



LANTERN

NUMBER 27 ——— | ——— AUTUMN 1979 ———

Introduction

Regular readers of LANTERN will no doubt have noticed that in the last few issues there has been a dearth of UFO material. This has been for a number of reasons but as from the next edition of LANTERN we are pleased to tell you that there will be a regular 'UFO Supplement/newsletter' which will contain details of East Anglian UFO reports both past and present.

Apologies are offered to the editors of all mags that exchange with LANTERN for the non-appearance of an 'Exchange Magazine' section in this edition. This is due solely to the shortage of space and the section will be resumed in the next edition of LANTERN. On the subject of exchange mags it was with regret, not to mention surprise, that we learned of the winding-up of 'PICWINNARD', which was in many ways a sister publication of ours in that it was the only other regional magazine in the country besides LANTERN. Under the guiding hand of Vince Russett it was a first class magazine and attained many features both in content and presentation that LANTERN is still striving to achieve. At the time of writing the reason for 'PICWINNARDS' demise is not known.

As I was compiling the material for this issue I suddenly realised that, by pure coincidence (you'll have to take my word for that!), it was taking on a 'Norwich flavour', with both of the main articles featuring that city. Now it has come to my knowledge that an interesting exhibition is being held in that city from October 15th to the 26th. The exhibition, which will be in the Long Gallery of the Theatre Royal, features the water colour paintings, prints and drawings of Oliver Caldecott many of which have been used to illustrate the book 'EAST ANGLIA: Walking the ley lines and ancient tracks', by Shirley Toulson. The exhibition also marks the launching of Ms Toulson's book, which, I understand, is the first in a planned series. Not having seen the book I can't say much about except to quote from publicity literature "...Shirley Toulson describes the 'ley line' walks which can be made in East Anglia - from the northern coast of Norfolk through Suffolk and Cambridgeshire into Hertfordshire: the Peddars Way, the Icknield Way, the Puddingstone Track, the Salters Way, the mysterious grundles, and the enigmatic and controversial terrestrial zodiacs.

And her descriptions are not evocative merely, they take us through time as well as space....And in his drawings, Oliver Caldecott, has not attempted to illustrate her text but rather to evoke the East Anglian landscape..."

Which all sounds very intriguing, so if you're in Norwich between the 15th and the 26th pop into the Theatre Royal and take a look. The book too will be on sale there (I don't know the price), but it's published by Wildwood House Ltd. Well, that's it for this time, might see you in Norwich.....

Ivan Bunn.

Lantern is published by the Borderline Science Investigation Group; a non-profit making organisation devoted to the investigation of unexplained phenomena in East Anglia. Annual subscription (4 issues) is £100 inc. P & P (overseas rates on application). Edited by Ivan Bunn, & Michael Burgess, 3 Dunwich Way, Lowestoft, NR32 4RZ ———
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TALES OF OLD WITCHCRAFT IN SUFFOLK

In his book 'In The Footsteps of Borrow & Fitzgerald' Morley Adams tells the tale of a girl who lived at Loddon (Norfolk), who had been bound over to the Devil. The girl showed no inclination to witchcraft other than dreaming-up a charm to teach children to read, which she ceased at the bidding of the local rector.

Of her mother, the locals told that she had two or three imps, bat-winged, rat-like and sometimes resembling human-kind. One of their functions was to bite the breasts of women who wanted to become witches. When the old lady died, she gave the boxed-up imps to her daughter telling her to let them bite her breasts. But when the daughter refused, and her mother died, the unbidden curiosity of others present caused the girl to throw the imps on the fire where, presumably, they died. However, the story ends when a "strange man" came along and carried the girl off. The locals said it was Satan, of course!

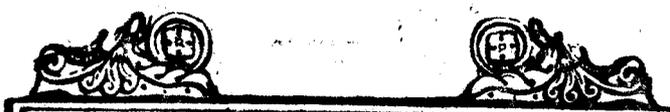
Another tale is told of an Ipswichian who was steeped in witchcraft, who turned his lore to the service of justice. Old Winter was his name and he lived sometime at the end of the 18th century. The story goes that a farmer, anxious to put a halt to the purloining of wood from his yard, consulted Old Winter for assistance. The two kept watch one night and saw a labourer who dwelt nearby, slink in and make off with a heavy piece of timber across a field to a stile which led to his home. Old Winter must have bewitched the stile because the thief was unable to cross it, and instead meandered around in circles to the point of exhaustion. At last Old Winter broke the spell by speaking to the unfortunate fellow and taking away the stolen wood. Presumably after that the farmer was no longer troubled by thieving in the night.

R. A. Haxell

GLEANINGS FROM THE LOWESTOFT JOURNAL

LEISTON: REMARKABLE DISCOVERY OF HUMAN BONES: Alterations are being affected at the rear of the premises tenanted by Mr. Stephen Mace, grocer and draper, of High Street., and on Thursday last, while excavating for the formation of a subterranean communication between two warehouse, at about 4 feet beneath the surface, in a stratum of sandy deposit the workmen came upon a heap of loose field stones of uniform size, evidently carefully collected for the purpose, and laid with much regularity one upon the other. These on being carefully removed exposed to view, placed in an inverted position, a terra cotta vase of very primitive manufacture and design resembling the appearance of a founders crucible, but of larger diameter, and, at the mouth of a greater inclination inwards. Upon examination this relic of bygone days proved to contain ossified fragments pronounced by Dr.E.D.Wallis, to be the remains of an adult human frame. Several vertebrae, a knee cap and the upper portion of a thigh bone are clearly distinguishable.... October 11th, 1873.

ATTACKED - IN THEIR OWN BACKYARD: When darkness falls, fear and misery enter the home of Mr. & Mrs. George Chapman at 7 Alma Street, Lowestoft. For a large owl is preying on their minds. It sits on their back gate and if anybody goes outside it pounces. "It's a vizious bird," said Mr. Chapman, who has already been attacked three times. When he went to put his bicycle away in the shed on Sunday the bird landed on his neck and dug its claws in. "It's really unerving!" said Mrs. Mable Chapman. "As soon as it gets dark I dare not move out of the back door....Mrs. Chapman is afraid of letting her white poodle, Tiffen, outside. Her husband takes it out into the yard for her - and he goes armed with a broom. Mr. Chapman explained that the bird is living in an old fish curing shed at the bottom of his neighbour's garden. Every evening about 5 o'clock it comes and sits on the garden gate, and sometimes it moves on to their bedroom window sill. He was advised by RSPCA chief inspector Ken Smith to throw newspaper at the bird and frighten it away, but has had no success. Mr. Smith said that if the owl continues to plague the Chapman, he will capture it, take it into the country and let it loose there. Then perhaps the Chapmans will be able to go out of their back door with an easy mind. -Jan. 19, 1979.



Early East Anglian ANTIQUARIANS

PART THREE

PERCY NASH & the Geomancy of Norwich.....

by

Michael W. Burgess



In the last issue of LANTERN I expressed the hope that we would be able this time to reproduce the whole contents of a paper on Norfolk geomancy by Percy Nash, which was first published as a single pamphlet in 1920 by the Norfolk News Company. Unfortunately, various printing difficulties have ruled this out, so I will instead attempt to outline some of Nash's theories on the subject, particularly with reference to Norwich. We have managed to reproduce in a redrawn form the plan that accompanied his paper, which will help

to give some
discovered' and

idea of the ancient measurements that Nash 're-
applied to the landscape of Norfolk.

Percy A. Nash has himself proved rather elusive, in that I can discover little if any- thing about his life or character. The reason for this is probably that he was what Walter Rye (see Part 2, last issue) called a "Foreigner" to Norfolk. He was a professional architect and surveyor (member of the Norfolk & Norwich Association of Architects); at one time assistant to the Norwich City Engineer, and a member of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society, for whom he supervised the excavations in 1910/11 of the Sackfriar's and Blackfriar's Conventual buildings in the City. He first puts in an appearance in the early 1900's, with a number of letters to the 'Eastern Daily Press' on the Supposed Roman origins of Norwich, letters which were to be the basis of his later pamphlet. After 1930, I can find no trace of him anywhere in Norfolk.

Although a contemporary of Alfred Watkins, and a witness to the great debate that followed the publication of 'Early British Trackways' and 'The Old Straight Track', he appears to have ignored almost totally Watkins' theories on the evolution of Ley line, choosing instead to rely on the Romans as the originators of all landscape alignments. His claims can readily be summed-up as follows :-

- a) That Norwich was the capital of a vast triangular segment of land laid-out by the Romans in the first century AD, known as 'Venta Icenorum'.
- b) That the walled enclosure of Caistor St. Edmund a few miles to the south was placed in the centre of this triangle to guard the twin river-peninsulars of Norwich and Shotesham.
- c) That 'Venta Icenorum', covering an area of some 125 square miles, was surveyed in accordance with very ancient units of measurement, the roots of which he found to be embodied in the dimensions of the Great Pyramid.
- d) That Norwich and its City walls was laid out as an exact copy of ancient Rome.

In the light of the archaeology of his day, his first two claims are fairly outrageous, though not overly so. The latter claims engendered some considerable controversy in the area, but in general he emerged with his reputation intact. This would seem largely due to the endorsement of his ideas by W.G. Clarke and Walter Rye, both of whom were eminent archaeologists and historians, and highly respected in East Anglia. Clarke indeed was most impressed, and put his opinion on record for the public in the 'EDP' of August 30, 1919. Rye however, whilst finding no fault with Nash's measurements and calculations, in his 'Norfolk Essays' volumes 4 & 6 casts doubt on the identity of the original surveyors. It was Rye's contention that an Italian surveyor in the employ of one Simon de Hethersett actually planned out the city walls in the early 1300's, using the Roman methods suggested by Percy Nash. In their time however, the question was never satisfactorily resolved, and Nash continued his belief in the Romans.

He maintained that Caistor was a military post set to guard 'Venta', with Tasburgh camp on its southern flank and Burgh Castle protecting the eastuary.

In only the latter case was he even partly correct. Tasburgh, it seems, was in truth an Iron Age hillfort, and any Roman connections were purely superficial; whilst Caistor, in total opposition to Nash, has proved to be 'Venta Icenorum' itself: a walled town built by the Romans to house the native Iceni tribes after their decimation following Boudicca's uprising in AD 61. The old distich; "Caistor was a City when Norwich was none; And Norwich was built of Caistor stone", which Nash totally rejected, has proved to have some validity. He gave vent to his feelings on the subject in the 'EDB' of July 16, 1928, in an article on Caistor which also featured the first photograph of the camp interior, its streets and buildings outlined in the corn by sepulchral, almost glowing, straight lines. This phenomenon of the "white lines in growing corn" had been known for over 60 years, but it took an excentric geomancer like Nash to interpret them correctly. It was at the urging of he and Basil Cozens-Hardy that the first aerial photograph was taken, revealing for the first time the true nature of Caistor Camp.

Eight years previously, in 1920, the Norfolk News Company decided to undertake the publication of his Norfolk master-work, entitled 'The Roman Survey of Norwich; the Capital of 'Venta Icenorum, with a Plan Showing the Geometric Details of the Survey.' Although a slim paper of only seven pages, it certainly "stirred-up a hornets nest" of orthodox opinion for some time. The plan (which we have reproduced opposite) shows only the Norwich portion of the Norfolk Survey, but it is, I think, sufficient to demonstrate the breadth of Nash's imagination. He says that the "distances quoted are geometrically exact" and I can only hope that our reproduction is accurate enough for others to trace on a large-scale OS map. As shown by the scales, Nash used in his research the four "ancient long measures" which he said he discovered in the geometry of the Great Pyramid, viz: "the geographical (nautical) or degree mile, the British statute mile, the Roman mile of Strabo...and the 'cross-interval', so named by me because I found it dividing my re-established cross sises in the circuit round the outermost circle of Norwich". It is obvious that he knew his Piazzi Smyth well enough, and equally obvious that both were sadly deluded. As he says "the centre of the Castle is the central starting point or 'Miliarium aureum' of the Roman mile distances." He was convinced that Norwich Castle had an ultimately Roman foundation, and that the remains of a Roman Norwich could be found about 12-13 feet beneath the present city. Again, he was wrong.

His contention that Norwich was an exact copy of ancient Rome I find the most bizarre, and so did a lot of others. He based his theory on the angular and measured similarities between various features of the Norwich landscape, and that around Rome. For instance: "Norwich is 18 miles from the sea; so is Rome; and is situated in two loops of an S-shaped winding of its river exactly like Rome." He compared the Castle to Rome's Pantheon; Coslany Bridge over its former islands to the 'Cestius Bridge'; Chapel Field (gardens) to the Capitoline Hill, and Caistor Camp to the 'Castra Praetoria' outside Rome; all these plus many metrical relationships that he saw as revealing a Roman Surveyor's hand in its layout.

For a professional architect and surveyor himself, Percy Nash displayed a curious lack of professionalism, and indeed accuracy, in many of his statements. In his Caistor Camp article of 1928, he alleges that the "centre line of the district of Venta Icenorum" is an alignment on which can be found the following six churches: Burgh Castle, Limpenhoe, Claxton, Hellington, Framingham Earl and Dunston. Walter Rye in his 'Norfolk Essays' (Mr. Nash's Roman Survey of Norfolk', pt. 6, 1928, pp. 455/7) compounds this by stating that East Carlton and Wymondham churches are also on the line, both of which claims are wildly inaccurate, as anyone can see by tracing it on the OS map. Although he thought it a "curious point", Nash firmly believed that these and other ancient churches, standing as they do on his survey lines, indicated "the sites on which the 'agrimensor', or surveyor, erected his ranging poles." After this the sites were of block-houses, built to carry signalling beacons for defensive purposes, and because of the taboo on destroying landmarks, they eventually became sanctified sites on which were built our churches.

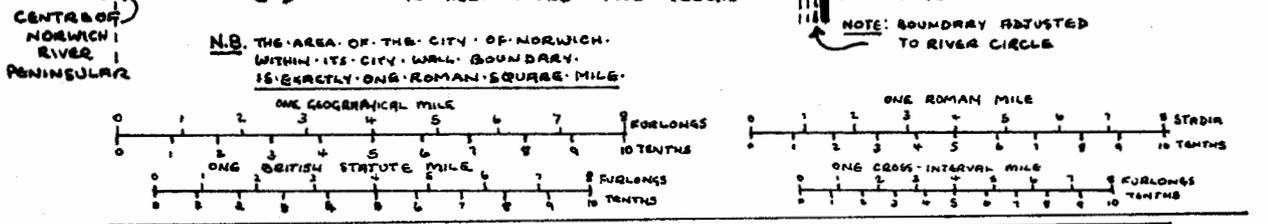
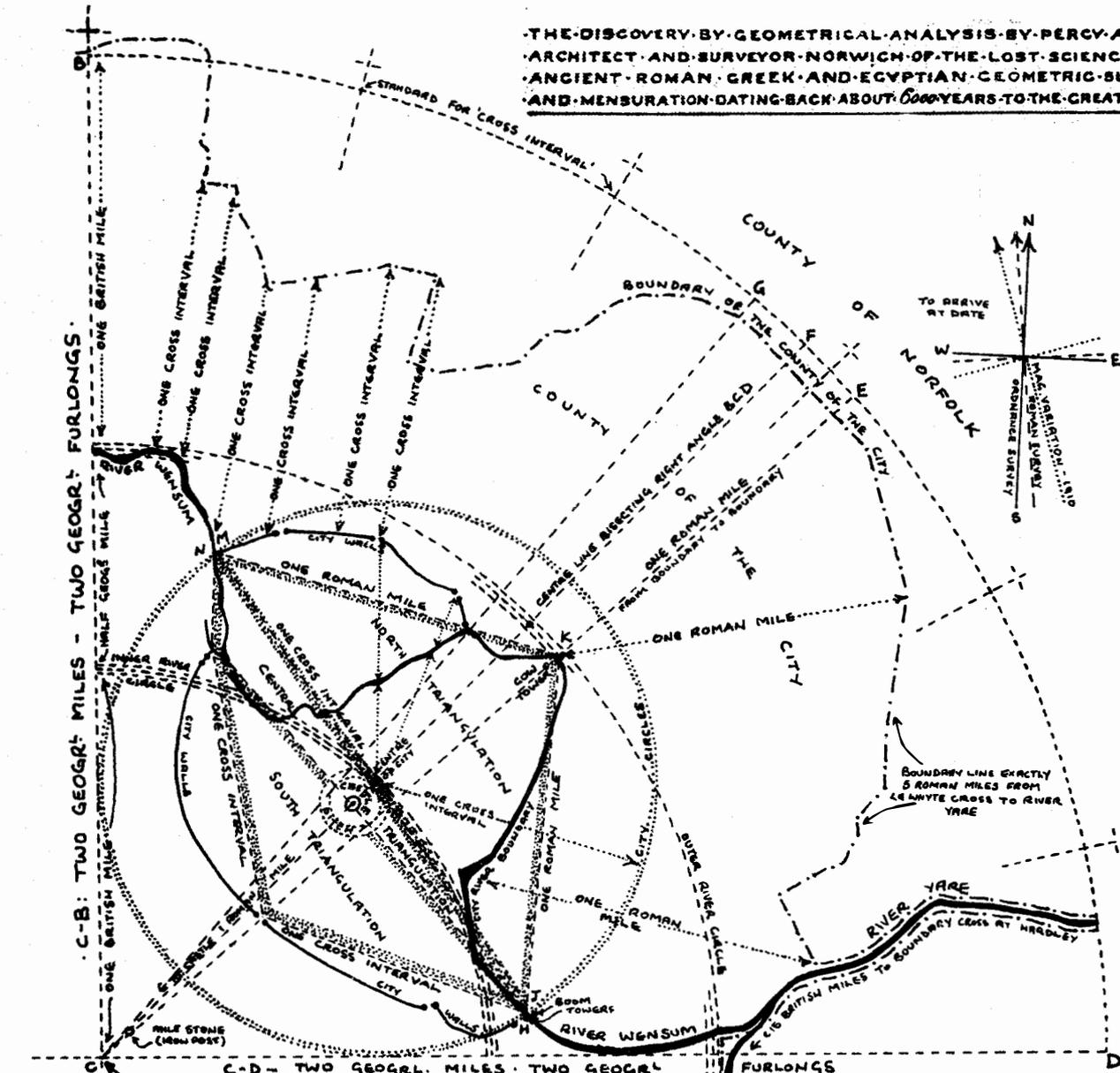
"After a quarter of a century's study of the matter I have satisfied my-

ROMAN NORWICH "Venta Icenorum"

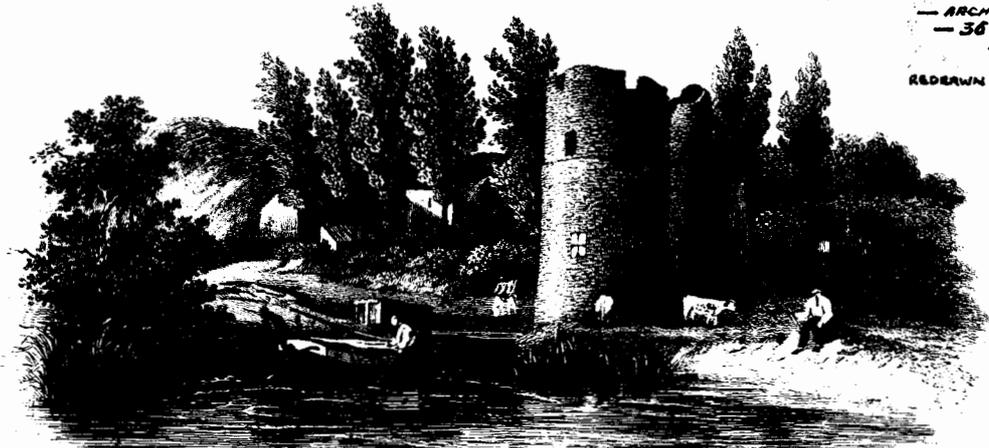
As designed by a Roman Surveyor, c. 1st Century A.D.

"LE WHITE CROSS"
WILSHAM ROAD

THE DISCOVERY BY GEOMETRICAL ANALYSIS BY PERCY A. NASH ARCHITECT AND SURVEYOR NORWICH OF THE LOST SCIENCES OF ANCIENT ROMAN GREEK AND EGYPTIAN GEOMETRIC SURVEYING AND MENSURATION DATING BACK ABOUT 6000 YEARS TO THE GREAT PYRAMID



— PERCY A. NASH —
— ARCHITECT & SURVEYOR —
— 36 EXCHANGE ST —
— NORWICH —
REDRAWN BY L.A.W. GINN. 91



"HASSETT'S TOWER, NORWICH: c. 1830 ~ FROM POCKTHORPE

"...all that Lathe Yarde in Pockthorpe...with all the pasturyng and fedying of the same yard, and all the houses and edifyngs beyng edified and buylded at the day and date of the said deed...within and upon the seyd Lathe yard..."

'Monks Grange' and 'Lathes Yard' stayed in the Blennerhassett family from William's first lease of 1551 until the death of his great-great-grandson, Edward, in 1702. It is hardly surprising that during this long period of occupation 'Monks Grange' became more commonly known as 'Hassett's House' or Hall.

During my search for material for this article, I came across the following reference to the 'Blunderhazard' legend in the Supplementary volume of 'The House of Gournay' by Daniel Gurney, published in 1858 - This is the earliest reference I have been able to find to the legend. Gurney writes, concerning Hassett's House:

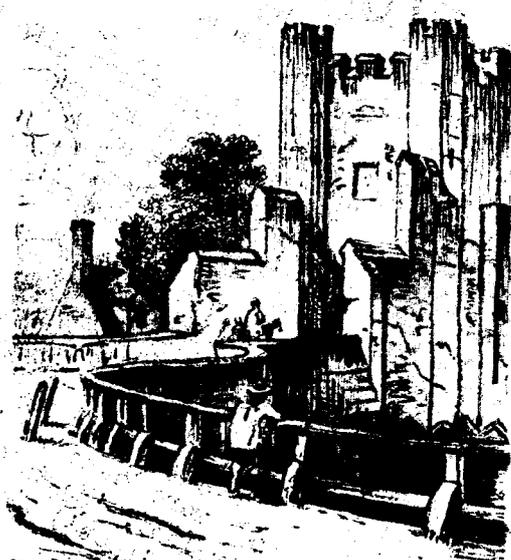
"...it was described to me by an old man and woman named Nelson, who are Pockthorpe (natives of Pockthorpe) as a brick building with a courtyard before it and a flight of stone steps up to the door. It was surrounded by a large walled garden... (a) strange tale ran that old 'Hassett' often 'rode' in his coach and four over Bishop Gate, and when the whip was cracked, flashes of fire came out which illuminated the whole city..."

In a footnote on the same page, the author adds:

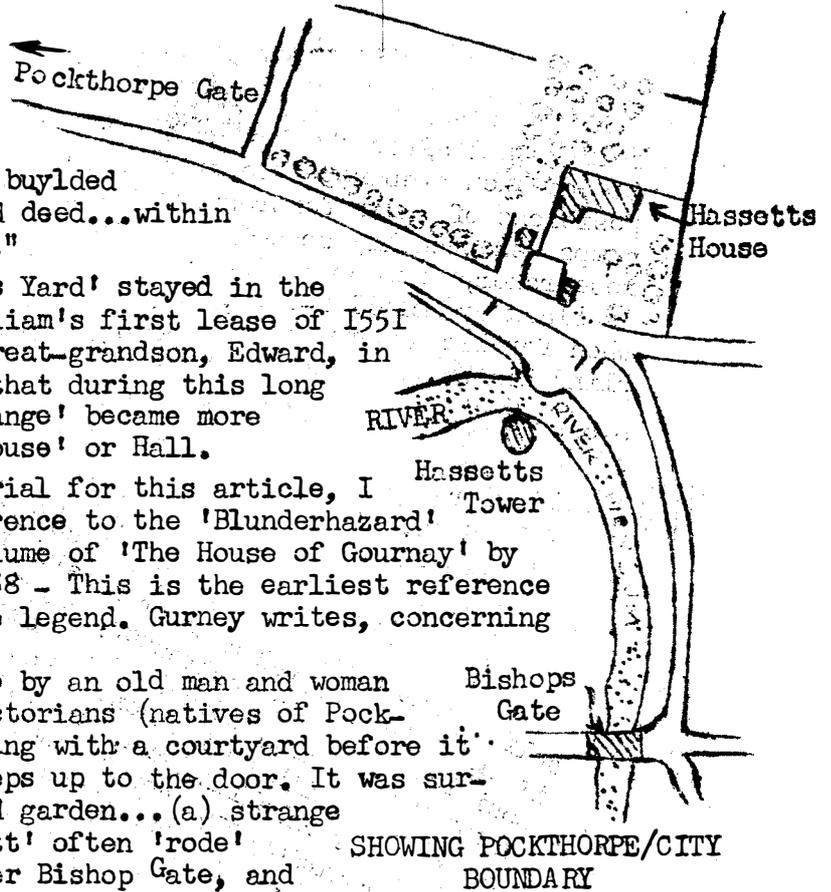
"A like tradition exists at Barsham, in Suffolk, where it is believed 'Old Blunderhazard' drives out every Christmas Eve just before midnight in a coach and six, to visit Hassett's tower at Norwich, and to return to Barsham before he may snuff the morning air. The Barsham story makes the horses without heads and yet fire flashing out of their nostrils."

This then links the two legends together, and in the same book I discovered the whereabouts of 'Hassett's Tower' in Norwich. Gurney writes:

"...close at hand to Hassett's Hall, but on the other side of the river, stands Hassett's Tower now remaining. It is in St. Helens Parish, and is more commonly called 'Cow Tower'..."



BISHOPS GATE + BRIDGE BEFORE THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GATE + TOWERS....



Here, then, is the final piece of the Blunderhazard jigsaw. However, unlike the tower at Barsham, this tower has no connections (except legendary) with the Blennerhassett family. As Gurney says, it stands opposite the site of Hassett's House on the City side of the Wensum. It is more commonly known as 'Cow Tower' (the origins of this name probably date from the 11th century when the whole marshy (as it was then) area adjoining the river here was used as cattle pasture and was called 'Cowsholm'). Cow Tower stands on the most north easterly tip of 'Cowsholm'. The tower here, unlike that at Barsham, predates the Blennerhassetts by many centuries; it was originally built to command the river at this point and for the collection of tolls belonging to the Prior. It was also used as a prison. It fell into dis-use when a new toll-house was built and was as-

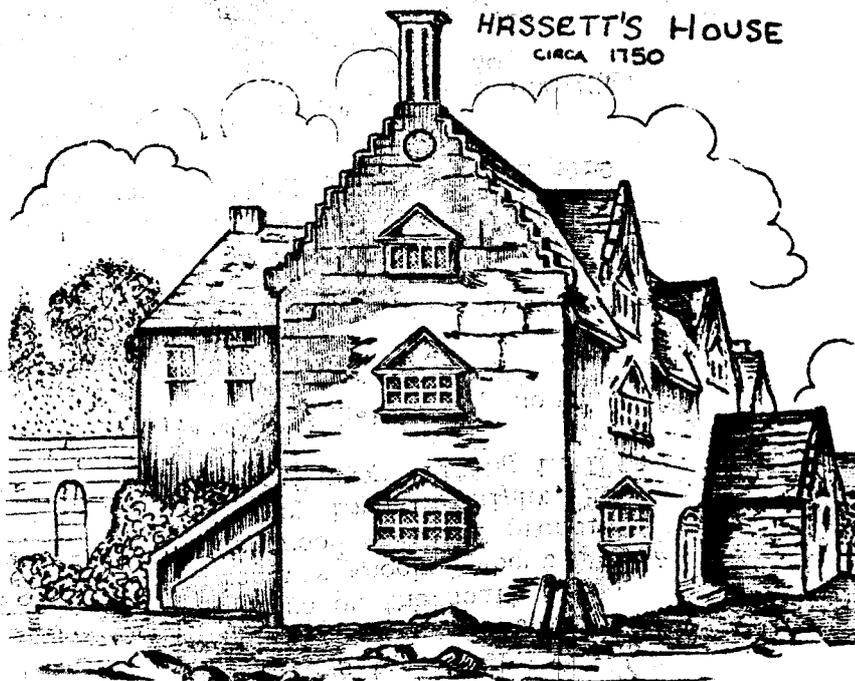
signed to the nearby hospital. The tower became more and more ruinous until, in 1378, the Master of the Hospital conveyed it to the City (by the name of the 'Great Tower' called 'The Dungeon') forever. It was rebuilt at great expense by the City and was finished in 1390. To what purpose the City put the tower is uncertain, but considering its very strategic position at the very bend of the river, it was almost certainly used as part of the City's defences. In 1565, at the time William Blennerhassett was residing just across the river, it was leased to Lord Maltravers, but for what purpose is not recorded. The tower stands 52 feet high and 24 feet wide with a large staircase on the south side (see illustration facing p.4) Apart from the top which was knocked about during Kett's rebellion in 1549, the tower today is in a very good state of preservation - it is built of red brick and still presents a very imposing sight. How it came to be called 'Hassetts Tower' is not known; even Gurney writing in 1858 can only suppose:

"...it was probably named Hassetts Tower from being inhabited by some of the Blennerhassetts at some period; or perhaps the command of it entrusted to them..."

But, as already noted, there is no evidence (apart from the legend) to link the tower with the Blennerhassett family.

It is interesting to speculate whether the legend of 'Old Hasset' riding over Bishops Gate is part of the story of 'Old Blunderhazard' riding from Barsham and back. In my opinion it is not. It seems that both legends are separate although perhaps with a common origin (Barsham?).

The reason that I do not think the Bishops Gate story is a continuation of the Barsham story, the 'other end' so to speak, is simply because in the 16th century when, and if, Thomas Blennerhassett rode from Barsham to Cow/Hassetts Tower, his journey would not have taken him over Bishops Gate. His route would almost certainly have been from Barsham to Bungay; and from thence to Norwich by way of what is now the B1332; entering the City in the south by either Ber Street Gate or Cornisford Gate. Once in the City he would have journeyed northwards, passed



the castle; through Tombland to the Cathedral and then eastwards to the tower. Although his journey would have taken fairly close to Bishops Gate, he would have had no need to cross it - unless of course he wanted to visit Hassetts House across the river in Pockthorpe. To get there from the tower would almost certainly have involved crossing by Bishops Gate, this being the most direct route. Gurney's (the oldest) version of the 'Old Hasset' legend, implies that the phantom coach enters the City via Bishops Gate - for Thomas Blennerhassett to do this en route for Hassetts Tower from Barsham a detour of some 20 miles or so would be involved.

If the Barsham and Pockthorpe legends are garbled accounts of the same story, then we can narrow the origins down to one short period in time; i.e., the period when Blennerhassetts were living concurrently at both places. This would place it between c1550 and 1598, which dates tie in exactly with Thomas Blennerhassett of Barsham and his 'Coche and Coche Horses', and also with the period in which William Lived at Hassetts House. He died there in 1598 (the

same year that Thomas sold his house and all his lands at Barsham) and, as already stated, he was the cousin of Thomas's father, John (who died at Barsham in 1573). William made his will on December 5, 1598, with a codicil dated December 7 - and from these comprehensive documents there can be little doubt that he was a wealthy, god-fearing man of some standing. There is nothing in his will to suggest a close link with his cousin's family late of Barsham for none of them are mentioned as beneficiaries. The will was proved at Norwich on December 22nd, 1598.

A whole book could be written about the life and times of William Blennerhassett of Pockthorpe, but as there is nothing relevant to link him directly with 'Old Blunderhazard' of Barsham, no point would be served by recounting it all here.

To summarise then, it seems as if 'Old Blunderhazard' of Barsham was in fact Thomas Blennerhassett (c1540-1599) of Barsham who specifically mentioned a coach and horse in his will. There also exists, in fact, a tower at Norwich known, amongst other names, as 'Hassett's Tower' as in the legend. However, there also existed at Barsham another tower known as 'Blennerhassett's Tower' which belonged to that family and formed part of the out-buildings of their home at Barsham Hall. In view of the fact that this tower has close and definite links with the family, whereas the tower at Norwich has none that can be found, I am still strongly tempted to conjecture that early versions of the Blunderhazard legend, could they be resurrected, would tell that the phantom coach went from Barsham to Norwich and the BACK to Hassett's Tower. As the Barsham tower, which stood in a very obscure position at the best of times, slowly fell into ruin, the current version of the legend came into being simply because there was a very prominent tower close where another, related, family of Blennerhassetts lived at Norwich. It seems that 'Hassetts Tower' at Norwich got its name from the legend rather than the other way round. I have found no reference earlier than Gurney's in 1858 of this tower being so named - 'The Dungeon', 'Hospital Tower' and, most common of all, 'Cow Tower'; but never 'Hassetts Tower'. Perhaps even the legend of 'Old Hassett' riding over Bishops gate is a much later story and a garbled version of the Barsham legend?

Before winding-up this account of 'Old Blunderhazard' it is worth noting a couple of ghost-stories associated with 'Hassetts House' at Pockthorpe, as recounted by Daniel Gurney in 1858. One of his 'old Pectorians' told him that his brother was -

"...when young, in Hassett's Hall, and saw an apparition of a dead body roll across the room..."

The wife of his informant also recalled that -

"...there was a closet in the old mansion which had never been opened, and no one knew what was there, and the doors of two rooms had been plastered-up - in attempting to open which, two people had been Struck blind..."

Alas, we shall never know the secret of the sealed rooms and closet, for in 1792 Hassetts House was demolished and on the site was built the 'new' cavalry barracks, the boundaries of which coincided exactly with the lands of the house. The barracks hospital was built on the site of the house itself, and this too inherited the reputation of being haunted, with the soldiers therein being disturbed by "strange apparitions" (of what, we are not told). Time marches on however, and today the cavalry barracks are just a memory - where once stood William Blennerhassett's orchard and gardens is now a new housing estate, whilst the site of his house and Lathes Yard has now been landscaped and planted with trees - no longer do the windswept commons of Mousehold Heath sweep down to the very back door of the house as they did 400 years ago for the land-hungry tentacles of Norwich have swallowed all, and today Pockthorpe is just a part of Norwich, indistinguishable from the whole. There is though, amongst all the roar of modern Norwich, just one small link with Hassetts House still remaining. In a parliamentary survey of 1649 we are told that the house and yards were enclosed by a stone wall. When the barracks were built part of this wall was incorporated into the Barrack Wall, and today it has been integrated into the modern landscaping of the site. It stands on the north side of the

between Barrack Street (once Pockthorpe Street) and Gurney Road. A small Cul-de-sac not far from here is called 'Hassetts Close'...Of the ghosts?...Nothing has been seen for many a long day.....

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.. .. - 1920: Nos: 5689.

Documents in Norfolk & Norwich Record Office

- Map of Pockthorpe dated May, 1718. Ref: MS4459/CABII
- November 1789. Ref: MSII899.
- Undated copy of a map of 1589 of Pockthorpe. Ref: Ms4546

Documents in Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich.

- Notes, letters & sketches concerning Barsham Hall, compiled 1915/1919. Ref: HD 78:2671.

ALSO: Numerous editions of the 'Eastern Daily Press' and the 'Eastern Evening News'.

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Reading about Blennerhassetts Tower I wondered whether the tower is on a Ley line? I understand now that these towers acted as 'receivers', eg witches and wizards wore conical hats and received telepathic messages - or tuned in to the Cosmic concious. The shape (as pyramids and the shape of gnome's pointed heads) is important. The shape receives and preserves transmitted messages and teachings of wisdom from the other world beings/space-people/gods. Whether we beleive this or not, it is why people built towers, spires to churches, pyramids, wore dunces hats etc. etc. Do you think the Blennerhassetts were 'wise' people and acted as advisors/spiritual guides to the rural folk - from spiritual wisdom given to them via their tower. Of course the tower would have to look like a store or a pigeon cote etc., because otherwise the Blennerhassetts would be deemed witches by the Establishment. Perhaps they turned their wisdom to their own ends and used it against the people rather than for them? I expect if the tower is on a ley-line, that's what it would have been used for - whether for good or bad, or a mixture, I wouldn't know or guess; but of course it would have been a gret secret, the purpose of the tower, in that case no wonder no-body knows today.

Crystal Hogben

NOTE: Regarding ley lines through Hassetts Tower at Barsham, Mike Burgess says that quite a good ley runs for 4.1 miles from Barsham to Hales, running from

SPELLTHORN 5

Please note that all copies of ESNA Occasional Papers Nos.1 (Standing Stones) and 2 (Wells and Crosses) are now SOLD OUT. Thanks to everyone who bought a copy of either, but no more orders please! A few copies of the Bury Zodiac paper are still remaining, price £1 (inc. p & p) from the address below.

No. 37...CROSS***** (See No.2) Way back in 'SpellThorn' 1, I included an old newspaper clipping sent by Mr. W. J. Chambers about an 'ancient stone monument' known as 'Hickathrift's Candlestick', supposedly in a village in Norfolk called Marshland Smeeth, and asked for more information. The following has since come to light, by Basil Cozens-Hardy, in 'Norf. Archaeology', Vol. 25, p. 324-5: "Smeeth, The, in Marshland-In March 1929, labourers were filling up a pond in a field just north of Smeeth Road Station and known as 'Hicifric's Hand Basin'. It is really a Scandinavian doom ring, the meeting place for centuries of the inhabitants of the Seven Towns of Marshland, which had common rights over the 1200 acres of fine pasture land known as the Smeeth. For this filling, soil was carted from a 'hill' adjoining, and a large pedestal 2'9" square and 1'9" high with stop-angles was unearthed. Two feet of the shaft, now pointed, survive. The cross has been moved into the hedge next the main road. It was at this cross, situated as shown in Sir William Dugdale's map in the middle of the Smeeth, that the commoners met at midsummer."

No. 38...FORTEANA***** The 'East Anglian Magazine', Vol. 17, p. 167 & 298, mentions two showers of frogs, known locally as 'Freshers'. The first, about 1890, occurred at a farm in Wetheringsett (Suffolk), where the creatures were described as "yellow or dull green in colour and almost 1½" long." The second fall was in about 1911, being "a shower of tiny frogs" which fell on a farm at Stockton (Norfolk), then vanished.

No. 39...QUERY***** Your 'Lantern' editor would like to know if anyone has any information on the ritual 'Burning of the Golden Wherry' which, until a few years ago, provided the culmination of the annual Oulton Broad Regatta. Just how far back does this tradition go, and what, if anything, does it signify? Is it anything to do with the legend of the phantom wherry 'Mayfly'?

No. 40...ROADSIDE BURIAL***** (See 'Lantern' 24) Alan Murdie of Bury St. Edmunds has sent the following tale, which he found in 'Notes on Rattlesden', by Rev. J. R. Olorenshaw (1900): "1815 (Circa) About this time it is said that a boy named Otterwell (?), aged from 14 to 15, hung himself, having been caught stealing beans. His body was dragged upon a slide to the place where the sign post is at the Water run and there buried." Alan adds that "there is, apparently, no record of this boy's death and burial in the parish registers."

No. 41...REPLY***** (See No. 22) Alan Murdie also tells us that the name "Monster of the Green" as applied to Walberswick, is used by A. A. MacGregor in his 'Ghost Book' (1955), referring to our old friend, Black Shuck. Anyone got any shuck stories from Walberswick?

No. 42...OLD LORE***** Until its removal sometime around 1800, the spire of St. Nicholas' church, Gt. Yarmouth, seemed to suffer from some kind of 'spinal curvature'. The saying was, that when an old maid dies, the steeple nods. Another wryly told that the spire had become crooked through a virgin having once been married there. "Whichever way you turned your eye, it always seemed to be awry."

The Suffolk author Allan Jobson, in various of his reminiscences, recalls a hollow in the bed of the Minsmere Stream, a little downstream from Rack-

ford Bridge, Middleton, called 'Mother Lumkin's Hole'. Into this, it is said, a horse and cart once disappeared and was never seen again. Also, Jobson, when he was very small, remembers being "warned off going too close, lest I should be crommed in, that is hooked by some malevolent creature that lived under the water."

No. 43...FORTEANA***** 'Magna Brittania', by the Rev. Thomas Cox (1720), tells on page 265 of Mundesley in Norfolk, "...where not many Years ago at a Cliff were taken up some large Bones, (thought to be of a Monster) which were putrify'd."

And on pages 361-2: "On the 12th of August 1581 there arose a terrible Tempest of Thunder and Lightning, with Hail-Stones in Shape like the Rowels of Spurs, which beat the Corn flat to the Ground, tore up many Trees by the Roots, and shattered them to Pieces. At Hemming (Horning?) a Mile from Worstead (Norfolk) the West Door of the Church, though it weighed above 300 Pounds Weight, was lifted off from the Hinges, and blown over the Font into the Body of the Church, within a Yard of the Chancel. The Roof of the Church was lifted up, and the Lead blown away, five Sheets of it, wrapt up together like a Glove, was found in a Field beyond the Churchyard."

No. 44...GHOST***** (See No. 35) Alan Murdie of Bury has been busy for us again, this time with reference to Barton Mere. Although unable to confirm the tale that its waters once rose and fell with the price of corn, he heard from a local woman the old tradition that "a ghostly woman rode across the mere on a phantom horse on certain days of the year. She had heard this story as a child from her father."

No. 45...STONE***** The huge lump of rock known as the Chediston Stone has been mentioned several times in previous 'Lanterns', but I've since come across some more info, to be found in 'Suffolk Fair', Vol. 1, No. 11, on pages 32-3. As the Stone was once allegedly 30 feet high, some old folk reckoned that smugglers on the coast used to use it as a guide, whilst one old lady recalled that, when a child, she was often told that, if she stood quite still and watched the Stone, she would see it slowly turning round on its base.

No. 46...TUNNEL***** (See No. 17) A different version now of the tunnel said to run from Gresham Cross to Beeston Priory in Norfolk, plus more of the efforts to find the elusive 'Golden Calf'. J. Cox writes in the 'E. Anglian, or Notes & Queries' for 1885-6 (Vol. 1, p. 60): "(The cross)...is spoken of as marking the place where religious meetings were held in times gone by... a subterraneous passage is supposed to run from the ruined Castle at Gresham, underneath the Cross, to Beeston Abbey. In this passage, a golden image, shaped like a calf, is said to be lost...sixty years ago, a 'cunning man' was engaged by an old lady to search underneath her property, in the parish of Gresham, for this calf. A pit was sunk in the old lady's parlour, about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from the cross, and hundreds of loads of soil excavated, without any result. As the excavators began to undermine the adjacent property, belonging at that time to Admiral Luken, of Felbrigg Hall, a stop was put to further proceedings, and the golden calf still remains to be found."

No. 47...OLD LORE***** An anonymous, undated booklet called 'The Earth No Longer Bare and Other Essays', p. 86, tells of a field on Waterloo Farm at Sturston, Norfolk, known as 'Hangman's Round'. The name is explained by the tale that "a Parson-Squire hanged himself from the branches of one of the ancient oaks which still stand."

No. 48...FORTEANA***** "In the month of November last, 1660, in some parts of Norfolk, were such Multitudes of meddow-mice, that in many hundred Acres together, one could hardly set down his foot without treading on them; they did eat up the roots of the grass, and in one Mr. Spelman's ground, as himself confest, they have spoiled him so much grass as used to keep 130 fat cattle, he feared, also, he should be damnified by them £300 in a field of Coleseed. We find that in the same month of Novem. Anno, 1580, at South-Minster, in Essex, there appeared an infinite number of Mice, which overwhelmed the whole Earth in those Marches..."

Michael W. Burgess.

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