of Dereham wrote in his diary that *'Mrs. Bulwer got up a little picnic at Scoulton Mere. The gulls were whirling and squealing with delight. They do not, however, appear to be so numerous as they once were. We rowed twice round the Mere.'*

In the heyday of the gullery it is said that up to 40,000 eggs were collected in one season though this seems an impossible figure – certainly for the colony to be sustained. The land-owners certainly profited considerably throughout the centuries from the sales of the eggs and there was some, but not significant, local employment benefit in necessary labour for harvesting, to maintain the suitability of the nesting areas for the birds and to control predators. Reeds were also harvested for thatching and maintaining Woodrising estate properties.

By the middle of the twentieth century the gullery was in serious decline. Alec Bull, the renowned Norfolk naturalist who lived in nearby Cranworth during that period wrote after a visit to Scoulton that he was *'very disappointed to discover that the island was completely covered with alder, with just a few mallard visible on the water'*, and that *'at the north end of the island, the trees disappeared and were replaced by lush marsh grass. On the water were between 150 and 200 black-headed gulls whilst around them, and around the low part of the island, dozens more wheeled and squabbled for position.'* Sadly, no longer the many thousands of just a few decades before.

Why did the gulls leave Scoulton Mere?

- Excessive egg harvesting of eggs over a long period of time resulted in fewer adult birds returning each year to breed.
- Demand for eggs decreased according to social changes in breakfast habits.
- It became uneconomical as post-war labour costs increased so there was increasingly less effective management of the nesting areas
- Vermin flourished unchecked resulting in increased predation of eggs and nestlings.
- Introduction of pesticides in agriculture removed much of the bird food previously naturally found in the surrounding area and the draining of fertilisers into the water affected water-quality and the number of small fish available as food.
- Scrub replaced the tussock grass as natural succession took hold. Trees replaced scrub and the few returning adult birds found less suitable nesting sites.

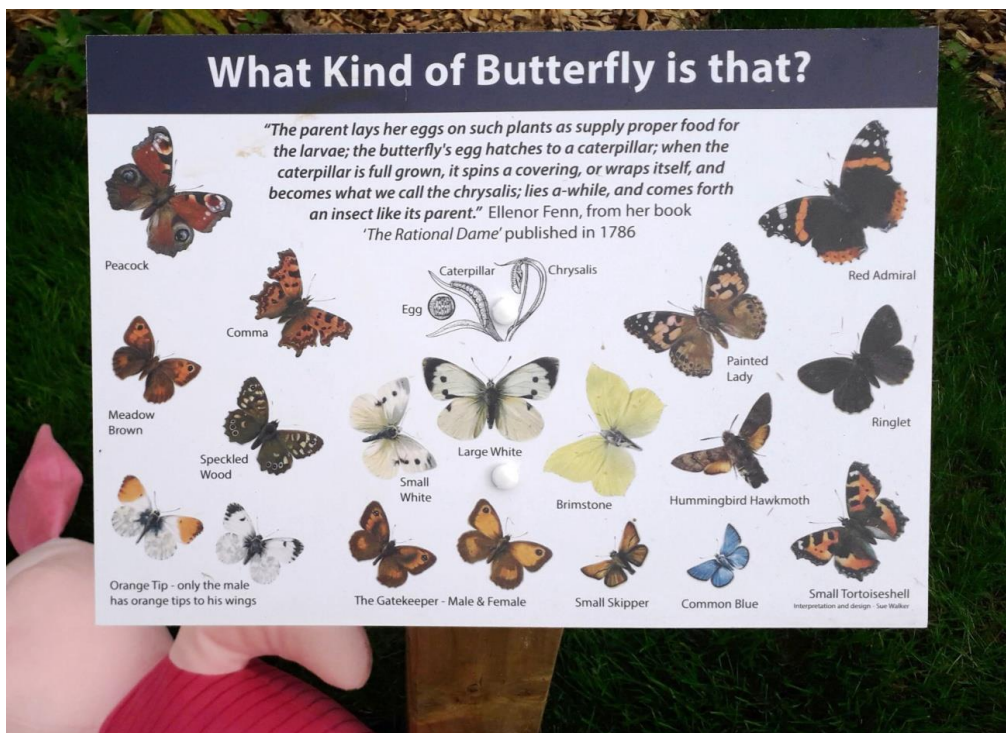
A few black-headed gulls are to be seen locally throughout the year but never in great numbers as they once were. Change has also been made to its scientific genus - no longer *Larus ridibundus* but *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*.

The gullery at Scoulton Mere has passed into history and now only fishermen inhabit this very special place where local and nationally rare plants still flourish.

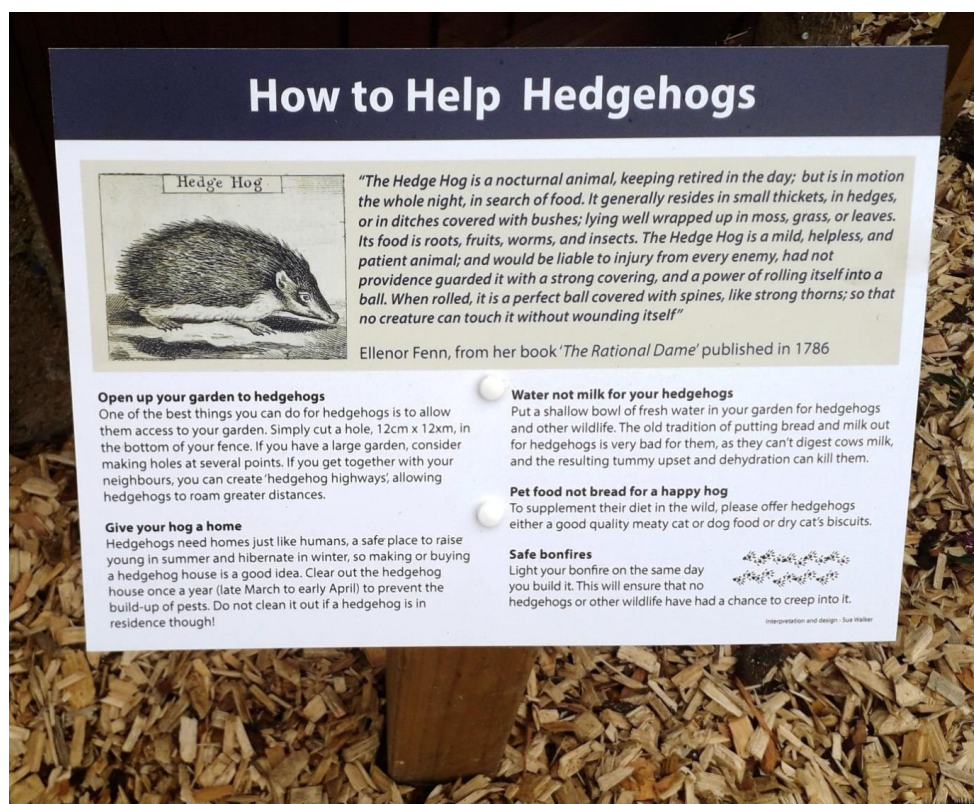
Town Centre Changes *Trevor Ogden*



We had a busy day on September 11th, when the Ellenor Fenn Garden finally replaced the waste land that had been hidden behind blue hoardings in Wright's Walk for years. This was a joint operation between Dencora, the shopping centre developer, Breckland Council, and aboutDereham, to access government money. Dereham Heritage Trust had a stand in the garden for the opening (almost hidden by visitors in the photo) which was kindly looked after by four of our Museum volunteers, Jane Heyburn, Sharon Lake, Lucy Rodger, and Mary Smith, and three people left their names to express interest in membership of DHT, two of them also being interested in volunteering for the Museum.



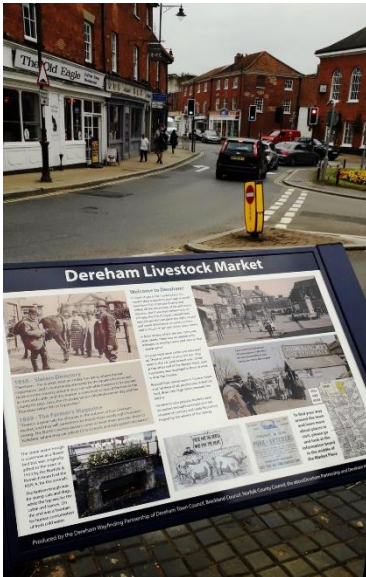
The garden incorporates two panels by Sue Walker, using quotes from Ellenor Fenn's works



Close to the new garden, Dencora gave us the chance to put a display in the window of a vacant shop in Wright's Walk, to explain more about who Ellenor was and why she have a garden named after her. We have used some of the panels made for the exhibition next year in the Museum, about Ellenor and John Fenn and their life in Dereham, and John's work on the Paston Letters. Sue Walker made some extra panels to relate the display to the new garden, and to point people to events elsewhere in Norfolk commemorating the Letters. We hope that this will be there for some weeks and will make Ellenor more than just a name to people. It should also be good publicity for the Museum and next year's displays.



DHT display of information relating to Ellenor Fenn currently in the empty Dencora shop window in Wright Walk



Long before the Ellenor Fenn Garden was conceived, we were taking part in the planning of the Wayfinding panels, and it is great to see them start to appear around the town. There are to be a total of 15 panels on ten sites of special interest. They were an initiative of aboutDereham, but again much of the design and research was Sue Walker's. It is good to see people stop and read them. Hopefully the illustrations and bite-sized bits of text will make people more aware of what happened in the past and give a better perspective of how the town has changed and is changing.

Steve Miller, Norfolk's Director of Culture and Heritage and Head of Museums, said recently "Heritage and history are most valuable, I think, when they help us to reflect on the past and plan more effectively for the future." Let's hope that the garden and displays contribute to that.



A History of Norfolk in 100 Places *Peter Wade-Martins*

Here is the fourth extract from the book by Peter and Susanna Wade-Martins and David Robertson, using locations which have public access to tell the story of Norfolk over the last million years. This new paperback is soon to be published by the History Press: it will cost £17.99 but you may order it in advance for £13.75 (including delivery) at <https://www.hive.co.uk/Product/David-Robertson/A-History-of-Norfolk-in-100-Places/25945946>.

Norwich Central Library, Technopolis and The Forum

This is probably my last contribution to the Newsletter from the pages of our forthcoming book *A History of Norfolk in 100 Places* due to be published by The History Press by the end of this year (after various false starts!). I have chosen this because it is a story which has not been told properly before and it deserves to be on the record. And, of course, from the new Norfolk Heritage Centre in the library there is a whole world of Norfolk's rich history for you to explore.

This is the story of a process, which started with a disaster and culminated in the building of the best-known, and possibly most enjoyed, piece of modern architecture in the county.

The Central Library

At 7.31am on Monday 1st August 1994 the first call was received by Norwich Fire Station to say that the Norwich Central Library was on fire. At 7.34am three fire engines were dispatched, followed in the coming hours by 12 more along with two hydraulic platforms, but they could not save the main part of the building. The Central Library, designed by the City Architect, David Percival, had been built in 1960-62 and opened by Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, in 1963. It was much-admired as a piece of contemporary architecture, but fire had destroyed most of the structure and its contents above basement level, except for parts of the high-level book stack. This included the lending library, the reference library, the American 2nd Air Division Memorial Library and much of the Norfolk Studies Library (established originally in 1880). The Norfolk Studies Library was made up of around 70,000 volumes of which 26,000 were lost. It also had a collection of around 30,000 old photographs of which about 15,000 were destroyed, including a number dating from the 1850s. Of the immensely important Colman Library of around 7,500 antiquarian books, pamphlets and papers of the greatest local and national interest, about 2,500 were destroyed. It was a catastrophe, and the leading article in the Eastern Daily Press the next day was headed 'Our heritage burned away'.



Norwich Central Library on fire: Image reproduced by courtesy of Eastern Daily Press (Archant)

The county archives held in the Norfolk Record Office below stairs in the basement were, however, not burnt. Not a single Record Office document was lost, although some were damaged by water which had penetrated through ducts linked to the warm air heating system which served the whole building.

The Record Office had a contingency disaster plan in place, so that the water-damaged documents could be quickly whisked away to be freeze-dried at the Harwell Atomic Energy Research Establishment. For the rest, there were frantic searches for suitable storage space, and Warmingers, the Norwich waste-paper merchants, generously offered their empty building on Ber Street in Norwich. So, it was possible to clear the strong room in an impressive ten days. The Record Office actually had a long-term relationship with Warmingers who every now and then passed on documents, such as manorial records and estate maps, which had come to them as wastepaper. Their Ber Street building was large enough to take the lot. A temporary Record Office opened a year later after everything had been moved again to Gildengate House in Anglia Square.

On 26th April 1995 an independent report was released which showed that the fire started in defective wiring in a bookcase, as a result of poor communication, inadequate inspection and maintenance by County Council officers. The fault had been reported four days earlier, but it had not been corrected. The ventilation system could have fanned the flames, and the devastation was so complete that the building above basement level could not be saved. It was a loss deeply felt by the people of Norfolk.

Technopolis

By May 1995 the City Council were floating the idea of a 'Technopolis' to take its place. This would consist of a modern library, a hi-tech visitors' centre and a facility to put local businesses 'in the forefront of new information technology', much of it paid for by the Millennium Commission. By July Technopolis was to be 'A computer mini-city for Norwich' (EDP 15th July 1995). Costing £79m it was to be a futuristic project to combine the latest information technology with entertainment, education, business and tourism, but despite strong promotion and after a very vigorous county-wide debate the idea did not gain traction and died. It was rejected by many people who said that the computing aspects of the project would quickly become an outdated white elephant. On 17th May 1996 the Millennium Commission also rejected the grant application for Technopolis.

The Forum

After this rejection by the Millennium Commission, a scaled-down scheme for a new Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, designed by a leading firm of international architects, Sir Michael Hopkins and Partners, quickly became a welcome alternative. Michael Hopkins, with Norman Foster and others, had become leaders in the field of high-tech architecture in Britain and had demonstrated that lightweight steel-and-glass structures could be energy efficient. The practice combined ultra-modern techniques and traditional architecture. Their proposal, 60% of the size of the previous design, was unveiled in March 1997; it was to be a U-shaped three-storeyed structure faced with hand-made bricks with a mostly glass roof covering a central atrium and an all-glass front wall facing St Peter Mancroft church (No. 40). This £60m version was approved by the Millennium Commission which offered £30m in June 1997, almost three years after the fire.

First there had to be a six-month archaeological excavation on a part of the site nearest St Peter Mancroft, and that began in November 1998. Construction work started in June 1999, and the roof with glass and zinc panelling was being assembled by August 2000. The new building was formally christened 'The Forum' in June 2001. It was to house the Millennium Library, including the old Norfolk Studies Library (re-named the Norfolk Heritage Centre), a Tourist Information Centre, a new American Memorial Library, exhibitions, a shop, the Radio Norfolk and Look East studios, a restaurant and a coffee shop. Beneath all that would be a car park for 250 cars to generate income. Large-scale purchases, funded by an insurance settlement, combined with a successful public appeal, helped to replenish library stocks. The new Norfolk Heritage Centre now contains a freshly assembled comprehensive collection of printed material and old photographs telling the story of Norfolk and its people. The library was formally opened on the first of November 2001 and in April 2003 it received a Civic Trust award. 'The building had fulfilled its brief with a strength and quality that will stand the test of time' (EDP 4th April 2003).



The Forum: Image courtesy of John Fielding

Meanwhile the Heritage Lottery Fund announced that it would provide a separate £4.2m grant towards a new £6.7m Archive Centre for the Norfolk Record Office and the East Anglian Film Archive to be housed in a new building at County Hall on the outskirts of the city near Trowse.

We can all feel so thankful that the county archives survived, even if many of the irreplaceable items in the old Norfolk Studies Library were lost. After more than seven tumultuous years Norwich had gained a state-of-the-art Archive Centre and what has become one of the most popular public libraries in the UK, visited by 5,000 people a day.

The Forum is open 7am to midnight, the Heritage Centre 10am to 7pm. The Tourist Information Centre is a good place to start this tour of Norfolk's heritage and the 99 other places described in this book. (NR2 1TF)

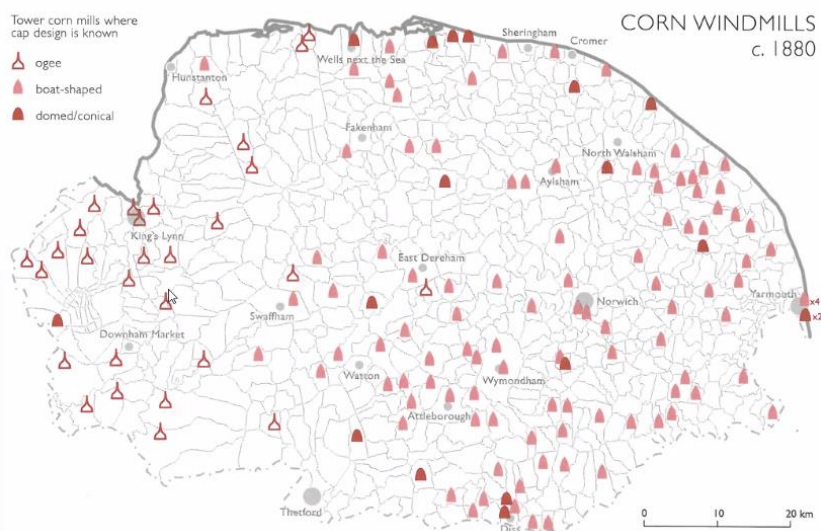
Recent Talks Ken Hawkins

July: Alison Yardy: An introduction to Norfolk's Mills

Alison, working in the Environment Section for Norfolk County Council, and also involved with Norfolk Windmills Trust, introduced her talk by noting that she would largely speak about windmills. She did however start by showing us some watermills, noting that Letheringsett was the only watermill in Norfolk still operating, to produce stone-ground flour for sale. There were still more than 100 sites to be seen in 2005, but only 19 still had a waterwheel.

She then moved on to her generously illustrated account of the windmills of Norfolk, a county with a high number of mills because it had more wind than anywhere else. There are 200 sites at which there is still something to be seen, about 120 former corn mills and 80 drainage mills. (There was, later in the talk, a brief discussion about the view that the latter should be called pumps, not mills, a view with which she wholly disagreed.) Faden's 1797 map showed 256 mills, mostly post mills. By the mid-19th century there were more than 400 mills, but by 1912, it was 100, and by 1937, just eleven; in 1956, Billington, near Diss, was the last corn mill at work in Norfolk. This decline was mainly due to the rise of roller mills from the late 19th century.

The earliest known depiction of a mill is from 1349, a brass at St Margaret's church in King's Lynn; this is of a post mill (built on a central post, and turned manually into the wind). She also showed us a later version from Happisburgh which had two fantails, which acted to turn the mill automatically to keep it facing the wind. Later came patent shutter sails, which adjusted according to wind strength, spilling the wind when it became dangerously strong. Another form were smock mills (with weatherboarded towers), and mills with a variety of caps.



Extract from *An Historical Atlas of Norfolk* eds T Ashwin and A Davison (Phillimore, 2005)

The oldest mills to survive in Norfolk are Briningham (1721) and St Benet's Abbey Mill (1720s). The latter was a combined oil mill and drainage mill, there to drain water from the marshes and thereby extend the grazing season as well as improving its quality; mills were worked in winter, to be laid up in May. There were a huge range of such mills, covering 250 sites, of which about 70-80 remain.

References to mills date from the 17th century, with a post mill shown on a 1702 map - 'ye engin or mill at the south corner' in Horning. The next earliest map is at Stokesby in 1721.



Extract from 1702 map of St Benet's Abbey precinct (NRO/MC 1751/1)



1813 J S Cotman etching



1912 photograph

Alison then showed us a number of paintings by members of the Norwich School of Artists, which, though not necessarily accurate in every detail, formed a good record of many mills. A surprising piece of information was that mills could be sold and moved to other locations, evidenced by advertisements for this process.

The mid-19th century was a period of further building, often on sites previously considered unsuited. The time also saw the introduction of steam power, often in combination with wind rather than a replacement. The 1900s saw the building of tower mills, up to 1911/12.

To conclude her survey, Alison discussed the work of Norfolk Windmills Trust, established in 1963, which currently looked after 21 sites, 16 of them in the Broads. Recent projects had been the restoration of Wicklewood Mill House, Billingford Mill (at Scole) and Old Buckenham Mill. The latest project is for Stracey Arms. The Trust is now reviewing the backlog of works; some materials are no longer available, so replacements are being sought: the same applies to contractors and for training.

For more information, see <https://www.facebook.com/norfolk Mills/>.

Further reading:

A-Z of Norfolk Windmills: A Visual Guide Through Aerial Photography Hardcover, Mike Page and Alison Yardy

Mills of the Halvergate Marshes: Reedham Marshes and Ashtree Farm, Alison Yardy

Norfolk Corn Windmills, Harry Apling

August: Susanna Wade-Martins: The Small-holding Movement

A Social and Agricultural Experiment

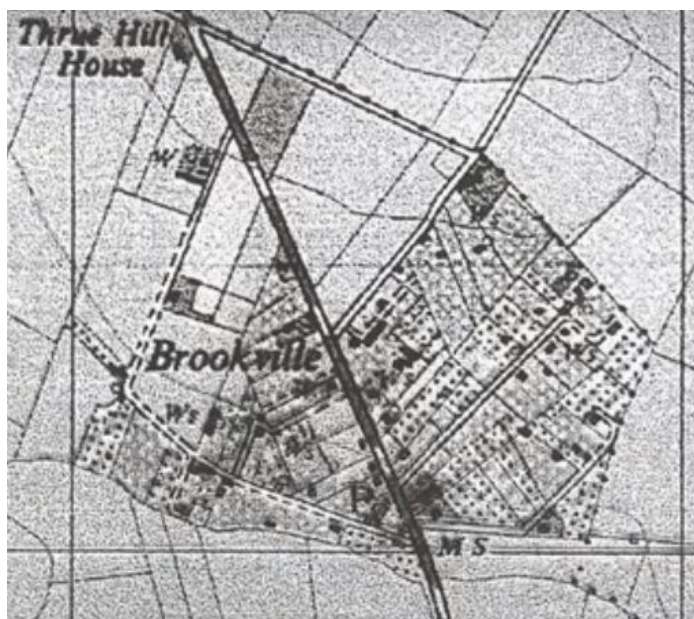
Susanna opened her talk by noting that the smallholding movement was unique, the only government initiative to promote small, rather than large, scale farming. Norfolk was one of the first to take up the opportunities and in 1930 was the largest landowner of smallholdings.

Susanna placed her talk in the context of four hopes for smallholdings, as formulated by Newlin Smith in 1946:

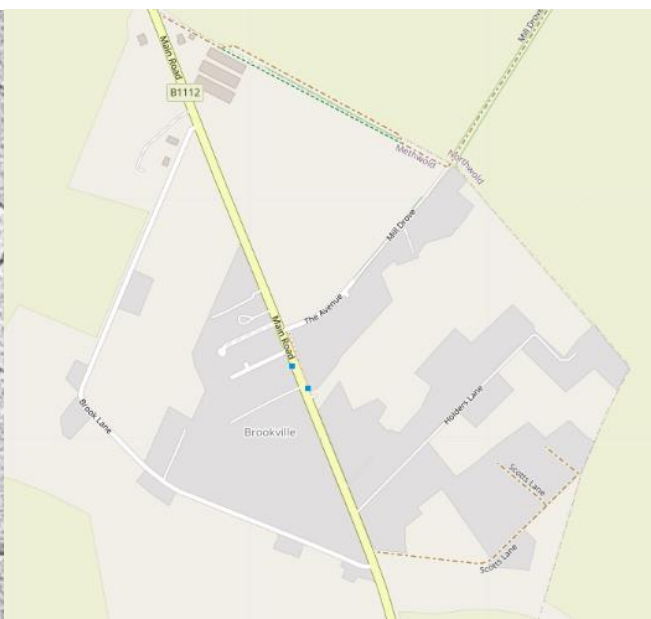
- a halt to the decline of small farms and the rural population
- the introduction of new blood, and encouragement of career progression
- an increase in political stability, and retention of a conservative outlook
- increased productivity and domestic food supply

Things began with the 1882 Allotments Extension Act and 1892 Smallholdings Act, which gave powers (but not duties) to County Councils to buy land for sale to smallholders. But take up was small - although Norfolk had set up a Smallholdings and Allotments Committee in 1889, by 1902, only eight Councils in England and Wales had used these powers, buying only 568 acres of land. Much was in fact bought by negotiation, rather than the use of compulsory purchase.

Alongside this development, there was also a movement towards communes and cottage farms set up by socialist and anarchist groups, though most were short lived because of the lack of expertise. Settlers at Methwold needed about £500 to buy the land and set up a house, so much of the early take up came from the middle-class. A smallholding with a jam factory was set up in Methwold in 1900, but was not listed in the local directory in 1908. A substantial area was given over in what is now Brookville, and the impact from this is can still be seen on current OS maps - but this is now the only evidence.



1890 map



current OS map

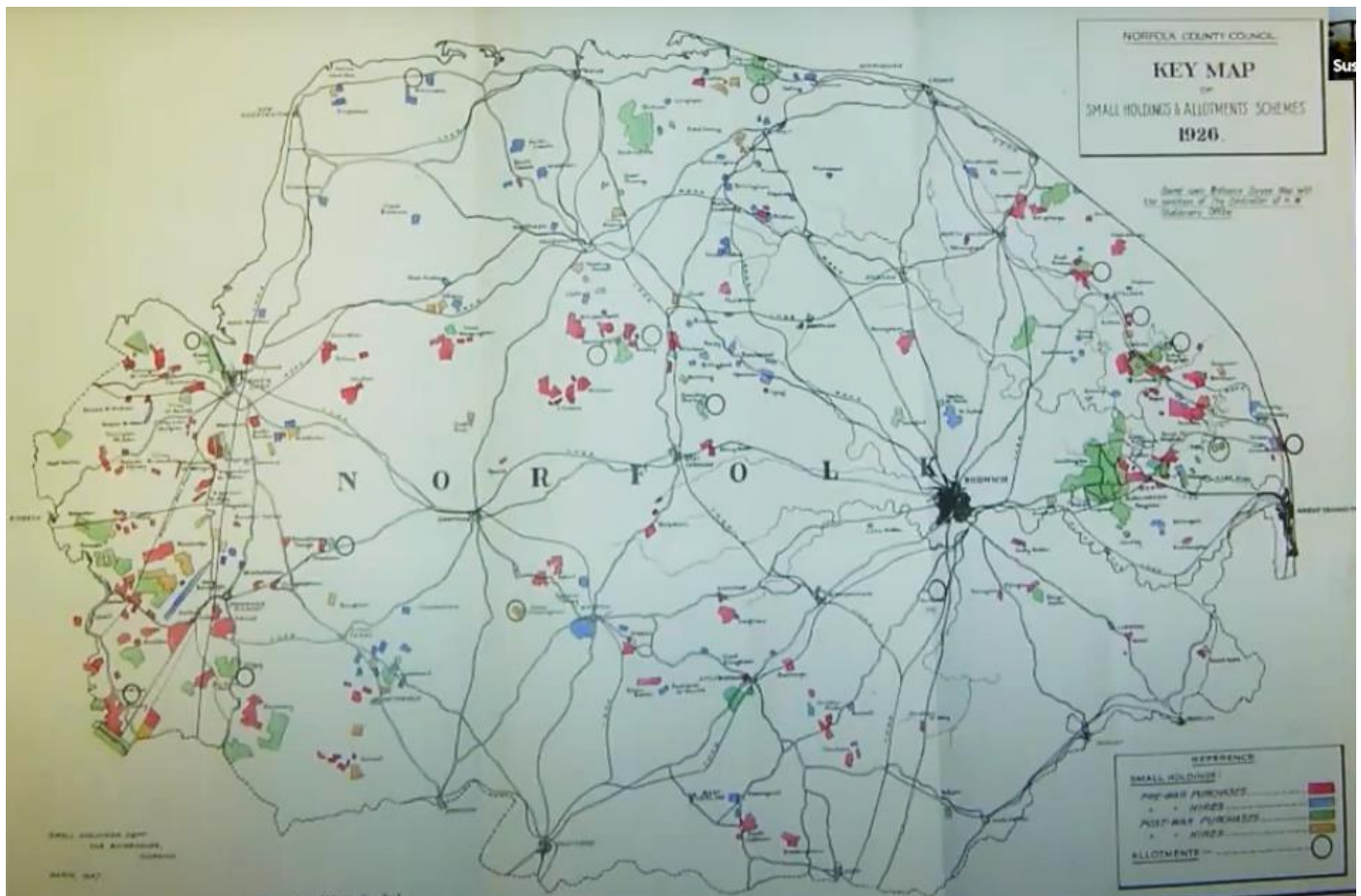
The modern map is from OS Open Source mapping, but for greater detail, see <http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map?X=573426&Y=296431&A=Y&Z=115>.

In 1904, Norfolk bought its first farm to be divided for smallholdings - 91 acres at Chapel Farm at Nordelph, for 35 tenants.

In 1907, a further Act required Councils to set up a committee, and to acquire land for rent or hire purchase, and between 1908 and 1914, over 20,000 acres of land were purchased in England and passed to 14,000 smallholders. Norfolk County Council used the powers 94 times (more than any other Council); by 1914 they had spent £40,000 and had 1300 tenants on 9,000 acres of purchased land and 4,000 acres of hired land.

A Government report in 1913 gave advice on houses and other buildings, while annual inspections took place: these inspections recorded falling standards during World War I. After the war, the Government provided County Councils with £20m for ex-servicemen to acquire smallholdings, and 24,000 servicemen were settled in this way, doubling the number of smallholdings. In 1919, the Norfolk committee, halted during the war, was re-established. These new buildings were asbestos pre-fabs (the trade name was poilite). Conditions were, however, not good, with hastily erected buildings having many problems - leaking roofs, sagging ceilings, walls not weatherproof, and fireplaces unsafe. Nevertheless, 50 were still in use in Norfolk in 1951, and one still survived (though being demolished) in 2005. By the mid-1920s, the emphasis shifted from buying new buildings to repairing existing ones.

The map below shows the holdings in Norfolk in 1926 - red for pre-World War I (WWI) purchases, blue for pre-WWI hirings and green for post-WWI acquisitions. They totalled 27,500 acres, ie., about 1/48 of the total area of the county.



1926 Holdings in Norfolk

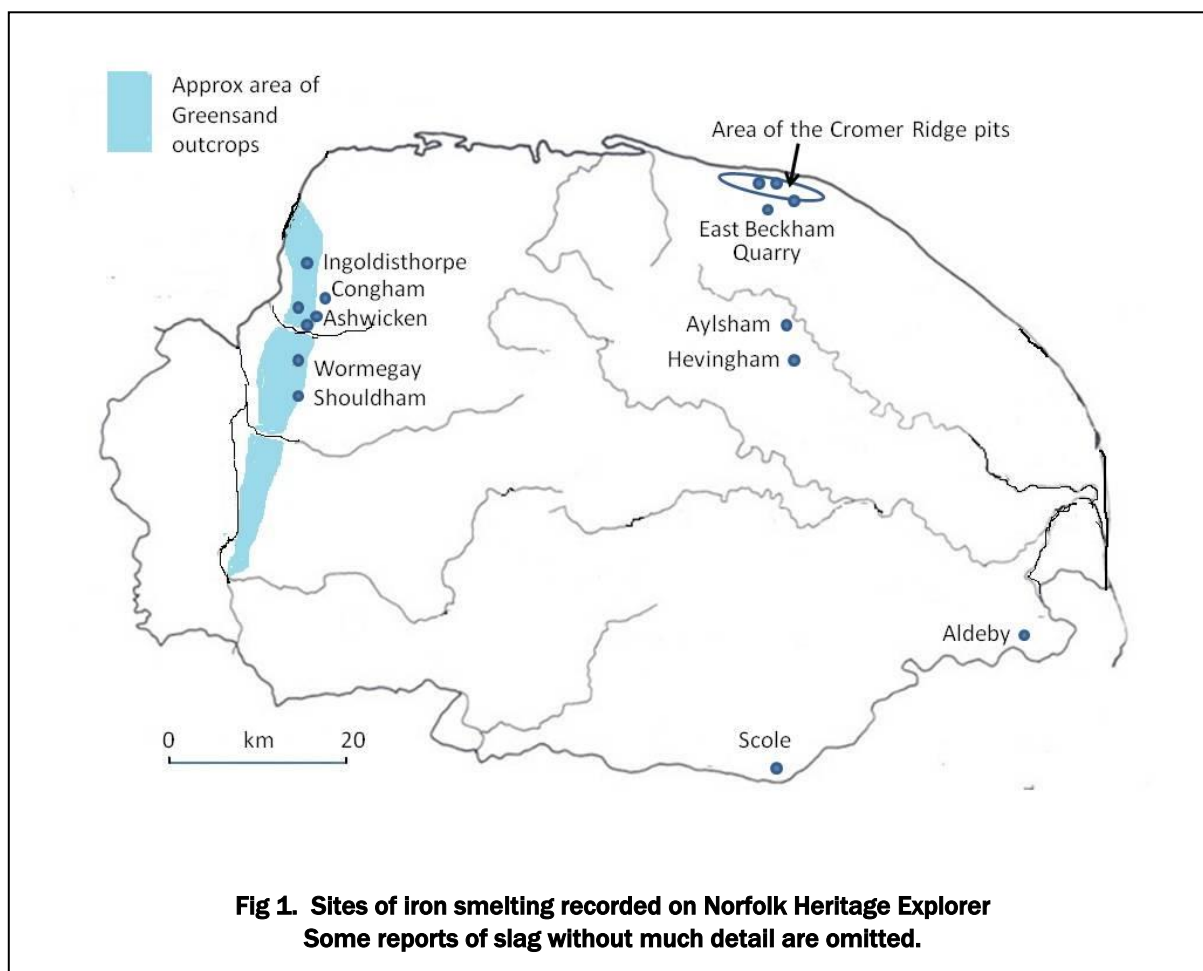
Further purchases were made starting in 1933, for long term unemployed people. In Norfolk, 1500 acres were acquired and 45 new homes built. By 1946, Norfolk had nearly 2,000 tenants occupying 32,000 acres, but buildings were still in poor condition, without water or electricity. This led to a programme of investment in the early 1950s, when an additional 224 new houses and farm buildings were built. A competition among smallholders showcased best practice, but there were comparatively few entries.

To conclude, Susanna reviewed the hopes for the smallholding movement. It was not clear how much impact the smallholding movement made. Little new blood was introduced, and progression (to buy a farm) was unusual, so the decline of small farms was not prevented. Neither did it provide 'homes for heroes', though some solid housing was supplied; nor was there any impact on unemployment, or change in the political stability in the countryside.

From 1947, the focus of government policy moved to agricultural rather than social considerations, so there was amalgamation into larger, more efficient units. Burlingham was an exception, moving from cereal growing to mixed farming, with new buildings. In the 1970s and 1980s, many were sold off.

Where did Norfolk get its iron from? Part 2 – The North Trevor Ogden

Part 1 of this story was in the previous (summer) issue. It began with the excavation of an Iron Age smelter at East Beckham Quarry, about 3 km south of Sheringham, which made me wonder where people in Norfolk in the Iron Age got their iron ore from. Part 1 looked at the ironstone layers and nodules in the sands of West Norfolk, and the mainly Roman era smelters that worked them. In this part we switch back to the East Beckham Quarry smelter (Fig 1), and the local sources.



The ridge of hills between Weybourne and East Runton is dotted by over a thousand pits, originally a metre deep or so and usually 2 to 4 metres across. Peter Wade-Martins did a survey of them in the mid-1980s. The ridge is now well-wooded, so you have to know where to look, but a couple of hundred years ago the area was much clearer. Fig 2 is an illustration from an 1853 paper by Henry Harrod and Fig 3 is part of a map contributed to that paper by WJJ Bolding (ref 1 – see end). Harrod could only conclude that the pits were remains of prehistoric dwellings. Thirty years later, FCJ Spurrell did another investigation, and found that “about and amongst them are broad patches strewn with cinders and slag, the refuse of iron working”, and “limited layers of ferruginous conglomerate”, but he could not believe that the pits were anything to do with mining, “for there is nothing to mine”. He believed that the ore for the iron working had been found on the beach. (2)

That interpretation stuck for 100 years, and the post-war Ward Lock guide to North Norfolk still described the pits as prehistoric dwellings, with roofs “consisting probably of turf overlying tree boughs...supported by a tree trunk resting on the floor” (3).

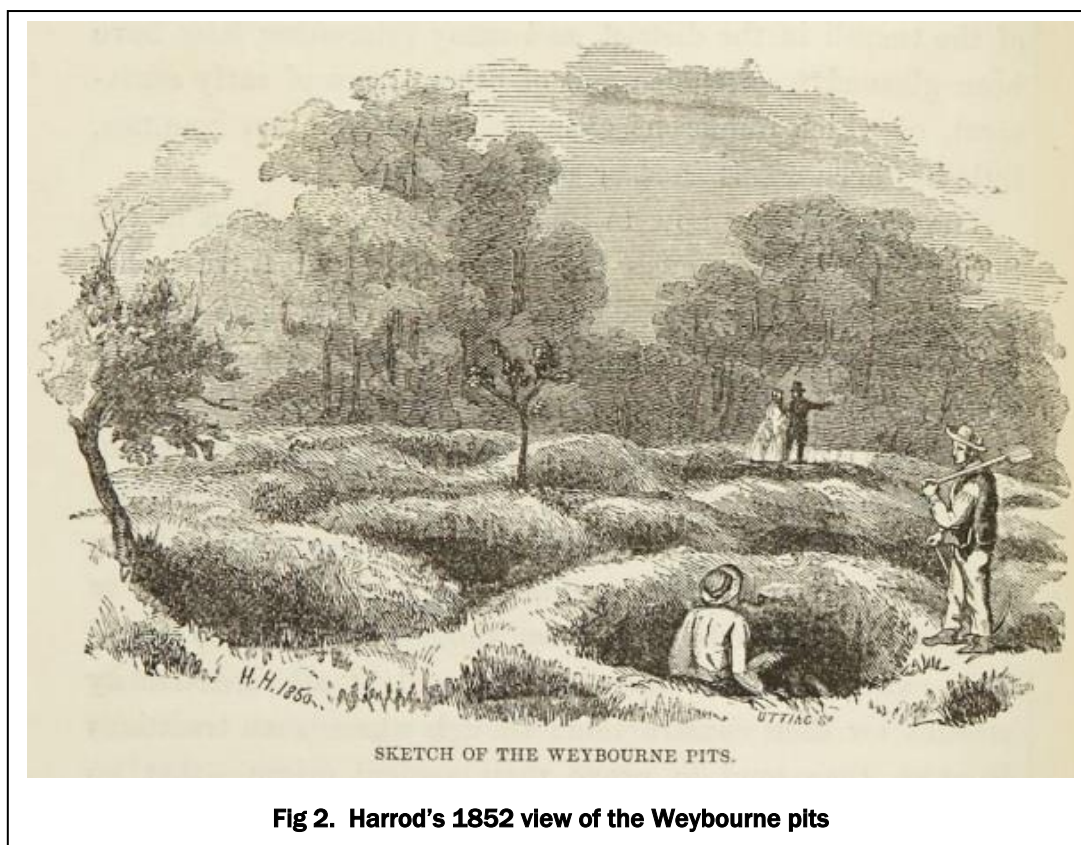
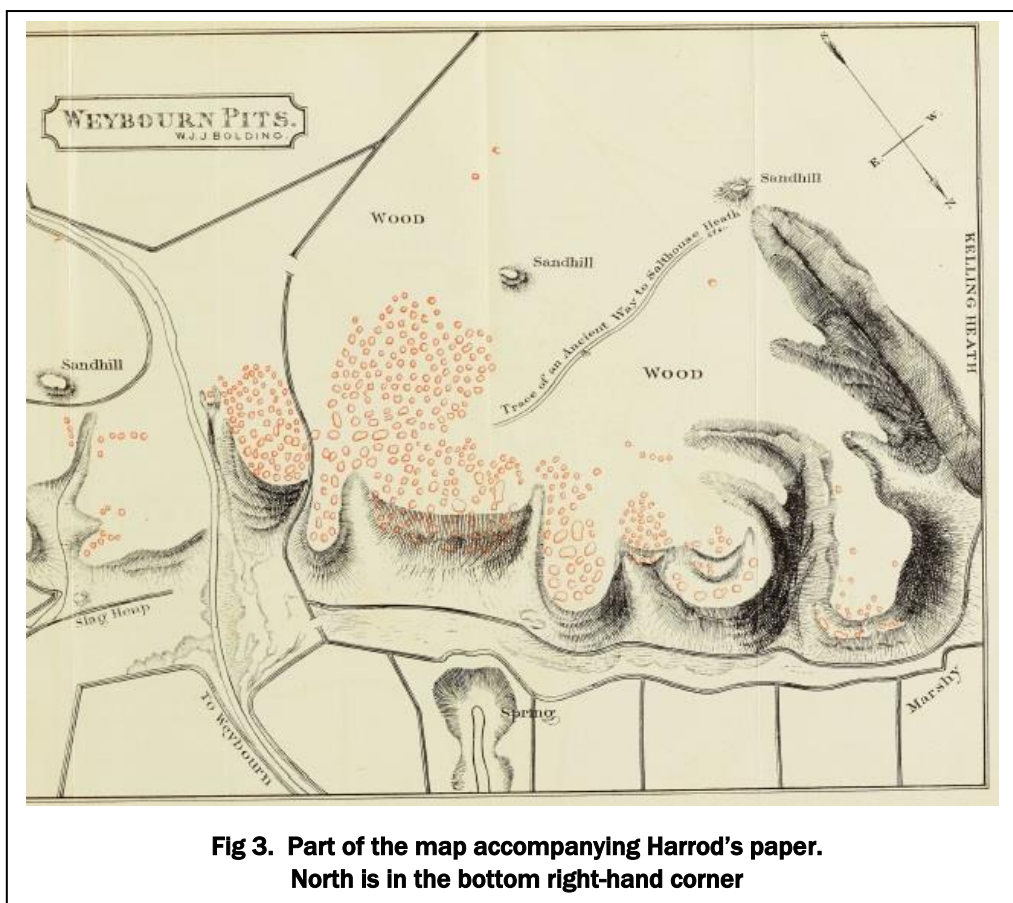


Fig 2. Harrod's 1852 view of the Weybourne pits

However, in 1967 Tylecote took away any doubt about the North Norfolk pits by a careful excavation (4). He found a layer of leached sand, and underneath that a hard pan mixed with gravel and ironstone nodules, and then yellow sand with ironstone nodules in irregular concentrations. The pattern was far from uniform, but he reckoned that around 270 kg of nodules might be removed from a pit. These would contain about 120 kg of iron (see Appendix for calculations). Tylecote concluded that the pits were dug to get at the iron.

So, my original question of where the iron came from becomes two: (a) How did the iron get into the ridge? and (b) How did it become a layer of nodules that could be mined? Here we run into many unknowns, but we can make guesses. The hills on which the pits stand, part of the Cromer Ridge, are thought to be composed of material moved from elsewhere and carried here by the ice during an Ice Age (5). This is thought to have happened in the Anglian glaciation about 450,000 years ago, but we do not know the fine details of the process, or how the top layer came to be sandy. Since then, there have been more glaciations, and periods between when the climate was sometimes warmer than today, with appropriate changes of vegetation (6).

I think that the clue to how the iron came to be concentrated in nodules is the layer of leached sand that Tylecote saw immediately under the thin soil. Iron is typically a few percent in soils, so we would expect that to be true of a layer of sand pushed onto or deposited on the Cromer Ridge. A volume of sand 3 m in diameter and 25 cm deep (dimensions similar to those found in Tylecote's pit) with 4% iron would have contained about 106 kg of iron before leaching. There are big uncertainties in this, particularly in the volume of leached sand and the percent of iron in it, but it looks as if there could perhaps have been enough iron washed out of the leached sand to explain the amount in the nodules, and perhaps the pan as well (see Appendix for the calculation). So, there isn't a great mystery about where the iron came from. Optimistically, 50% of the iron was recovered as metal from the smelting, so a thousand of the pits would yield a total of about 25 tons of iron in total.



**Fig 3. Part of the map accompanying Harrod's paper.
North is in the bottom right-hand corner**

If the iron came out of the leached sand, how did it wash out, and how did it form the nodules (and pan)? The chemistry of soils is very complicated and technical, but iron can move. When deposited as a mineral it is normally the very insoluble ferric oxide, but waterlogging with a high organic content, provided by rotting vegetations, can produce conditions in which micro-organisms change the oxide into a soluble form. The iron can then be carried down from the top layer in the ground water (leaching). A few tens of cm further down the acidity might be lower, causing the iron to come out of solution (7), forming the nodules (and cementing the pan). Tylecroft describes the nodules as being of insoluble hydrated iron oxides, invariably with a concentric structure, "often seen to have a core of clay or sand around which the iron must have deposited". With the iron now ready to come out of solution, it might have found some nuclei for precipitation and then grown as nodules, perhaps over a period of centuries or longer. The concentric structure is consistent with this (8). (Somewhat similar processes can lead to bog iron ore, which forms as small nodules. The speed of deposition of these can allow harvesting of the bog every generation.)

So, I think Norfolk's iron might have simply been in the sand the ice brought; rotting vegetation helped change it into a soluble form which the rain washed through the sand and deposited in nodules. Later, people came along and dug them out and smelted them. Tylecote found Thetford Ware pottery associated with the pits, so the pits were probably operating in the 900-1100 AD period. The smelter at East Beckham Quarry was carbon-dated to the Middle Iron Age, 400-200 BC (9). Possibly the pits were also operating then, or ironstone nodules might have been found nearer to the Quarry.

A convenient place to see the pits is the National Trust property at "Roman Camp", Beeston Regis, which has a car park and an explanatory display. Fig 4 shows a small ironstone nodule and Fig 5 some slag that I picked up nearby a few weeks ago. Martin Warren, who was formerly curator at Cromer Museum, and in normal times runs geology walks in North Norfolk, kindly sent me a photo of a pit he had noticed at the East Gate of the Felbrigg Hall estate (Fig 6), which from the pieces of slag lying around (Fig 7) must have been associated with iron-working. This is 2km SE of the "Roman

Camp", and is probably part of the workings described in Norfolk Heritage Explorer NHER 6469 (<https://tinyurl.com/k8w4mb8p>), and is on the same geological deposit as the Beeston Regis pits and the East Beckham Quarry (the "Briton's Lane Sand and Gravel", overlying the Wroxham Crag).



Fig 4. An ironstone nodule from Beeston Regis



Fig 5. A small piece of slag from Beeston Regis. The smooth, formerly molten parts catch the light.

The outliers

Fig 1 shows four ironworking sites not in the West and North groups discussed so far. According to Norfolk Heritage Explorer the Aylsham site (NHER 15074) was Roman or Medieval. The British Geological Survey map shows it as being on the Wroxham Crag, a formation which outcrops on the beach at East Runton, and contains large ironstone pebbles. This is also the base rock at Hevingham (NHER 7495), but here it is overlain by sands and gravels deposited by the ice. Excavation showed the ironworking to be possibly Roman, and the ore was supposed to be a ferruginous sand. It is not possible to say more about the source of the iron at these sites, but clearly some sort of process such as that on the Cromer Ridge may have been at work.

The site at Scole (Fig 1) was a 2nd century iron-working furnace in the Roman settlement (NHER 1008). This is well served by Roman roads, and clearly the ore might have been brought some distance. Smelting takes many times as much charcoal as ore (by volume), and with good roads the smelter could have been sited for maximum convenience.



Fig 6. Site of former Iron-working at Felbrigg (Martin Warren)

The iron-working at Aldeby (NHER 34099; <https://tinyurl.com/nrkdk92t>) is less straightforward as far as the ore is concerned. Nine simple bowl furnaces were found, dated to the Early to Middle Iron Age, and the NHER record says that they might be “the earliest evidence for iron working anywhere in the country”. Unfortunately, the published details are extremely skimpy, so it is not possible to say much. The base rock is a sandy crag, topped by sands and gravels. Perhaps there was ironstone as on the Cromer Ridge, but there is no information. If this was the first ironworking in this part of the country, presumably the expertise and perhaps the ore must have come from somewhere else, perhaps from the Continent. The site is less than a kilometre from the flood plain of the Waveney, which may have been part of the Great Estuary in the Iron Age, and as the crow flies it is about 10 km from the sea at Lowestoft.

I think I know now where most of Norfolk’s iron ore came from, but it looks as if the source of the ore used by the pioneers at Aldeby will have to remain a mystery.



Fig.7. Pieces of slag near the suspected ironworking pit of Fig 6. (Martin Warren)

Acknowledgements. Conversations with several people helped with this article – Megan Dennis with her experience of archaeometallurgy; Sue Walker, who once organised an exhibition on the pits; and Peter Wade-Martins, Martin Warren, Adrian Read, and Tim Holt-Wilson who helped greatly with their expertise and experience (but don’t necessarily agree with me).

For more on the geological makeup and history of North Norfolk, see the 2011 Norfolk Coast Partnership Report, *Geological Landscapes of the Norfolk Coast* by Tim Holt-Wilson, who is to speak to us in January 2023 on “Norfolk’s Earth Heritage”. (<http://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/mediaps/pdfuploads/pd001561.pdf>) For identifying the local deposits, I use the British Geological Survey maps, accessed using the iGeology app.

References:

- (1) Harrod H (1853) On the Weybourne pits. *Norfolk Archaeological Journal* 3: 232-240. <https://tinyurl.com/yf6jf33f>
- (2) Spurrell FCJ (1883) On some large collections of shallow pits in Norfolk and elsewhere. *Archaeological Journal* 40:281-295. <https://tinyurl.com/yhq6upco>
- (3) *Guide to North Norfolk*. Anon, undated. Ward Lock and Co., London
- (4) Tylecote RF (1967) The bloomery site and West Runton, Norfolk. *Norfolk Archaeology* 34(2):187-214. <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/details.xhtml?recordId=3237065>
- (5) Holt-Wilson T. *Geological Landscapes of the Norfolk Coast*. Fakenham, Norfolk Coast Partnership, 2011. <http://www.norfolkcoastaonb.org.uk/mediaps/pdfuploads/pd001561.pdf>
- (6) Lee JR, Woods MA, Moorlock BSP (Eds) *British Regional Geology: East Anglia*. 5th Edn, 2015. British Geological Survey, Nottingham. <http://pubs.bgs.ac.uk/publications.html?pubID=B07313>
- (7) Weil RR and Brady NC, *The nature and properties of soils*, 15th edition, pp684, 738 & 739. (Pearson, Harlow) 2017
- (8) Wikipedia article, *Liesegang rings*. Accessed 31 July 2021
- (9) Mustchin ARR, Newton AAS (2020) A Middle Iron Age Bowl Furnace at East Beckham Quarry. *Norfolk Archaeology* 43(3):281-287

Appendix – the calculations

Tylecote reported that the nodules were about 64% iron (ferric) oxide. Ferric oxide is about 70% iron, so 270 kg of nodules would contain about $270 \times 0.64 \times 0.7$ kg of iron, about 120 kg approx.

A circular volume of sand 3 m in diameter and 25 cm deep has a volume of about 1.75 cu. m. Loose sand has a density of about 1500 kg/m³, so if this were 4% iron, 1.75 m³ sand would contain about $1500 \times 0.04 \times 1.75 = 106$ kg iron approx.

Programme of events 2021 and beyond

We have a full programme of speakers and events planned through to the end of this year and throughout 2022, though it has to remain open to change. We still hope to resume meetings when we feel it is appropriate to do so and are keeping this under constant review, but for now, we are showing online presentations; if you get this Newsletter by email, we will send you links to these. Some of our talks have been recorded in advance; in those cases, we send you a web link which will enable you to watch a presentation at a time of your own choosing (up to the date of the meeting). We will also send you a second web link to a Zoom meeting to take place at the scheduled meeting time of 19:30 on the planned meeting date. This will enable you to join a virtual DHT meeting, usually involving the presenter, to allow you and the other participants to ask questions and join the discussion. For the others, the presentation takes place on the scheduled night as usual (but online). Our recent 'meetings' have enabled those who had seen the talks to take part in some very interesting and extended discussions. We hope and believe that the same will apply for our future talks too. **If you get this Newsletter through the post, but are able to have internet access, please let us know, and we will send links to your chosen email address.** Where possible, recorded talks are available to members for a week after meeting date; you can find them on our website.

We are not making the usual £1 charge to members to watch the talk or join the meeting, but we will be pleased to **welcome donations** to offset our costs - our speakers still deserve full recompense for their time and effort! Payment can be made by cheque or bank transfer as noted in the [Membership matters](#) section above.

PRESENTATION by Andy Reid – OCTOBER 13 2021 - 7.30pm

HARRIET KETTLE – Pauper, Prisoner, Patient and Parent in Victorian Norfolk.

A change to our advertised programme has meant that our October talk will be given to us via 'Zoom' by Andy Reid who spent much of his life in Norfolk as a history teacher, Liaison Officer at Gressenhall Museum, and later as HM Inspector of Schools, while maintaining an interest in the history of Norfolk. He has since worked as an education consultant, supporting schools in England and contributing to school improvement programmes in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

A book of the same name as the title of our talk was published by Poppyland Publishing this year and I was eager to buy a copy. Andy and I had spoken earlier when he was seeking information about the village of Cranworth in which Harriet Kettle (c1838-1916) was born, and about the Reverend Philip Gurdon (1800-1874) who served as its minister for 42 years and would have come into contact with Harriet in his public offices. I don't think I was able to be of much help, however, on reading Andy's book I was delighted to learn much more about the area in which we live.

We encourage members to listen to Andy's account of poor Harriet Kettle and her life as she moved from the small village of her birth to Gressenhall Union workhouse and from there to various other institutions in Norwich and Wymondham before marrying and raising a family in Toftwood. Sadly, however, she reached the end of her life in 1916 back at Gressenhall workhouse.

Please enjoy a remarkably well-researched, riveting story of a female rebel throughout a life almost unimaginable today. Tune in on 'Zoom' using the following link address:

Join Zoom Meeting: 13 October 2021 7.30pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88151553358?pwd=bXJwQmhHU3hFNkxhbWxjOCtwYXBsQT09>

Meeting ID: 881 5155 3358 Passcode 526573

If you would like to know even more by then, or after the presentation, please buy Andy's book which is such a good read that I will probably have to read it all again by 13 October.

If you know any non-members who might enjoy the talks, please ask them to contact Trevor Ogden at ogden@ogs.org.uk so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

10 November - The Norwich Castle: Gateway to Medieval England Project

Speaker: Dr. Robin Hanley, Assistant Head of Museums, Norfolk Museums Service

-oo00oo-

8 December - Hexachordia – A Tudor Christmas performance of medieval music

Please note change of venue to Dereham Wellspring Family Church for this event

A very different format for us this Christmas appropriate to our meeting face-to-face again. The three members of Hexachordia present a unique blend of historical narrative, contemporary accounts, visual images and live music, played on an array of instruments. celebrating the festive season as it was under Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, combining music, mirth and merriment. Listen to some of your favourite carols as you may not have heard them before which have their origins in the Medieval and Tudor eras and many of the traditions associated with Christmas which are equally ancient. Discover how the world was turned upside down for a day and how they celebrated Twelfth Night.

-oo00oo-

12 January 2022 – The Life and Mysteries of Saint Withburga

Speaker: Rod Chapman

Next Issue.. We will continue to produce a Newsletter every quarter, in January, April, July and October and the press date for the next issue is 15 December. If you have material for this issue, please send it to our Editor Ken Hawkins. We welcome contributions from members relating to the history of our area which may be of interest to others. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any other comments of any sort. In between Newsletters, our website is updated regularly so please have a look now and again: www.derehamhistory.com