

**Dragon Hall Heritage Volunteers
& Local History Study Group**
NEWSLETTER No.8 February 2022



Volunteer News

Tours: in view of the rapid spread of the Omicron virus it was decided to cancel the planned **tours** for January and February but to start tours again on Monday, March 21st, subject to Covid regulations.

Study Group: the January 18th meeting was on Zoom, as will be the February 21st meeting. We hope to resume face to face meetings on Monday, March 21st at 10.30 a.m.

Report of Zoom meeting on January 18th

The Match Factory in Synagogue Street

Richard told us about John Lincoln's Lucifer Match factory in Synagogue Street, one of several in Norwich. Much of his information came from the 1863 Royal Commission into working conditions for children in the factories. Despite the fact that the owner appeared to have some concern for his employees (60 at one stage), for instance, not employing children under 10, working conditions were appalling. The workers, described by the Inspector as 'the poorest of the poor and the lowest of the low' laboured for 12 - 14 hours a day for, at most, a few shillings: one boy earned 2s - 9d a week, another, who had never heard of London or Queen Victoria, 1s- 4d!

There were 3 main jobs in the factory, mixing, dipping and boxing. As the main raw material was a dangerous phosphorus mixture which the workers inhaled, there was serious danger of them developing 'phossy jaw' which could lead to bone cancer and death. Richard's account brought home to us the industrial nature of our area and its extreme poverty in the nineteenth century.

Anna Gurney

Mary had spent Christmas in the Northrepps Country Hotel, but originally known as Northrepps Cottage. It was owned by the famous Gurney banking family and lived in from 1825 to 1857 by Anna Gurney. As a result of polio in infancy she spent her life as an invalid, mostly in a wheelchair. She lived with another lady who was her cousin both by blood and marriage, Sarah Buxton, whose brother the anti-slavery campaigner Thomas Fowell Buxton and family lived at the big house Northrepps Hall. The two cottage ladies, as they were called, had a very close relationship until Sarah's death in 1839 and they are buried together in Overstrand Church.

Despite her disability Anna was heavily involved in philanthropic causes; she set up a local school, assisted in the campaign against the slave trade and travelled extensively in Europe. She was learned in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Icelandic & Anglo Saxon and published in 1819 'A Literal Translation of the Anglo Saxon Chronicle'. She was the first female member of the British Archaeological Association, publishing in its journal, and was Vice President of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Association; she was also interested in geology and fossil collection. We reflected that she was a very interesting example of a 19th century woman, from a well off Quaker family, self educated, with an extensive circle of influential family and friends and wide philanthropic and intellectual interests.

East Anglian Archaeology Report 112 now available on line

This report is now available to read or download free on line. It is really 'the bible' on all matters related to Dragon Hall, being the report of the major archaeology dig in 1997/98 but not published until 2005. You can access it at:

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/library/browse/issue.xhtml?recordId=1140610&recordType=MonographSeries>

Just click on the green 'Download' button; in many ways it is easier to browse through on your screen than the print version. The term 'archaeology report' is really a misnomer as a good half of the report is devoted to documentary research.



Japanese head, possibly oriental

It must constitute one of the most comprehensive studies ever carried out of one small area and its buildings. For this reader at least, some of it is extremely technical, with more than you will ever need to know about, for example, the 'geoarchaeological evidence', 'lithics' and 'palynology'! But it also has valuable information about all the owners and residents of Dragon Hall and overviews of the history and archaeology of the King Street area, with sections devoted to the Saxon period, King Street as a medieval port, etc.

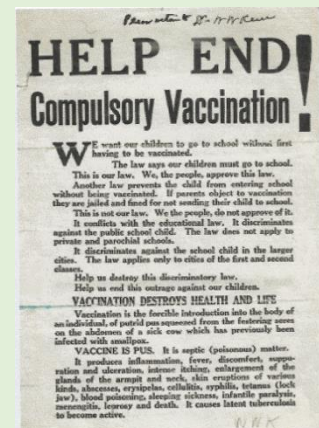
The full title of the report is Shelley, A. (2005). *Dragon Hall, King Street, Norwich: Excavation and Survey of a Late Medieval Merchant's Trading Complex*. Norwich: Norfolk and Norwich Heritage Trust

Anti - vaxxers in the 19th century in Norwich



Smallpox has now been eradicated but in the 19th century the Government was concerned enough to make vaccination for children compulsory. Opposition was well organized and the campaign took many forms including cartoons and posters. In the 1882 cartoon Dr

Guy, the Norwich public vaccinator, is depicted as a skeleton while a mother is held by the law. The battle was waged over a number of years until the end of the century when parents were allowed to register as conscientious objectors.



Shea Fiddes

The Early Days of Dragon Hall (or 'The Old Barge Building' as it was known before re-naming c.1985)



One of the purposes of archiving the many documents produced over the last 50 years is to preserve the memories of the early Volunteers who did so much to create the Dragon Hall we know today. We are very lucky to have with us one of those volunteers, Jim Marriage. There follows some extracts from Jim's memories about those early days: some of them from an interview with Jim for the King Street Community Voices project based at Dragon Hall in 2010 – 12:

Jim at the Medieval Market 2014

"I'd taken students to see Dragon Hall in the 1980s, shortly after they "rediscovered" it. In 1988 people were asked if they wanted to go to Dragon Hall to train as guides. Chris Barringer, Tony Eggleston and Janet Smith were there. We were let loose in the afternoons to do guided tours - people were not able to come in and look around on their own in those days. We were open all year round. At that time the building had holes in the walls; the floor level of the Great Hall was much lower than it is today. There was block board boarding over the floor and it looked a bit of a shambles in some respects. Nevertheless, you could see what it was and you could see the ceiling and the roof, that was the important thing. People felt there was something about discovering something; they were looking at nooks and crannies of history that had only just been uncovered, so it was very nice and personal. It had to change of course - the fabric of the building would have collapsed eventually.



Partition, stairs & dragon carving

"It was nice to have seen it almost from the beginning. In our day some of the building that is now inside was outside - where the glass gallery is was all boarded up - and we used to come out the back entrance. Where the yard is was an old apple tree and a mound of earth. The working girls were around there and they tended to bring their clients round the back of Dragon Hall. Neil and I went out one day and the poor client must have thought, "Oh my god, what have I let myself in for?" because we invited him, did he want a tour of Dragon Hall!



1981 - 83

"Dragon Hall has given me the opportunity to do things otherwise closed to me, such as German poetry evenings for example. There was a great deal of scepticism about how these would be received, but with a great deal of help from June, my friends and the Norfolk and Norwich and Koblenz Twinning Association we had some enjoyable evenings spreading the word of Brecht, Goethe and Heine, sipping German wine and eating German food. Above all we have met many wonderful people, staff and volunteers past and present, and visitors who have shared their experiences with us, including the man who had re-wired the Rectory in

1946 - he even remembered the numbers of the electrical fittings.”

Note: we were very sorry to hear that Jim had a stroke recently while on holiday but understand that he is making a good recovery. We send our very best wishes to him.

News from National Centre for Writing – so much going on!

*An interesting development by the NCW of an ‘outreach’ project using Dragon Hall history and the **King Street Community Voices project** - the first time we, the DHHVs, have worked with NCW:*

“**Rooted**” is a **heritage and creative writing project** funded by the National Lottery and led by the National Centre for Writing in partnership with the Norfolk Record Office. Its purpose is to connect more people with heritage, from the history and stories that live within Dragon Hall to the culture and memories of migrant communities living and working in Norwich's medieval quarter. This will be achieved via the collection of **Bengali oral histories** and a series of creative workshops for Norfolk primary school children, using memories from the Bengali community and objects representing Dragon Hall's many residents as starting points for creative responses to heritage.

The Heritage Volunteers will be supporting the project by training and sharing their collective knowledge and passion for Dragon Hall with the Rooted team of creative writing tutors, as well as offering tours to the wider Bengali community. Rooted was inspired by the King St Community Voices project, 2011, that collected over 80 interviews with King St residents. In June 240 school children will be visiting Dragon Hall as part of their creative heritage experience with Rooted.

Other **National Centre for Writing community activities**

January - June 2022: **‘Bengali Stories’**: Dragon Hall is hosting monthly Bengali cultural events for Bengali children and families, celebrating Bengali culture, storytelling and music.

Saturday Series, starting February 5th : An 8 week creative writing programme centred around Norwich's rich history of Storytelling, for 8-13 year olds. Helping Norwich celebrate its 10th year as a UNESCO City of Literature. **‘MAP’** – a charity supporting young people - is regularly using Dragon Hall for their groupwork and events. On March 26th they will be hosting their **Norfolk Diversity Celebration** event in Dragon Hall. **‘A Life Written’** is a 6 week life writing programme for writers age 70+ starting in March 2022. Participants will have their stories published in an anthology and invited to a celebration event in Dragon Hall.

Hannah Garrard, NCW

On your screen

We are told quite often that some of us are spending too much time looking at screens. But in fact there is a wealth of visual material on line which we wouldn't be able to access otherwise, much of it of high quality. So I make no apology for providing links to some of



these sources to enjoy ‘in the comfort of your own home’ on these dark days! **Norwich Castle** has a number of ‘virtual exhibitions’ to chose from, notably on **Seahenge**, where you can see very good close up shots of the henge, with a very readable commentary on its builders, purpose, dates etc.

Another virtual exhibition is **Norwich at Work**, with excellent photos of the Boot & Shoe industry, the

Textile Industry, Lawrence & Scott iron foundry, Boulton & Paul, the Chocolate industry, Caley’s Crackers, etc, etc.



A third choice is ‘**Where Land & Water Meet**’, showing artworks depicting Norfolk’s rivers. Some of these will be familiar but there are many of high quality which are probably not.

Thomas Lound: *River Scene with wherries*, early C.19th

To see the full selection of topics, click on this link:

<https://www.museums.norfolk.gov.uk/museums-from-home/virtual-exhibitions>

RJM

A short Quiz for you: Do you know your Grogrinett from your Grazianos?

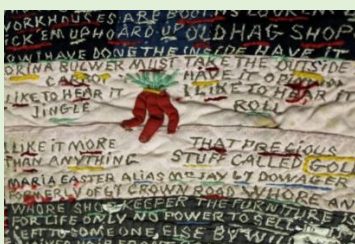
Norwich textile manufacturers proved to be very resourceful in their marketing, constantly producing new (or inventing new names for old?) products.

Which one in each line of the following is NOT the name of a Norwich textile?:

- a) Princillian, Pinckuarina, Paduasoy, Puckerine, Paolis
- b) Durances, Desserines, Denims, Dunjars, Dentelles
- c) Grosgrain, Grogrinett, Grenadine, Glosserattas, Grazianos
- d) Meckerino, Momperilla, Mockado, Motley, Mecklenbergs

Answers at the end of the Newsletter

I Like to hear it jingle, I like to hear it roll



One of the textiles in the ‘Textile Treasures’ exhibition in the Castle Museum till Feb 20th.

Long sampler made by Lorina Bulwer

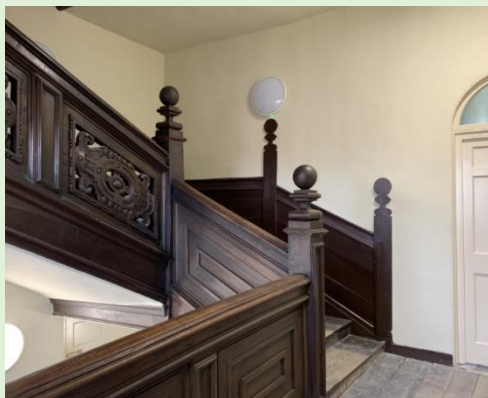
This takes the form of a long embroidered letter, with references to Lorina’s life throughout. At the time of

stitching the sampler in 1900, Lorina Bulwer was resident in the female lunatic ward of Great Yarmouth workhouse. It contains over 1600 stitched words along with items including a small bunch of appliqued carrots with the words: 'I LIKE TO HEAR IT JINGLE I LIKE TO HEAR IT ROLL I LIKE IT MORE THAN ANYTHING THAT PRECIOUS STUFF CALLED GOLD'.

King Street closure

King Street will be closed to all traffic between Music House Lane and St Anne's Lane until mid-April.

A peek inside Howard House after restoration



The Jacobean staircase



Restoration by Orbit Housing; contractors R & J Hogg, after campaigning by Mary Ash of the Norwich Society



Before restoration

Answers to Quiz

- a) Puckerine;
- b) Desserines;
- c) Grazianos;
- d) Meckerino