

Dragon Hall Heritage Volunteers & Local History Study Group NEWSLETTER No. 9: May 2022



A very warm welcome to our new Archive Intern, Sally Piper.

Sally is graduating from UEA this year and will commence a Master's degree in Cultural Heritage and Museum Studies in 2022/23. She will be working for two days per week for 6 months from early May, funded jointly by our DHHV funds and by UEA. She has experience of archiving at Gressenhall and for the Girl Guides. We hope that she will be able to join us for the next Study Group meeting on May 16th and to give us periodic updates on her progress – and on any 'discoveries' in the NRO material.

We are part of an HLF-funded project at Norfolk Record Office (NRO) known as 'CASSS'. This provides support and training for some 30 local community groups to create a digital archive of their material to a professional standard so that it can be linked to the NRO catalogue and to the National Archives. We are the only group to have an Intern so will be 'blazing a trail' in this respect.

Most of our material is in the NRO, comprising some 40 boxes but none of it yet catalogued. Sally's task will be to create a database and to digitise as much of the material as possible and as appropriate. Other material to be catalogued includes the documents, films and photos on our website and several files of press cuttings in our cupboard in the north cellar. Ultimately, it is hoped, researchers in Tokyo, Timbuktu or Tuddenham will be able to access our catalogue on line and view items which are digitised.

Our contact person at NRO and Sally's mentor is Sophie Cabot and our 'steering group' comprises Adrian O'dell, Andrew Mitchell and Richard Matthew. Both Adrian and Andrew are also involved with other community groups who are part of the CASSS project. At present it is not clear exactly what extra help might be required to complete the archive but if anyone is interested in helping – with no commitment at this stage – please get in touch with Richard. It may be that we will require help with mundane tasks such as digitising the press cuttings, probably at NRO: absolutely no special skill required! And if you have any photos, programmes, messages etc, however mundane, please send them to Richard for adding to the archive.

Dragon Hall would not be what it is today without the enormous amount of work – and paper generated – over the last 40 years or so by a host of Volunteers, Friends, professionals, architects, fundraisers, etc. This has been forcefully brought home to us by our preliminary trawl through the boxes in the NRO. Creating a proper archive will be a tribute to, and a record of, their efforts for posterity.

Study Group



It was good to meet again in person in the Great Hall on March 21st. We were all so delighted that Jim Marriage had sufficiently recovered from his recent health problems to join us. They began on a cruise to see the Northern Lights; he told us that his Norwegian hospital outshone the N&N in everything except the food! Reports of the main topics presented at this meeting and the following one on April 11th are shown below.

Dates for your diaries:

- The next Study Group meeting will be on **Monday 16th of May at 10.30.**
- Summer Outing and ‘picnic’ at Waterloo Park: **Monday 27th June**
- Heritage Open Day at Dragon Hall: **Saturday 17th September**

Report from Study Group on March 21st

Mary Bradford presented some extracts about **the sheep accounts of Norwich Cathedral Priory 1484 - 1534 ***:

Norwich Cathedral Priory was easily the wealthiest monastic house in Norfolk, and at this time one of the most enterprising as well as among the richest in England. They owned a vast amount of farming land and rearing sheep played a huge part in the economic activity of the Priory. Sheep production was geared to the wool market rather than consumption, although plenty of sheep were eaten at the end of their wool producing life.

The Cathedral had well established systems of accounting and auditing for most of its economic and financial activities. Originally the aim was to prevent defrauding by employees and officials but increasingly during the medieval period more sophisticated profit and loss accounting was developed to inform management and future policy.

The sheep accounts for this period of 50 years can be grouped into 3 categories:

- Stock accounts of individual flocks: Flock size was large, up to 1000 sheep. Shepherds were paid around 60s per annum plus clothing allowance plus tips and perks, e.g. they could run their own flock.
- A centralised stock account: this was drawn up later from the shepherd’s accounts and it gave a snapshot of the overall picture.
- Centralised revenue accounts: the earliest surviving document dates from 1524, probably a new system to enable the Priory to tighten its financial grip.

The accounts emphasise the importance of sheep rearing to the economy of the Priory, with flocks of 5000 - 8000 sheep. They were presumed to be a hardy Norfolk breed with medium weight fleece, and were actively managed in half a dozen flocks. In the 1470s income from the sheep was probably £12 per annum; in the 1530s, £75 + per annum; by this date they were sold mostly to a single buyer, e.g. in 1505 424 wethers were sold to Robert Brown, a Norwich butcher for £ 26-10. The overall control and accounting was done by the Master Cellarer and more comprehensive systems of accounting were developed to meet challenging circumstances.

[* Taken from a Norfolk Record Society volume: *Sheep, Taxation and Charity in Late Medieval Norfolk*, eds. Bailey, Jurkowski & Radcliffe NRS LXXI, 2007]

“I thank God, and ever shall, it is the shepe hath paid for all”

(from a stained glass window donated by John Barton, wool merchant, in Holme by Newark, Notts.)

Report from Study Group on April 11th - The All Hallows Nuns

I have long wanted to satisfy my curiosity about the presence of the All Hallows building at the top of St Julian’s Alley. Did the nuns have a link with the King Street area for many years? In Sister Pamela’s interview with the King Street Community Voices (on our website) she says the nuns were attached to different Norwich parishes, including the King Street area - but when and for what purpose? I found the history of the order on their website (<https://www.all-hallows.org/copy-of-our-history>) and this gives a picture of their foundation and development

under their foundress, Lavinia Crosse, daughter of John Greene Crosse, one of the first consultants at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital in the early 1800s.

A report on the British Health services in 1937 tells us much about the fragmented care of those in need in terms of health and wellbeing. *'A bewildering variety of agencies work for health mainly by attacking specific diseases and disabilities as they occur and by maintaining the sufferers'*. For almost a century from 1855 the All Hallows nuns worked in the poorest parishes of Norwich, mainly with young women in desperate circumstances, orphans and prostitutes. Their rescue work centred round St Augustine's Lodge for which many annual reports remain at the Archive Centre. This began in Botolph Street but after many moves was finally located in St Leonard's Road in 1947 when it closed. The sisters managed the lodge, caring for the women with care and kindness but following a routine of prayer and regular worship with their chaplain and the oversight of the Bishop of Norwich through the 'The Norwich Diocesan Association for the Rescue and Protection of Girls'.

The aim was to train the girls for work and much of this was done at the House of Mercy at the All Hallows Ditchingham convent. Here a hospital was opened with maternity care and later it became a hospice and centre for recuperation. Account books for Ditchingham show there was a profitable laundry run by the young women but much of the financing of the rescue work at St Augustine's came from subscriptions, donations and fundraising by clergy, and the well-to-do of Norfolk and Norwich. I was excited to come across an annual report for 1889 of Greyfriars Lodge, King Street written by Rev W Hudson whom we know as the vicar of St Peter Parmentergate and author with Tingey of the 'Records of the City of Norwich'.

The Third Annual Report of Greyfriars' Lodge, King Street
A Refuge for the Reception of Fallen Women
**Branch No.1 of the Norwich and Norfolk Ladies' Association for the Care of
Girls**
In Connection with the Church Penitentiary Association
1890

A copy of the cover page of the report. Note the reference to 'fallen women', rather than to their clients.

The Lodge had only been open a short time and I could not find when it closed. It was run by the All Hallows nuns. The report tells the stories of some of the inmates and its close connection with the 'Church Penitentiary Association'. It too has a long list of financial supporters. .

Sister Pamela says that at one time the nuns had a house on Ber Street. In the 1950s Watney Mann brewery built them the centre on Rouen Rd. The news is that this now belongs to the St Julian's Trust and is being refurbished to accommodate a warden who will also build links with the local community. Sister Pamela herself lives on the Isle of Mull and two remaining members of the order live in Bungay, maintaining their spiritual life away from the heavy responsibilities the order once maintained in Norwich and Ditchingham.

Heather Pfeiffer

An amazing aerial view of our area in 1946

John Stevens, author of the memoir *'In the Shadow of the Castle'* (to be seen on our website: Local History/Local History Archive) sent me this link to a wonderful aerial photo of the area, taken in 1946:

<https://historicensland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/EAW002882>

You can see 'Dragon Hall' in the centre and a bit to the right. Below it are the few remains of St Julian's church demolished in the Blitz of 1942 and to the left of that is Morgan's brewery. John's house, which he described so vividly in his memoir, can be seen very clearly bottom left on its own with trees or bushes behind it. The photo emphasises what a crowded and commercial area it was.

Another photo looking north up King St shows Dragon Hall from above. It's towards the bottom of the photo, to the right of the ruins of St Julian's. Synagogue Street can be seen on the right of the picture with the ruins of the Synagogue at the northern end, also bombed in 1942:

<https://historicensland.org.uk/images-books/archive/collections/aerial-photos/record/EAW002879>

RJM

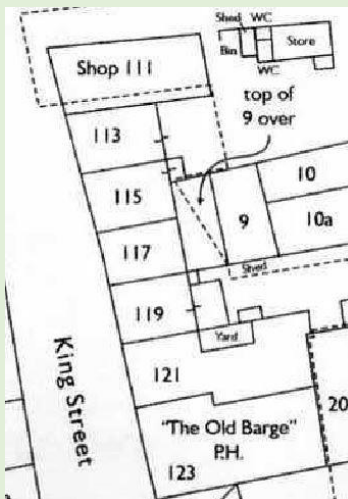
Heritage Open Days Sept 9th – 18th

The NCW (National Centre for Writing) can only offer Sat 17th September for HOD activities when they hope to organise a busy 'drop in' day of activities. We might be able to have a 'stall' and display – possibly the Toppes film also. It is unlikely that tours would fit in with the NCW activities. Plans are at a very early stage but **please put Sept 17th in your diary** if you think you will be able to help on our stall. We will need to staff it, ideally with two Volunteers, throughout the day. It could be a good opportunity to recruit 'new blood'!

Tours

Monthly tours on Mondays have resumed and are advertised on the NCW website – see 'What's On/All Events'. Several group tours have also been booked. Linda Bradfield is organising the Guides rota. Copies of all the information for guides, including the setting up and closing down procedures, are in the 'DHHV's chest', which is now in the Glass Gallery – the chest nearest to the lift.

Census 1921: No. 121 King Street – aka Old Barge Room (half of)



Susan Keeyes, quick off the mark as ever, has accessed the recently released Census records for 121, King Street, where her great grandfather, William Comer, lived from approx. 1914 until his death in 1934. The census shows that he was living there with his wife Eliza and nine other family members: seven children from ages 25 to 6, a son in law and one grandson. It seems remarkable that such a large family was living in what seems to have been such a small space, even though there was an attic space. In the diagram of 1935 (left) the pub is No.123 and only occupies the southern half of today's Old Barge Room, with No.121 occupying only the northern half of the Room, much of it taken up today with the staircase up to the Great Hall. The King Street side of No.121 is shown in the photo(below). Later the pub took in No. 121 as well as No.123 to create the front bar – believed to be used mainly by the ladies. (No.121 is the house inhabited from 1841 to 1911 by Agnes Palmer).

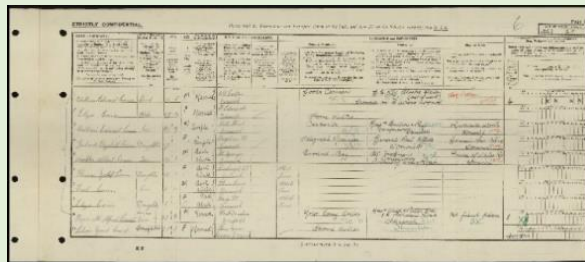
In the census William Comer is shown as working at Thorpe Station as 'Out of Work - labourer on Distress Work'; his son, also William, 21, is a carpenter at Boulton and Paul whose factory was nearby. Gertrude, 17, his daughter, works as a telegraph messenger at the GPO; she is Susan Keeys' maternal grandmother. William's son, Albert, 14, is an errand boy for Mr Fredman in Prince of Wales Road, and his son in law, Reginald Creed, 27, is a lorry driver with a haulage firm in Ipswich.



It is lovely to have such a direct connection from one of our members to the Comer family and we even have a photo of William and his granddaughter, Olive, which Susan has kindly supplied.



William Comer and Olive Perfect, (Susan's mother), daughter of Gertrude Comer – the hats almost match!



1921 Census form for 121, King St.

Quiz Question

What is the link between Rev. W. Hudson, a skateboard park and the Berney Monument?

Answer: they are all connected with St Peter Parmentergate church. Yes, there are plans for an internal skateboard 'park' and shop in the church. It is owned by the Norwich Historic Churches Trust who have agreed to this - the plans for the Jarrold Printing Museum to move here having changed. The new tenants seem to be well aware of the historical importance of the building and are keen to research its history.

(Who will be the first DHHV to whizz up and down the nave?)

Castle Museum on line

- **'Talking Objects'** – a series of short talks about one object:
<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLRjfssxDAKOQPDqEPwh1cQMoHxPRdKGv2>
- **'Norwich Castle Re-born'** – a film about this massive project:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC83k11D74KJu6N5armQ4hHg>
