

My Town



Essays on the History of
Reepham
by
Wesley Piercy

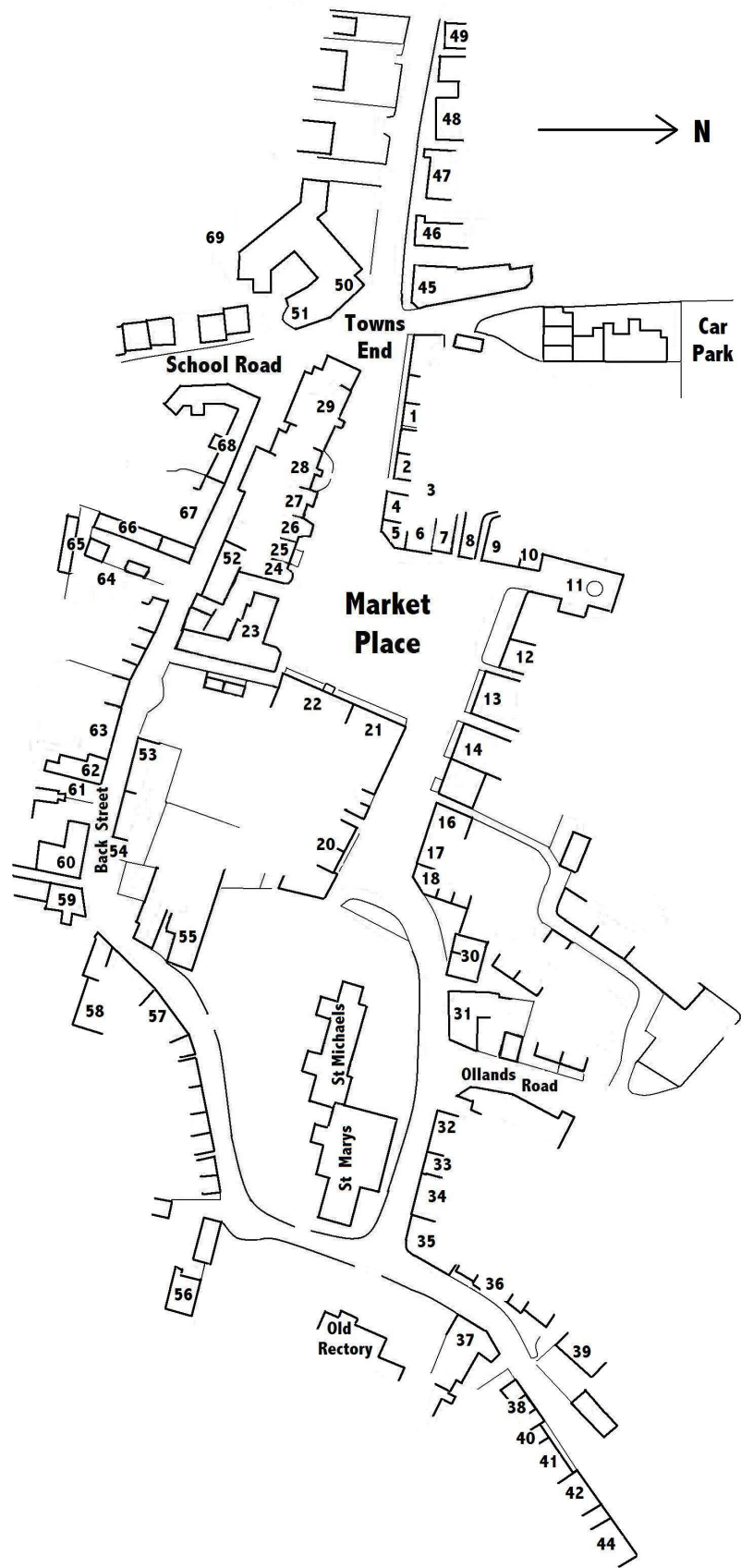
REEPHAM, *May 18th* 1885

M^r T Piercy

Dr. to S. & S. W. LEEDS,
FURNISHING & GENERAL IRONMONGERS.

	1 Cast Tender	8	6
	1 Wrot do	3	=
	1-4 ^{ft} Vin Iron Saws	2	2
	1-1 ^{ft} Vin do		5
	1/2 Gal Wurf		6
	1 Bottle	1	-
		15	7
	<i>6¹/₂ On Chew</i>	1	-
		14	7
<i>May 13</i>	<i>1 Set fire Saws 1 pole</i>		10
		1	7
	<i>Paide May 18/85</i>		10
	<i>S. & S. W. Leeds</i>	1	0
			0

Thomas Piercy, to whom this bill is made out, was Wesley's grandfather.
S & SW Leeds later became E Gibbs & Son.



MY TOWN

A Compilation of Writings by Wesley Piercy

Born 25 February 1917

Compiler's Preface

I met Wesley shortly after moving to Reepham in 1994 when I attended Reepham Society meetings and courses run by the WEA (Workers' Educational Association). I quickly recognised how much lecturers on local history appreciated Wesley's vast knowledge.

The Piercy family can be traced back in Reepham to the first part of the eighteenth century. Wesley has had no wish to live anywhere else and apart from his war service has lived here all his life. An account of his war experiences is included in the BBC2 People's War Website under parts 1-4, A Baker at War. A devout Methodist, Wesley has also written and had published *The Story of the Reepham Methodist Chapel 1817-1992*.

During the 1970's a group of historians and archaeologists interested in Reepham's history, ran a number of Workers' Educational Association courses in the town. Wesley readily acknowledges the inspiration of lecturers David Yaxley, Chris Barringer and Richard Joby. Subsequently Wesley passed on his researches into the town's history to local organisations, including The Reepham Society. Some of those talks are included in this publication.

Wesley met his wife Olive during a Conference at Pakefield. As part of the programme they both chose to visit Norwich Cathedral. Their house, in which Wesley has lived for over fifty years, resembles a museum; packed to the gills with books, reference material, photos and local objects.

I had known Wesley, a very modest man, for eleven years before accidentally seeing a letter from British Mensa Ltd. notifying him that his score of 157 was "higher than would be achieved on this test by 98/99 per cent of the population". His comment was "I just took the test for a bit of fun".

Wesley has always answered any questions posed by Kate Nightingale and me during our researches into Reepham's past. I know the Reepham Society takes great pleasure in publishing this compilation of memories of his beloved town. Although there have been some changes within Reepham since these articles were written, readers will follow the routes with little difficulty.

My thanks to my husband, Ralph and to Chris Peakome for their assistance in matters technical and photographic respectively.

Joyce Cox

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THE TOWN OF REEPHAM

REEPHAM, NORFOLK (D.B.Refham, 1203 Cur. 1254 Norwich Valuations.) Manor held or run by a Reeve. (O.E. gerefa.) The Old English form must have been (ge) reffham analogous to O.E. gerefaern "courthouse" gerefmaed "meadow under the supervision of a reeve" [Dictionary of English Place Names. Ekwall]

Reepham is a small market town that lies in what used to be four separate parishes, Reepham St. Mary, Kerdiston, Hackford and Whitwell. The town itself is mainly in Hackford parish, that is to say the market place and its immediate surroundings. Being small, strangers often allude to Reepham as a village but size is really nothing to do with it. The Lord of the Manor of Hackford obtained a charter to hold a weekly market and annual fair in the fifth year of Edward I, 1276-7, making Reepham one of the oldest market towns in Norfolk. It also appears that there had been a market held here even before the charter was obtained. It may also be pointed out that Reepham looks like a town, with its large market place and its huddled houses.

Reepham, it seems, has always been the centre of a district. It is said that the hundred court was held here in the old days, and the Eynsford Petty sessions were held here. Eynsford, the name of the hundred is supposed to get its name from the ford near Booton bridge. The Hundred was a division of the county dating from Anglo-Saxon times. Booton Beck of course is otherwise known as the Eyne. Foulsham, also in the Eynsford Hundred, was once a market town and the petty sessions were held there alternately with Reepham, but Reepham was always the more important.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Reepham was an industrial as well as a market town. There was a large brewery and two large tanneries in Whitwell. There was also a horse-training establishment. Beside all the usual trades, there were blacksmiths, tailors, harness makers, shoemakers, cabinet makers, wagon builders and many more. There were butchers, bakers, grocers, ironmongers, basket makers and chemists; in fact everything that people needed could be obtained here. Reepham also had thirteen public houses. Perhaps the chief thing about Reepham as far as the surrounding area was concerned was the cattle market that was held on Wednesdays. It was the only cattle market in this part of Norfolk; there were several that sold pigs and poultry but not so many for cattle. Wednesday was the day when the usually quiet town became a busy and crowded place. There were herds of cattle driven through the streets, the pubs and shops would all be busy, (pubs were open all day). In the 1920's all the farmers and dealers used to come by horse and cart, and the stables of the pubs would all be full with their horses. The farmers' wives would come with their husbands to shop and sell their eggs and butter.

Reepham Fair was held on the 29th and 30th June. It was originally for horses but by the 1920's it was just an amusement fair with roundabouts etc. The market place would be full and sometimes there was an overflow on Ireland's meadow (by the Chapel). Before the District Council took over the market place they were not strictly limited to the actual fair days. Afterwards they were not allowed to overstay so they had no time for setting up and taking down and the fair died out.

Before the 1950's the population of Reepham was much smaller than it had been a century earlier when the brewery and tanneries were going strong. Also the numbers employed in other trades had declined. Further decline came when the cattle market closed. This decline halted when piped water and sewage were provided. A spate of house building began that attracted retired people from London and elsewhere, houses here being cheap compared with London. Reepham became almost a dormitory for Norwich. Unfortunately this did not lead to any more employment in Reepham and made little increase in trade as many of the new inhabitants shopped in Norwich. We thus have the larger population at the same time as shops were getting fewer. Reepham has still not been able to attract any industry to the town and when firms have made enquiries there have been objections from the newcomers. On the whole the increased population has not been of any benefit to Reepham. The inflated prices of houses make it very difficult for local people to buy, and the low wages in Norfolk do not allow them to compete with buyers from the south. Housing for rent was almost non-existent. At the same time all the available building land has been taken up by the developers and any plot that may become available makes the price out of the range of most locals. It appears now that incomers outnumber the natives, completely changing the character of the town.

The population is probably double what it was in the 1920's but while the population has been growing the local amenities have been going. We had two railway stations, now there are none. We had a resident registrar of births and deaths, now we have to go elsewhere. We also had a police station and police court.

The decline in amenities also applies to shops. In the nineteen twenties there were no fewer than seven grocery shops. Three of these were in the market place, one of them being also a drapery. There was one in Back Street, one on Towns End Corner, which later moved to Station Road, one at Station Plain that was also a pork butcher and general store and one at The Moor. There were three bakers, one in the Market place, one in Church Street and one in Back Street. There were three butchers, each of whom slaughtered their own meat, not mere retailers of meat as there are today. There were three shoe shops and three tailors, a pharmacy and a druggist and two watchmakers, a newsagent, stationer, confectioners, tobacconists and nine public houses. However, in spite of all this, and being called a dying town in the fifties, Reepham is not dead yet.

REEPHAM MARKET PLACE AND TRADE - 1920-39

Superscript numbers in the text refer to the map inside the back cover

The North Side Starting from Town's End Corner

E. Gibbs & Son's Ironmongers and Seed Merchants¹ business was founded in the eighteenth century and the shop appeared to have altered little since. My grandfather Thomas Piercy worked there for Stephen Leeds before Mr. Gibbs' time and stayed with Mr. Gibbs almost until his death in 1930, over thirty years. I remember going with my grandfather on Gibbs' horse and cart delivering iron bars to blacksmiths in the surrounding villages, particularly Lyng and Sparham. That was about 1922. Lyng Bridge had not then been built and going through the ford was a thrill for a small boy. I also recollect going to Weston House and Heydon Hall, I think delivering paraffin. The shop and premises were fascinating to a youngster with all the funny little places, mysterious stairs and cellars etc. The seed room where grass and clover seeds were mixed for hay was an interesting place too. Mr. Gibbs and family attended the Wesleyan Chapel where Mr. E. Gibbs jun. was organist.

The cottage next door² was occupied by Mr. Lee Hall who worked for Purdy and Holley, solicitors. He was also secretary of the Eynsford Lodge of the Manchester Unity Independent Order of Odd Fellows, who met in the King's Arms clubroom. The house was later occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Claxton and became the telephone exchange.

The opening next to this was known as Hall's Yard.³ Next to this was D'Arcy Collyer's office,⁴ (later Purdy and Holley). Alongside was E. Jewell's druggist's shop.⁵ Mr. Jewell I believe was a Reepham native who left as a young man to join the Royal Navy and returned in the early 1920's. He had one daughter whose name was Bessie. He later moved across to Ivy House, which had been the telephone exchange. Round the corner facing east was Barclay's Bank.⁶ Mr. H.T. Owen was manager with a staff of two. Mr. and Mrs. G. Bunnet were caretakers living on the premises. Their living room was in the basement and their bedrooms on the top floor. I remember visiting them in the basement as a child. Mrs. Bunnet was a cousin of my grandfather. Next was a private house,⁷ occupied by Mr. John Hall the harness maker after he retired. He had a housekeeper, Miss Gurney. Next was the harness maker's shop⁸ which Bert Hall took over when his father retired. He lived over the shop. The workshop was at the back. A selection of items of harness was displayed outside. At harvest time repairing binder canvasses was the main task.

Next George Fisher's, Grocer and Draper, quite a large shop⁹ with the grocery counter on the right as you went in and the drapery on the left. The shelves behind the drapery counter were packed with bolts of cloth; calico, flannelette etc. also some ready made clothing. On the grocery side items such as sugar, rice, currants, etc. were loose in drawers and had to be wrapped for the customers. Very little pre-packed groceries in those days. My mother served an apprenticeship of two years (without pay) learning the drapery business in the early 1900's. She returned during the first world war to take over the grocery counter when the men were called up. Mr. Fisher was a talented musician, choirmaster and organist at the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel. The organ was formerly in a side chapel of St. Nicholas Church, Great Yarmouth. Mr. Fisher went to Yarmouth, dismantled the organ, had it brought to Reepham where he reassembled it. He was a member of the Black Diamonds concert party who performed for charity. Mr. Gibbs and Mr. Sidney Eglington were also members. Mr. Fisher was Captain of the Reepham Volunteer Fire Brigade. He had a pony and cart for delivering groceries to Kerdiston, Themelthorpe etc. This was driven by Mr. Alfred "Bantling" Coe; a retired farm worker who suffered from rheumatism and was unable to do heavy work. One day he was thrown out of the cart and killed, unable to save himself because of his disability. Soon after this tragedy, which upset

Mr. Fisher, he sold the business to Dent of Cawston who put in a manager. Mr. and Mrs. Fisher retired to Barnham Broom where their son Reg had a shop.

Harry Swoish's barber shop¹⁰ was next, where a haircut cost 6d for a man and 4d for a boy. Mr. Swoish was a former regular soldier in the Norfolk Regiment and had many good tales to tell of his experiences in India before 1914 and Mesopotamia during the first world war. I once heard him say that his name was Swedish in origin. About 1930 ladies hairdressing was a new thing in the district and Harry decided to open a ladies salon in the room over his shop. He employed a young lady from Lowestoft, Miss Patricia Manby. After she left to be married, Miss Molly Amis from Cromer took her place. Both of these ladies lodged with my grandmother at The Hill. Mr. Swoish at first was a sub-tenant of Mr. E. R. Kiddell, a carpenter and wheelwright who lived in a house behind the shop in what used to be called Dyball's Yard. When Mr. Kiddell died Mr. Swoish took over the house. All this block of property belonged to Mrs. Kate Eglington of Bawdeswell and included Fishers, Swoish's, outbuildings including a barn (now demolished), another house, an orchard and garden.

Next is the yard¹¹ to Brewery House with its ornamental well top. This is not a former public water supply as some have supposed but the source of water from which the famous Bircham's beer was brewed. The cover was made by Henry Hawes from oak taken from the windmill at Booton, by order of Samuel Bircham Esq. Brewery House was the home of Mrs. Nan Bircham and family. Mrs. Bircham was a kind-hearted lady who helped many who were in need. The younger son, Michael, was a member of Norwich Aero Club and one time used to fly over Reepham doing all sorts of dangerous looking stunts and frightening all the old ladies. I believe he was asked to stop it and he did.

The next house¹² was occupied by Mrs. Knights and her son Jack and later by Mr. and Mrs. Dick Ford. Ford's bakery¹³ was next. Mrs. Ford senior was a native but Mr. Ford, I believe, came from Somerset. On Wednesdays (Market day) they did teas. The Fords were often delivering late at night after people were in bed. The bread was sometimes left in peculiar places. Dick and Walter Ford were both bell ringers at St. Michael's.

Next to Ford's yard was George Cocking, shoemaker's shop.¹⁴ Mr. Cocking came to Reepham in the early 1920's, taking over the business of Mr. Allen. He employed one or two men and a girl to serve in the shop. Mr. Cocking, a small man, played the double bass in the Reepham String Orchestra. He was also a member of Reepham Town Band, and retained an interest all his life. These premises were once a tallow chandler's, that is a maker of candles. The proprietor was Mr. St. John, hence the name of St. John's Alley.

I have forgotten who lived in the next house. The house¹⁶ beyond St. John's Alley was occupied by William Bishop, watchmaker. Next¹⁷ was Mrs. B.M. Miller, newsagent and stationer. Mr. Miller who was in poor health, had a photographic studio behind the shop. I remember as a small boy being taken there to have a photo taken with my mother. I believe Mr. Miller took some of the postcard views of Reepham which are eagerly sought after today. Next was a house where Mr. Bishop lived before moving to that mentioned.

The corner shop,¹⁸ now the Post Office, was occupied by A V King, tailor. Mr. King was a son of a former landlord of the King's Arms, his wife a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Cornell, the last master and mistress of St. Mary's school. Mr. King died quite young and Mrs. King carried on the business as an outfitters. They had two sons, William and Trevor; contemporaries of mine. Both were in the forces in the 1939 war. William took Mrs. Miller's business after the war and died a few years later. Trevor's name is on the war memorial in Reepham church. He died while serving in the Middle East.

The South Side of the Market Place

Opposite the Post Office was²⁰ grocer and wine and spirit merchant L R Riches, reckoned to be Reepham's high class grocer. He had two sons and one daughter. Sidney Whyer, a one legged man, worked for him for many years.

Next to Riches' yard was the entrance to the Gospel Hall, meeting place of the Plymouth Brethren, a room which was part of the premises belonging to the grocers shop next door. This shop²¹ had earlier been occupied by Mr. H. Peck who was followed by Reeve and then Stangroom (or vice versa). About 1923 Mr. Percy Hilton took it. This was another good business, employing two or three assistants besides Mr. and Mrs. Hilton. They had one son Kenneth. Mr. Arthur Hardiment was an assistant with Mr. Hilton and took over the business when the Hiltons moved away.

Next the Bircham Institute,²² where Mr. James Piercy and his wife were caretakers. Mr. Piercy, a retired policeman, was a distant relation of my grandfather. They had two daughters, Edith, who had a small lock up tobacconist and sweet shop in School Road. She married Arthur Hunt. The other daughter, Evelyn married Bert Hall the harness maker. After the Piercys retired to The Ark in Park Lane, their place was taken by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Fuller. Mr. Fuller was a lorry driver with Stimpson & Son of Reepham Station.

Past Pudding Pie Alley to the King's Arms²³ whose landlord, Mr. George Hubbard, did a good trade, especially on Market Days when the stables would be full of farmers' horses. Some of those attending the Market would lunch there, I think having ordered in advance. It was also a place where commercial travellers could put up. Mr. and Mrs. Hubbard had a son Ted and daughters Doris and Edna, all of whom were at school with me. The Hubbards left about 1932, and the pub was taken over by Mr. and Mrs. W. Devlin. Mrs. Devlin was otherwise known as Daisy Ashford, who, as a girl wrote the children's book "The Young Visitors". In 1939 the tenancy was taken by Mr. Monty Bishop.

The little shop²⁴ next to the King's Arms yard was occupied by Tom Coe, shoemaker. When he died his widow still sold boots and shoes.

Next to this a door opened on to a staircase which led to the clubroom where the Odd Fellows held their meetings and here I was initiated as a member with due ceremony in 1933.

The next building²⁵ was occupied by the Misses Boon. Miss Ethel Boon was a teacher at Hackford and Whitwell School. Later it was used by a dentist who attended on certain days. Mrs. Bishop, wife of the watchmaker was the receptionist.

Next a butchers shop²⁶ which Mr. W. Utting took over from Mr. Watts Austin about 1923. Mr. Utting bought his bullocks and pigs at Reepham cattle market and with other local butchers slaughtered them himself in the slaughter house on Station Road, opposite the Methodist Chapel. His slaughter man was Mr. Albert Fowle.

Next the Post Office,²⁷ Postmaster Mr. D.K. Chapman who lived over the shop with his two sisters, Olive and Hilary. Miss Hilary Chapman had a wool shop at one time in the part of Gibbs' premises which is now Ewing's office. Mr. Chapman sold stationery, sweets, tobacco etc. in the Post Office. He was clerk to the Parish Council, prominent churchman and choir member, Scoutmaster, (to see him in shorts was a sight never to be forgotten), reporter for the local newspapers and Chairman of the Reepham and District Football League and a patriotic Reephamite. I used to clean his windows and brass on Saturdays for sixpence.

Ivy House²⁸ next door, held the Telephone Exchange, run by Mrs. Wilton. This was later moved over the way when Mr. Jewell moved his shop from the Bank.

Finally the Sun Inn,²⁹ run by Clifford Watson with his wife Violet. This pub, like others in Reepham, did a good trade on Market days when they were allowed to stay open all day. The Sun was altered extensively in the 1920's by Collison Bros.

The Market Place Itself

Having travelled all round the Market Place, let us have a look at the place itself. In the 1920's it just had a rough gravel surface; no defined roadway, just an open space. All week except Wednesdays it would be empty, not cluttered with cars as it is today. On Wednesday it would be full, including Sainsbury's van taking eggs which people brought in, Cannel's seed van and various odd stalls. The rest of the space was taken up by farmers' carts. In the summer there was Peruzzi's ice cream van, drawn by a piebald pony.

Sometimes there were stalls on a Saturday night and cheap jacks would sometimes appear. J. Wyer from Back Street sold ice cream and at one time a man named Dick Woods sold hot peas. Sometimes politicians held meetings on the Market and sometimes evangelists came to convert the Reepham heathens. Every Saturday night the Salvation Army would gather there to hold a service. There were always plenty of shoppers about, the shops stayed open till about 9.30pm. There were always plenty of people in the pubs too, Wednesdays when they were open all day and Saturday night. The rest of the week was quiet, this also applied to the shops.

Once a year the Market Place took on a different aspect; this was the time of the annual fair. In the year 1277 the Lord of the Manor of Hackford was granted a charter by King Edward 1 to hold a weekly market and an annual fair to be held on "The eve day and morrow of SS Peter and Paul". That was the 29th and 30th of June and the 1st of July. Later this was reduced to two days. It was originally a stock fair but by the 1920's it had become merely a fun fair. The Market Place would be full of roundabouts and such like with coconut shies and all the fun of the fair. The people living nearby were not very happy with the noise but the shopkeepers did not complain too much; they did quite well out of the fair people. There were several different showmen who used to come to Reepham including K. Gray and Stocks, but the one mainly associated with Reepham Fair was Underwood, better known as "Rhubarb". I remember old Mr. Underwood coming to the school when the fair was set up to invite all the school to a free ride on the swinging boats. The fair stopped coming on to the Market after the Council took it over and it was covered in tarmacadam. They went either on to Ireland's field, near the Chapel, or to the Crown meadow, now they do not come at all.

Beyond the Market Place, Church Hill and Norwich Road

The trade of Reepham was not all situated in the Market Place. There were more shops etc. in Norwich Road and Back Street than there are today. Continuing along Church Hill where we left off at Kings, the tailor, we come to two thatched houses;³⁰ one of these was occupied by the Salvation Army Officers, the other by a Police Constable, who afterwards lived in a Council House in New Road. The house on the corner of Ollands Road³¹ was a butcher's shop; first John Rump and then Hubert Pratt. The present Spar shop opposite, previously Randell's, we will leave for the moment till we come to look at Ollands Road. The present Echo Antiques, previously Spar shop³² was a bakers, William Overton, followed by Mills then Barrow and eventually Sidney Morley. Next door³³ was S P Eglington's ironmonger's shop, later Randell's.

Next was a house³⁴ with the name Frankland over the door; formerly the home of John Frankland, tinsmith whose daughter married Mr. S. P. Eglington and the two businesses merged. At this time the house was occupied by the Alcock family. Next was the George and Dragon,³⁵ licensee George Goward, later Amos Hessman. The building³⁶ next to the George Yard was part of an old maltings. It was made into a garage where cars could be kept. It belonged to the pub. Next to this on the maltings site was a beautiful garden belonging to Jesse Bircham who had the pharmacy opposite.³⁷ This was an old established business founded by Thomas Staples, Mr. Bircham's grandfather, in the early 1800's. When Jesse took the shop after his mother he had it fitted out with mahogany counter and fittings in the traditional chemist shop fashion. Later vandals ripped it all out and turned the shop into a garage. After Jesse Bircham died (he was not connected with the brewery family in any way), his business was taken by Mr. James and later by John Freeman. The shop, now Virginia's Workbox,³⁸ was J. White, harness maker, who then lived in the house attached. He later moved to Cawston but kept on in Reepham by building a wooden shop on what had been Jesse Bircham's garden opposite and he attended on certain days. The Bays,³⁹ was home to the Storey family. Mr. George Storey, a painter and decorator took over the business of his father-in-law, John Wright. His paint store was in the top storey of the building next to the road and the ground floor was a butcher's shop, proprietor W.E. Spriggs. When Mr. White went to Cawston Mr. Spriggs moved over the road into his shop. Walter Spriggs was a bachelor and did not live at the shop. The house⁴⁰ was let to a Mrs. Harvey. The Storeys moved away to London and that house eventually was taken by the Allen family who had a coach business and ran services to Norwich. Next to Mrs. Harvey's house was Beavers.⁴¹ This had once been a grocery shop but then Mr. A. G. Beaver used it as an office for various posts which included being Clerk to Reepham Parish Council. Mr. Beaver was a former nonconformist minister; his son, Heslop Beaver was for a time a partner to S. P. Eglington, his cousin. Next door was Mr. James Gray's shoemaker shop;⁴² the mock Tudor shop front was put on in his time I believe, also the false beams on the gable. Mrs. Gray who was another daughter of John Wright, died and the family moved away. The shop was later taken as a sweet and tobacconist shop by Mrs. G. Frankland. The house at the end,⁴⁴ which had been the Salvation Army headquarters, was occupied by Mr. Tom Coe, who had a shoemaker's shop in the Market Place (see above). The iron gates next to this house were the entrance to another house, "Sunnyside" now demolished. Here lived Mr. and Mrs S. Fenn. Beyond this was the barn and other farm buildings belonging to Reepham Rectory. These were let to Mr. Ambrose Frankland, but were later sold to Mr. J. Wyer, the man who sold ice cream (see above).

St. Mary's School was formerly the school for the parishes of Reepham and Kerdiston but was closed about 1920. It was later used for woodwork and cookery classes for children from other schools. Opposite were two houses belonging to The Ollands, occupied by gardeners. These were demolished to make way for Bircham Road. Next to the school was the cemetery for Reepham and Kerdiston which is now a nature garden. A little further along is the White House, this had been a doctor's house for many years. It was

occupied at this time by Dr. Berry, assistant to Dr. Perry. After Dr. Berry died it was occupied by a succession of doctors, none of whom stayed long. (I should have mentioned that Dr. Berry was later partner to Dr. M. H. Cane, Dr. Perry's successor). The last doctor here before the war was Dr. C. Burgess.

School Road

School Road in those days was more often called Whitwell Road or Sun Barn Road. We start at the building⁵⁰ where the DIY and Mr. Leslie's hairdressing salon is now. This is a new building very recently erected. Here Mr. and Mrs. F. Gibbs had a shop. Mr. Gibbs was an engineer who had contracted TB in the Far East. He did watch repairing, electrical work and when broadcasting began he also went into the wireless business. Mrs. Gibbs sold sweets and tobacco. They lived in the house adjoining⁵¹ which is still standing at the moment. After the death of Mr. Gibbs his wife had the old shop demolished and a new one built with plate glass windows in which she sold ladies' clothes. Standing where it did, the shop windows were broken more than once by vehicles crashing into them; on one occasion even a horse and cart. Mrs. Gibbs remarried, becoming Mrs. Clarke. The little shop next to the house was at one time a fish and chip shop. Later Mr. Gibbs used it as his wireless shop. Later still it was C. Plume's barber's shop. The land next to this belonged to the Sun Inn. There was the bowling green⁶⁹ (still there), a wooden building, originally stables, later converted into the Sun Hall, which was used for functions such as dinners. The rest was garden. Across the road, in another part of the old maltings, was John Walker's upholstery shop. This later became a fish and chip shop run by Mrs. W. Reeve. Reepham had two fish and chip shops for many years, and no one complained of the smell as some of the present residents do.

Next was a small lock-up shop where Miss Edith Piercy sold tobacco and sweets. Next Sun Barn Yard and then the Methodist Hall, which was used by the Band of Hope, which I have mentioned elsewhere. Then came John White's garage, of which S. E. Abbs was manager. This was later taken over by Messrs. Massy and Bridges, Mr. Abbs setting up for himself on the opposite side of the road.

Next to the garage were the barn and other buildings belonging to Sun Barn Farm, farmed by Mr. Walter Sharpin. It was later acquired by Sewell Eglington, who added it to his other farm, The Oaks. This farm at one time belonged to the Bircham brewery family. The barn was too large for the amount of land that went with it at this time so it may be assumed that there had once been more. In Arthur Young's "General View of the Agriculture of the County of Norfolk", published 1804, Mr. Bircham of Hackford is reported as farming 840 acres, which may explain the barn. The barn was demolished to make way for yet more houses, a piece of historic Reepham townscape disappearing without a protest being heard from conservationists. Opposite to the barn was Sun Barn Pit, (pond if you are not Norfolk.) This was filled in some years ago. Next to the barn is the back way to The Oaks, and next to this was a brick wall and then a row of stables; used by the baker in Back Street. The field opposite, now a Council estate, was called Sun Barn Close or nine acres.

We have now covered the main business areas of Reepham. It just remains to cover those that were scattered over the rest of the town. In Station Road was Mrs. Ada Frost's shop, built in 1935. On Station Plain was Philip Hunt's General Supply Stores, which was a laundry before Mr. Hunt opened about 1920. He had previously had a shop at The Moor, which was taken by Mr. John Andrews. There is now no shop at The Moor. At Reepham Station the granaries and coal yard were occupied by Messrs. Stimpson & Hurn and by R. Coller & sons. Both of these firms were corn and coal merchants. On Cawston Road was Collison Bros. Brickyard and their other premises were at The Moor.

I have not mentioned Dereham Road in this. It ought to be included. On Towns End Corner was Mrs. Frost's grocery shop⁴⁵ and Mr. Frost's bicycle business; he also had two petrol pumps and owned a charabanc called The Lollipop. Later Mr. and Mrs. Frost parted. He went away and she had a new shop built on Station Road. The next building⁴⁶ was built by Mr. Frost and was let to Norwich Corporation Electricity Department as shop and office. Opposite was W. E. Pask, tailor. Mr. Pask employed two men as tailors and was also assisted by his two youngest daughters. I think I have now gone through all the businesses but we will just keep going up Dereham Road. The house next to the electricity shop⁴⁷ was then called Bevan House, and was the residence of Mr. A. Smith, Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages and Relieving Officer. It is a strange thing that with a lot more houses and population we now have to go outside Reepham for a Registrar. It seems the more the place expands the more amenities are lost. The Laurels⁴⁸ next door was first the home of Mr. H. Hawes and then Mr. E. Gibbs and the next house was occupied by Mr. Gilbert Jeary, a porter at Reepham Station, and his wife.

The Primitive Methodist Chapel⁴⁹ was closed at Methodist Union and became the Fire Station. Next Dr. Perry's house, He was the local practitioner for a great many years and a Reepham benefactor. His father had been doctor here before him. In the next house lived Mr. and Mrs. William Pitcher, former master and mistress of Hackford and Whitwell School. They later moved to The Bays on Norwich Road after the Storeys went away and before the Allens had it. The next house, on the corner of Smuggler's Lane, was the former Swan public house occupied by Mr. Williams, Excise Officer, another thing we do not have here any more. Over the road was the old Police Station, built in the 1850's and demolished 100 years later. This was on the site of Hackford pound. The buildings at the top of Lamb Hill were hired by Tom Bacon (see above). Spriggs the butcher had a slaughter house here. At Hackford Vale lived Mr. Walter Reeve who ran a passenger and carrier service to Norwich via Horsford.

Mention should also be made of Hardiment's blacksmith shop at Kerdiston. This was on the road past Brick Kiln Farm, opposite the turn to Four-Water Lane. The smithy and the two bungalows with it have now disappeared without trace.

REEPHAM IN THE 1920's and 30's.

Reepham in the 1920s was a very different place from what it is now. We hear talk of preserving the character of Reepham, by which is meant the appearance of the place and its buildings but, to my mind, the character of a place is in its people. Reepham in the 1920's, like all towns and villages, had a distinct character of its own. Since the last war the town has changed its character completely. If our deceased Reephamites could come back they might recognise some of the buildings but otherwise they might wonder if they were in the right place. I hope to give an impression here of Reepham as it appeared to residents at the time.

Reepham is a small but ancient market town. Its charter for an annual fair and weekly market was granted in 1277 making it one of the oldest market towns in Norfolk. However, I am not going to speak about ancient history but of the period between the wars. The population of the four parishes had decreased from nearly 2000 in the nineteenth century to between thirteen and fourteen hundred in 1921. The town was more or less self contained, most of the necessities of life could be obtained locally. Almost everyone worked locally, very few chose to commute. Reepham's chief reason for existence was as a market in the centre of a farming area. The majority of those working here were employed in trade of some sort, often related to farming or to supplying the people of the town with the necessities of life. It was very different from today when most people go out of Reepham to work and do their shopping. Reepham is now not much more than a dormitory and a place for people to retire. I find it all rather sad.

At the start of our period Reepham consisted of four civil parishes with three parish councils, one for Reepham with Kerdiston, one for Hackford and one for Whitwell. There were two ecclesiastical parishes, Reepham St. Mary with a rector and a vicar for St. Michael's, Hackford and Whitwell. As well as two churches there were three Methodist Chapels, the Salvation Army and the Plymouth Brethren. There was a relieving officer cum registrar, an Excise Officer and a volunteer fire-brigade. Hackford and Whitwell School (now Reepham Primary School), was on Whitwell Road. Reepham St. Mary's School, on Norwich Road, had closed earlier. There was a Police Station with a resident sergeant or inspector and two constables - no shortage of police in those days! There were two doctors, Dr. E.V. Perry who lived at Eynsford House and his partner Dr. Berry who lived at the White House on Norwich Road. The resident solicitor was D'Arcy Collyer, a rather eccentric character. He was one of the Collyers of Hackford Hall. After him came Purdy and Holley

Market Day

The weekly cattle market was held on Wednesdays when Reepham really came to life. The place was full of farmers, dealers, drovers and various others from many miles around. A policeman would be on point duty at Townsend Corner all day, another would be on the sale ground issuing licences to move pigs and keep an eye on things. There were no cattle floats in those days, all had to be driven. Ladies of a nervous nature would keep off the road on market day in case they met a herd of bullocks!

Market Day was a busy day for the shops, of which there were many more than there are today. Lots of farmers' wives came in with their husbands to do their weekly shopping and bring in their eggs and butter. Butter was sold to the grocers who sold it on to their customers; eggs were sold either to Sainsbury's who had a van in the Market Place for that purpose, or to Mrs. Freeston who had an egg depot in The Back Street (as it was then called).

It was also a busy day for the pubs which were allowed to open all day. Most of the farmers came by horse and cart, stabling the horses at the various pubs; The Kings Arms, The Sun Inn, George and Dragon, The Greyhound, Duke of York, The Crown and The Black Lion. The Star and The Foldgate were too far out to benefit from this trade. All three Reepham butchers attended the market to buy their meat on the hoof and slaughter in their own slaughterhouses. All the meat we ate was produced locally or in the surrounding area, all yard fattened. Other butchers from round about also bought their beef, pork and mutton from Reepham, the best market in this part of Norfolk. Those animals not sold to butchers were bought by dealers for the London market. They were driven to one of the stations where cattle trucks were always waiting. A lot of poultry, especially old worn out hens were bought by a Jewish gentleman by the name of Isaacs; apparently the Jews in London were partial to boiling fowls.

The Shops

Saturday was also a busy day for shops when they stayed open till about 9.30pm. Reepham had numerous shops. I have already mentioned the three butchers. There were three bakers, seven grocers, one of whom was also a draper, one also sold wines and spirits, and one was also a pork butcher and general store. Only one of the seven sold grocery only. There were three tailors, three shoemakers, two harness-makers, two watchmakers, one chemist, one druggist, one newsagent and stationer, the Post Office which also sold confectionery and tobacco, two other tobacconists, two barbers and a fish and chip shop. Perhaps the chief shop was Edward Gibbs and Son, ironmongers and seed merchants. There was also Barclay's Bank, managed by Mr. H T Owen.

Other businesses were F Randell, formerly Eglington and Beaver, agricultural engineers (in the yard behind the present Spar shop), Stimpson and Hurn, coal and corn merchants (run by Ben Stimpson of Salle after the death of his father), R Coller and Son, coal and corn merchants (after whom the small industrial estate is named) and W Freeston, coal merchant. Wilkin Bros. had a small milling business in the Old Maltings. There were builders, painters and decorators, an undertaker, a brickmaker, chimney sweeps, a florist, a plumber, two garages with petrol pumps and an upholsterer. There was also a small private school run by a Miss Bull.

Utilities

Electricity did not reach Reepham till 1930, and there was no piped water or main sewer till the 1950s. Most people managed with oil lamps and candles though some of the shops had acetylene gas. Water was obtained from wells, each house or group of houses had its well or pump. [*some of the pumps can still be seen around the town as well as the large wellhead in the Old Brewery yard.*] Everybody also had a tank or tub for catching rain water which was used for washing. Soft water is so much better for washing than the hard well water which was used for drinking. No flush toilets, of course. Pail closets in the town were emptied weekly by Tom Bacon; people in the outer area had to make their own arrangements.

The Large Houses

Now we come to the larger houses in Reepham. First, The Ollands built by the Birchams when they moved out of the Old Brewery House. In 1920 it was standing empty, the previous occupants, the Kendrews, having died. About 1923 it was bought by E. Philips Oppenheim, a popular novelist at the time, but now almost forgotten. Mr. Oppenheim lived here in the summer, winters he spent in the south of France. After a few years in Reepham, he lived permanently in France, The Ollands being occupied by his daughter and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Ryder Smith. Later it was sold to Mr. Harmer of the Norwich clothing firm, F.W. Harmer, Ltd. After he died it was sold to Fred Irwin (hence nearby Irwin Close) Sad to say it has since been demolished.

The Brewery House, now part of the hotel named after it, was occupied by Mrs. Nan Bircham, her sons Merrick and Michael and daughter Ann. Michael was a member of Norfolk and Norwich Aero Club and used to fly over Reepham doing stunts which frightened some of the residents till someone complained.

The Moor House, happily, is still standing. This house, in Norwich Road, was also built for the Bircham family but was occupied by Ernest Hudson in the 1930s. I remember seeing Mr. Hudson being pushed about in a wheel-chair.

In Whitwell lived Captain Evelyn Barclay and his wife, the Hon. Mrs. Barclay, JP. Capt. Barclay inherited Colney Hall from his father and moved there just before the Second World War. Antony Ivins bought Whitwell Hall, turned it into a school and ran it.

Brigadier General Collyer lived in Hackford Hall. He later moved to South Africa where Mrs. Collyer had been born. A family named Broughton then had the Hall. They were Roman Catholics, the first in Reepham since the Reformation, perhaps! After the Broughtons a man calling himself Baron de Pitchford and a Scots lady (not his wife), who called herself the Baroness Pitchford lived here. They turned out to be confidence tricksters and both landed up in prison.

Sport and Leisure

Reepham had a great cricket team at one time. The cricket ground was on Norwich Road opposite the present trout farm. There were two football clubs, Reepham Town and the Band of Hope. The town played on what was then known as 'Holah Pasture', the meadow next to Bar Lane, by permission of Mrs. Holah who lived at Rookery Farm. Later, they played on Coller's Field, where the industrial units are now. The Band of Hope played on the field belonging to the Ollands which is now the housing estate called Moor House Close .

Reepham Fair was held on the 29th and 30th June. Originally three days, later reduced to two. It was once a stock and horse fair. I have heard tales of horses being tethered all round the Market Place and along Pound Road [*Dereham Road*] as far as the Swan Inn [*Corner Dereham Road and Smuggler's Lane*]. By our time, it was just a pleasure fair. The fair people would arrive with their live-in wagons and for a few days the Market Place was crammed with roundabouts, coconut shies and all the fun of the fair. Lots of noise and congestion but all good for trade, especially for the pubs but also for the other tradespeople. The fair people worked hard and needed plenty of good food which they purchased from the local shops.

The Market Place belonged to Mrs. Kate Eglington, or at least she owned the rights as Lord of the Manor of Hackford until about 1930 when she sold the manorial rights to the Rural District Council, to be managed by the Parish Council. The R.D.C. had the Market Place tarmacked and did not want the fair driving stakes into it. They could not prevent the fair coming but, by making a rule that they could only stay for the two fair days, made it impossible to set up and dismantle in the time. After nearly seven hundred years, this was the end of Reepham Fair! Fairs still came to Reepham on other sites but not on the fair days. It was not the same as on the Market Place. Several different fairs used to come to Reepham – K.Gray, Stocks and, best known of all, Underwood, better known as 'Rhubarb'! Mrs. Underwood was famous for her home made rock. I remember old Mr. Underwood coming to the school the day the fair arrived to say we could all have a free ride on the swings after school.

Every December there was the Christmas Fat Show and Sale when fat bullocks competed for the Reepham Trademan's Cup. There was great competition among local butchers to buy the prize beast. There were also classes for pigs, poultry etc. Another annual event was the Michaelmas Sale which was held on the nearest Wednesday to October 11th, Michaelmas Day, when farms traditionally changed hands. Any surplus implements were brought to the sale which was held on Ireland's Meadow, opposite the Methodist Chapel. All sorts of things were in the sale such as household furniture and almost anything you could mention. This field was also sometimes used as an overflow for the fair if they could not all get on to the Market. It was also the venue for the occasional travelling circus. This field, like so many former open spaces in Reepham has been built over.

The Crown Meadow, now also built on, was another site for travelling circuses and fairs, after they stopped going on the market. It was also a regular stopping place for caravan dwellers or gypsies. One of them, Tom Gray, did a bit of horse dealing. They made clothes pegs which the women hawked from door to door with other odds and ends. They were decent people who never caused any trouble, unlike some of today's so called gypsies. Tom was reputed to know every pub in Norfolk but never went into one on a Sunday but be that as it may he had an unrivalled knowledge of the roads of Norfolk. One couple, Charlie Temple and his crippled wife lived on Crown Meadow permanently, and when they died their van and its contents were burnt. I believe the Grays eventually settled down in a bungalow at Attleborough.

The Town Hall was called Hackford Parish Hall in the Twenties but, to my grandparents' generation it was The Old School. It was built by subscription in 1861 as Hackford and Whitwell School on the site of a former poorhouse. It remained a school for those parishes till the 1890's when the present primary school was built and then it became the Parish Hall. It had always belonged to the parish although the church tried to claim it from time to time. The hall caretakers in the 1920' s were Mr. and Mrs. W. Cornish. Mr. Cornish had a hook in place of his left arm that he had lost in the 1914-18 war. Mrs. Cornish was rather deaf which led to an amusing incident when Mr. Cornish stuck his head through the doorway as his wife was trying to shut the sliding door. His head was on the inside and the rest of him outside with her still pushing and not hearing his yells. His face turned blue and so did his language when he got free!

A travelling cinema came to the Hall once a week. The front seats, where we youngsters sat, cost four old pence. Harold Lloyd was a great favourite of ours. There were frequent whist drives and dances held in the Hall, plus the occasional concert. About once a year the Reepham Players would perform a play. One that I remember is 'The Ghost Train'. Occasionally a touring company would put on a play.

I must not forget to mention The Bircham Institute. The former Hackford House, which had been acquired by the Birchams, was given to the town by Sam Bircham in 1919 as a memorial to the dead of the Great War for the use of the inhabitants of Hackford, Whitwell, Reepham and Kerdiston. It contained a reading room where newspapers and periodicals could be read, a billiards room, facilities for other games and the old parish library. These facilities could be used subject to a small annual fee. Rooms were also available for other organisations such as the whist club. The caretaker was Mr. James Piercy, a retired policeman, who lived on the premises. From about 1927 the County Library had a room in the Institute which opened two or three times a week, manned by volunteers. Mr. Thompson, the schoolmaster, was librarian. This carried on till after World War Two, when it was changed for a mobile library which only came once a week during daytime when people were at work, which was rather inconvenient.

No account of Reepham in the twenties would be complete without some reference to Reepham Nursing Association which, for a small subscription provided a nursing service for those who needed it. The District Nurse was Nurse Coles. She came to Reepham in 1923 and lived on Station Road in a dwelling made from two old railway carriages set in a V shape with a glass roof between forming a sort of conservatory in which was an aviary containing dozens of birds. On the spare ground next to her house she had a tennis court made which was used by lots of local people. I do not know how many babies she delivered during her time in Reepham, many scores I think. She was a great character, very much loved. Coles Way, opposite to where she lived, is named after her.

Characters

In those days Reepham was rich in interesting characters with ways that may seem strange today. One who springs to mind lived at Bilham's Hill, and later in Bircham's Yard. His name was Jimmy Jarvis and he had been a labourer. Now he was an old age pensioner. After his wife died he was left to fend for himself. However, according to Jimmy his wife used to appear to him and tell him how to make Norfolk dumplings and shortcakes and so on. Jimmy claimed he was born in "chime hours" - three, six, nine and twelve are chime hours - and people born at those hours can see ghosts and things that the rest of us cannot see, or so it is said. Jimmy, therefore, could see his wife. This went on for some time but at last she told him she was not coming any more and he should get a housekeeper. Jimmy thereupon got a lady named Jane Newstead, an inmate of Aylsham Workhouse to come to be his housekeeper. She had not been there long when Jimmy's wife appeared once more and told him he must marry Jane. Jimmy would have been happy to do so and told people it was true love and how lucky he was. He attributed his good luck to the fact that he had "several mole spots about him". Jane, however, had no desire to marry Jimmy and she left. Not only that but, according to Jimmy she took his nutmeg grater! Jimmy had an old gramophone and one record of the old Gospel hymn "Joyful, joyful will the meeting be", which he played over and over again. I never knew what was on the other side. He would stamp his feet in time to the music. He had very big feet and always wore hobnailed boots! Somebody once said, "Jimmy Jarvis would be a tall old fellow if he didn't have so much turned up at the bottom." He would sometimes sing with the record as well as stamp his feet. He never changed the gramophone needle either.

REEPHAM CHURCHES

In the early 1950's I was employed on building a church at Bawdeswell to replace the church that was destroyed by an aircraft crashing into it during the war. When the foundations were being dug we came upon the remains of three former churches, mediaeval, Norman and Anglo-Saxon. This led me to think about our Reepham churches and what might lie beneath them. We look at mediaeval churches without thinking about what has gone before. We forget that this country has been Christian for well over a thousand years and that there have been church buildings here for most of that time. During a conversation with the then Rector of Bawdeswell, the late Rev. H.G.B. Folland, who knew a great deal about Norfolk churches, he mentioned that Reepham was a very ancient site. One important clue is the fact that, due to burials through many centuries, the churchyard is several feet higher than the adjacent streets. Since that time I have read numerous books and collected information from various sources looking for clues as to the origins of our churches and why there were three of them. As there is no documentary evidence available answers have been found by other means. I leave others to judge whether my answer makes sense.

In Reepham churchyard are two mediaeval churches and the remains of a third. The question of why there are three churches in the same enclosure has puzzled people for many years and no one seems to have come up with a satisfactory answer. I would not presume to solve a problem that some far more learned than I have failed to solve, but do suggest a possible answer. To do so we must go back to the Anglo-Saxon settlement of East Anglia and the coming of Christianity.

Although Christianity had existed in Britain during Roman times it seems to have disappeared from East Anglia before the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons, which, according to Bede began in AD 449. However, pagan Saxon cemeteries of an earlier date have been found in East Anglia. By AD 600 an East Anglian kingdom had been established under the Wuffinga dynasty.

In AD 597 Augustine arrived in Kent, sent by Pope Gregory to convert the heathen English. About AD 600 Augustine baptised Raedwald, king of East Anglia and Brewalda, or high king of Southern England. Apparently his baptism was for political reasons for he merely placed a Christian altar in a heathen temple, and made no serious attempt to adopt the new religion. Bede says that he was seduced by his heathen wife. East Anglia really began to be converted to Christianity after Sigebert became its king. Sigebert, who was either a stepson or nephew of Raedwald was baptised while exiled to Gaul and became a committed Christian. When he became king in AD 635 he brought Felix, a Burgundian from Kent. With the latter's help Sigebert set up a school for priests. Felix built a church at Babingley, the first in Norfolk and set about converting the heathen East Anglians. He was appointed Bishop of East Anglia with his see at Dunmoe, thought to be Dunwich in Suffolk, and travelled throughout East Anglia as Bishop for seventeen years. As there were few churches and few priests it was necessary for the Bishop to travel his diocese.

The church in East Anglia had its origins in both the Roman and Celtic churches. While Felix was busy making converts a party of Celtic monks, led by Fursey or Fursa had been permitted by Sigebert to found a monastery in the Roman ruins of Burgh Castle. They were busy making converts and created a lasting influence on the church in East Anglia. They set up individual cells, often on pagan sites, sometimes two or three together, each of which developed into churches. This may be the origin of what H.O. Mansfield calls church clusters such as we have at Reepham. There are a number of similar sites in Norfolk but only Reepham has three churches in the same churchyard. After Fursey's monastery was destroyed in a Mercian raid in AD 664, he left England for the continent, so ending the involvement of Celtic Monasticism in East Anglia. However, their "loving democracy and humble saintliness" lived on. After the Synod of Whitby in AD 664 the Roman and Celtic Churches were linked and the Roman practice was followed by all.

By AD 680 the church in East Anglia was well established and a second diocese was established at North Elmham. There were still few churches at this time but, in the absence of a church, a cross for daily prayer would be erected, often on a pagan site as recommended by Augustine. It may be significant that each of the three parishes of Kerdiston, Hackford and Whitwell contain the sites of one of these crosses. The Kerdiston cross can still be seen in the shape of its flint base about one mile from the Town's End on the left hand side of the road. The Hackford cross's base was unfortunately destroyed, presumably through ignorance of its significance, when the pathway known as Sun Barn Walk was made. The site of the Whitwell cross is just

beyond Whitwell Station bridge about a mile to the south of the Hackford one. It seems reasonable to suppose that the pathway known as Sun Barn Walk was made. The site of the Whitwell cross is just beyond Whitwell Station bridge about a mile to the south of the Hackford one. It seems reasonable to suppose that they date back to this early period. There does not appear to have been one in Reepham parish but as these crosses came before churches, there may have been one in the present churchyard. There were few priests and not many villages before AD 700 and the parish was still in the future. Later on wealthy noblemen were persuaded to build and endow churches on their estates.

Having more than one church in close proximity is a sign of Saxon origin as is an oval churchyard. Dedications also are a sign of early date; St. Mary and All Saints and especially St. Michael, the slayer of demons, which was often used on former pagan sites. Other churches in these so-called clusters had similar dedications; St. Mary and St. Margaret at Antingham and St. Mary and St. Lawrence at South Walsham among others. Thus we have in Reepham churchyard three churches with early Saxon dedications; St. Mary, Reepham, All Saints, Hackford and St. Michael, Whitwell (later Saxon dedications were usually to Saxon saints), probably of monastic foundation on a former pagan site. This gives us a probable 8th century date. Supposing that Reepham was the original settlement as seems likely, Hackford and Whitwell were daughter settlements. There were no parish boundaries at this time; it appears that the churches were not intended for any particular parish, the churches being older than the parishes. Who the wealthy noblemen were who built them we cannot say. I have never believed in the story of them being built by three sisters but with regard to the original churches there may possibly be a grain of truth in it.

There are very few 8th and 9th century churches existing today; most it seems were destroyed by the Danes in the 9th century. Although there was no bishop for a hundred years, heathenism was never dominant and Christianity survived. After the Danes were defeated by Alfred the Great, their King Guthrum agreed to being baptised and the Danes became Christian. The Saxon system had remained unaltered under the Danes and the Bishopric was restored with a single diocese at North Elmham. Those churches which had been destroyed were rebuilt including presumably the three at Reepham.

I have not mentioned Kerdiston so far because it always seems to have been united with Reepham St. Mary. There is supposed to have been a chapel there at one time but this would have been a field church with no burial ground, perhaps attached to one of the manors. Burials from all four parishes would have to be at Reepham. Kerdiston had its own Rector at times, sharing St. Mary's Church with the Rector of Reepham. At other times one priest served both parishes, for example in Domesday book, under Lands of William de Warenne, Kerdiston, *half a church and half a priest*. This I believe refers to St. Mary's, the other half church and priest belonging to Reepham. Also under Lands of William de Warenne is Hackford *one church*. There is no mention of a Whitwell church but this does not necessarily mean that one did not exist. Domesday was an inventory of property and if a church did not belong to an estate it was not listed. We can only surmise what happened here during the next three or four centuries before the present churches were built. The evidence is hidden beneath them and we shall probably never know.

Parishes did not become general until the 10th century. Therefore, if, as I have suggested the churches were here earlier instead of, as is usually supposed, their being built at the point where three parishes meet, the parish boundaries must have been drawn so as to include one of them in each parish. I cannot believe that Whitwell church would have been built surrounded by Hackford Parish if it had been built as the parish church.

Before closing this essay there is one interesting item I must add. In 1368 Archdeacon Swyneflete made an official Visitation of his Archdeaconry of Norwich and found in Sparham Rural Deanery these churches: Refham Omnium Sanctorum, Refham Michaelis and Refham Marie. This I believe goes to prove that these four parishes have always been known collectively as Reepham.

NONCONFORMITY IN REEPHAM

There appears to be no record of dissent in Reepham before the second half of the 17th century. In 1603 the Rector reported that there were no recusants or dissenters in the four parishes. Two Puritan usurpers were ejected at the Restoration in 1660, Sampson Townsend of Hackford and Whitwell and William Sheldrick of Reepham and Kerdistone. Sheldrick later became an Independent minister at Yarmouth.

By the end of the century there were connections with the Independent chapel at Guestwick. A letter from Tunstead in 1696 requests the Guestwick congregation to accept Lydia Robotham of Reepham. Oddly enough the Rector of Reepham from 1674 to 1690 was also named Robotham, perhaps there was some

connection. Lydia's children were baptised at Guestwick but there is no mention of her husband as a member of the Guestwick congregation.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century religion in Norfolk, as elsewhere, was at a low ebb. The diocese of Norwich was known as the "deadsee". Many incumbents did not live in their parishes, taking the stipend but leaving the work to a poorly paid curate. With parishes neglected and the poor almost untouched by religion, the time was ripe for the Methodist Revival when it came. It arrived in Reepham perhaps in 1759 when the house of Francis Taylor, Hackford, was "set aside for the exercise of religious worship of Protestant Dissenters". Methodism had been established in Norwich in 1751 and John Wesley himself had visited Norwich in 1754 so possibly Francis Taylor was a Methodist. There is a story, the source of which I have forgotten, of two Methodists preaching in the Market Place being set upon by ruffians sent and paid by the local parsons. However, despite opposition, Methodism became established in Reepham, although it seems there was no regular meeting place.

The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel on Station Road was built in 1817, but with a very different appearance from the one it has today. It had a gallery round three sides and the entrance was on the east side. They must have expected a large congregation. Even after the gallery was removed it still seated 200. The founders included many of the tradesmen, Thomas Staples, chemist, whose shop was in Norwich Road, Thomas Scurl, baker, (see Parson Woodforde's Diary) James Pumfrey, farmer, Kerdistone, Seymour Jewell, veterinary surgeon, John Frankland, brazier, Church Street, and Thomas Peck. The Chapel was originally in the Norwich Circuit but was later included in the Cromer, North Walsham and Holt Circuit. These places all had a resident minister. Reepham had a lay pastor, a sort of apprentice minister. This arrangement continued until the Methodist Union in 1934.

In 1827 a Baptist Chapel was built in Fisher's Alley, but it was later taken over by a breakaway group, the Free Methodists. They later amalgamated with another group to become the United Methodists. This chapel closed when the three main Methodist bodies amalgamated and the congregation transferred to Station Road. The chapel was sold and became a carpenter's workshop. It later became the Good Companions' Club. It has been demolished and two houses stand on the site.

When the Free Methodists appeared on the scene the Primitive Methodists were already established here. Cyril Jolly, in his book *The History of the East Dereham Methodist Circuit*, tells the story. "Key took his stand in Reepham Market Place in the summer of 1830. Many listened but soon hostility was shown". The principal opponents, Key affirms, were the tradesmen of the town. The labourers sided with him and cried for a fair hearing. Apparently another preacher was helping Key for he was knocked off his stand and the labourers were so incensed that they took the matter to law.

The magistrates, however, heard the case and dismissed it, telling Key he had no business to preach in the Market Place, and that they would bring the water engine to play upon him if he did so again.

Key was not the type of man to be intimidated; moreover he had many brawny supporters and they rallied round him so strongly that when he did preach again in the Market Place he had a large bodyguard armed with sticks and other weapons. Fortunately the threat of the water engine was not carried out, otherwise there would have been a "civil war" in Reepham. After this visit a Society was formed with preaching places at Whitwell Street, The Moor, Whitwell Beck and Booton. Robert Wilkin of Whitwell Street, who was converted by Key, helped to establish the cause and became a local preacher. By now the Wesleyans had become "respectable", and the poorer people went to the more radical "Prims". By 1847 they were able to build a chapel at a cost of £103, 1 shilling and 7 pence, a remarkable achievement considering that most of the members were labourers with very low wages. The attendance at Sunday services was between 30 and 40. In 1840, the chapel had seating for 116. In 1867 the chapel was rebuilt (in brick and tile), at a cost of £232, 7 shillings and 2 pence with seats for 192. This building was sold after the Methodist Union and the congregation transferred to Station Road. For many years the old chapel was used as home for the fire engine (what would Robert Key have thought of that?). Now it is the R.A.Y.S. Hall in Dereham Road.

Toward the end of the century the Salvation Army appeared in Reepham. At first they had premises in Norwich Road which they hired from Mr. S.P. Eglington. They had two officers stationed here who lived in a thatched house on Church Hill. They were also in charge of the Corps at Wood Dalling. The Army was never in large numbers in Reepham. It made its presence felt by holding open air services all over the town on Sundays and on the Market Place on Saturday nights, competing with the church bells, which were

always rung on Saturday nights in those days. When the fair was also on the Market the noise had to be heard to be believed. The Army finally faded out in Reepham in the 1960's.

The Plymouth Brethren were a little later in starting, around the turn of the century I should think. A man named Jennings who had a shop on Town's End Corner, seems to have been the person who brought the sect to Reepham. Their first meeting place was in part of his premises in a building which has long since disappeared. Arthur Fowle, barber, was another leading member. Their later meeting place was in part of Hilton's premises (*now the Town Office*) next to Riches' yard. They faded out after the second World War.

So for many years Reepham had no fewer than seven places of worship; St. Mary's with its Rector who also had a curate at one time, St. Michael's with its vicar, the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists, each with a Pastor, the United Methodists, the Army with its two officers and the Brethren. All these ran a Sunday School, almost all children were sent by their parents to one or another of them. Some managed to attend two, so getting two treats, instead of one. The only one with a purpose built schoolroom was the Wesleyan. Here I attended as a boy. As my grandfather was Superintendent there was no chance of dodging. I have in my possession the gold watch chain my grandfather was presented with when he retired from the Sunday School in 1928. In my day there were about 30 or 40 children on the books, some of whose parents were Church of England. It appears that the chapel schools were more popular with the youngsters, perhaps they had better school treats! All had a seaside outing in summer and a winter treat of a tea followed by games, most of them if I remember correctly, involved kissing. At the end everyone was given a bag of sweets and an orange. The Wesleyans gave everyone with a reasonable number of attendances a book as a prize; I am not sure if the others all did the same. The United Methodists had the largest number of scholars at this time. There are no nonconformist Sunday Schools in Reepham today.

All three chapels had organisations attached to them in the 1920's. The Wesleyans had the Wesley Guild, the Primitives the Christian Endeavour, but the biggest was the Band of Hope, a temperance organisation which started in the United Methodist Chapel during the First World War. It was under the inspiration of John Walker, a temperance enthusiast who was manager of the Reepham branch of Messrs. Wallace King. (He later had his own business in Reepham). The Band of Hope soon became too big for the Chapel and needed larger premises. Jesse Bircham, the chemist, came to the rescue. He was the grandson of Thomas Staples (see above) and inherited his shop. Jesse provided the money to purchase a piece of land at Sun Barn Yard and to erect a timber building on it. This was known as The Methodist Hall and was mainly used for activities connected with the Band of Hope. Weekly meetings were held on Monday evenings which consisted of concerts, miscellaneous evenings, magic lantern shows and lectures on the evils of strong drink. These were always well attended, the membership running into hundreds. The Band of Hope had its own football team, mixed orchestra, ladies' orchestra, male voice choir, and brass band. This later became the Town Band, one of the leading brass bands of East Anglia, known later and until recently, as Matthews Norfolk Brass. Every summer the Band of Hope hired a special train from Whitwell Station for an outing to Yarmouth. The whole thing had faded out by the last war after the death of John Walker.

The subject of nonconformity cannot be left without mention of the Sunday School Anniversary. At the Wesleyan, with which I am most familiar, a platform was erected in the Chapel, on which sat all the Sunday School scholars and teachers and the choir. The first Sunday in July was our date. All the children had to give a recitation; no recitation, no treat. These were some of the biggest occasions of the year. All three chapels followed a similar pattern. The chapels were always packed on these occasions, when ladies could show off their new hats.

Another annual event in those days was the open air united service held in the Market Place on a Sunday evening after the usual services. This was another of John Walker's ideas, I believe. Methodists, Anglican and Salvation Army all took part. A farm wagon stood in front of the Brewery House on which the speakers stood, mostly Methodists but sometimes the Vicar of St. Michael's the Reverend Geake would be there, never the Rector of Reepham, as far as I remember. The Band was there to play the hymns. This was held during June when the daylight is longest.

SCHOOL IN REEPHAM IN THE 1920's

It was not called Reepham School when this writer started school in 1921, at the age of four. It was known as Hackford and Whitwell School. There had been a Reepham School in Norwich Road, but it had recently

been closed. It was used again later as a woodwork and cookery school to which boys and girls came from schools around to learn woodwork and cookery respectively. Hackford and Whitwell School, now called Reepham County Primary, then had about 180 pupils, presided over by Mr. C H Thompson. Mr. Thompson taught the first class, otherwise Standards 6 and 7. The second class or Standards 5 and 6 was taught by Miss Ethel Boone, who lived in the Market Place. Soon after this Miss Boone left to be head teacher at Carlton Forehoe, and her place was taken by Mrs. Thompson, the head master's wife, who had previously taught at Salle. Class 3 or Standards 3 and 4, was taught by Miss Dora Barret, who lived with her parents at Fokhard Farm, Jordan Green, Whitwell. These three classes were in what we called the big room. They were separated by sliding partitions. These were opened in the mornings and last thing in the afternoon when class four was marched in for prayers. Class four was in a separate room (standards 1 and 2), taught by Miss Dewing, who subsequently became Mrs. Watson and then Mrs. Lawn. The infant room was also separate; Miss Frances Austin was teacher. When she left to marry Mr. E Gibbs junior her place was taken by Miss Saunders, who later became Mrs. Bird and was replaced by Miss Miriam King.

The school was built in the early 1890's to replace the former school, now the Town Hall, which had been condemned. This school was built by subscription in 1861. Apparently it was condemned as unsuitable because of the cramped site, rather than any fault with the building. The head master and mistress were Mr. and Mrs. William Pitcher, they moved to the new school and remained until the First World War. Mr. Thompson came in 1920 after service in the RAMC. Reepham St. Mary's School was still going at this time, the head master and Mistress were Mr. and Mrs. Cornell. When they retired about 1920 the population of Reepham had become less and so there were fewer pupils. This led to the two schools being amalgamated.

The teaching at the school was of a high standard but the building was not very convenient, it was also cold. There was a fire in each room in winter but those sitting at the back could not feel much of it. Many suffered from chilblains. In frosty weather the ink froze in the inkwells. Hot water pipes were installed eventually which improved matters slightly. Those children who lived two or three miles away had to walk to school in all weathers and stay all day in damp clothes and have lunch of bread and cheese. No wonder so many had coughs and colds. Mr. Thompson could do nothing about it except allow them to roast potatoes under the fireplace. The floors were of wooden blocks, which were worn in the doorways so letting in a draught which nothing could stop. The playground was covered in loose shingle which could be rather dangerous. Boys and girls were mixed in class but strictly segregated in the playground. Girls and infants had their playground and boys had theirs. They could see one another through the railings, they could speak to one another if they wished but each playground was out of bounds to the other. P.T. was done in the playground although the surface was not very suitable. On Friday afternoons pupils would adjourn to Holah's pasture for football or cricket according to the season. While this was going on the girls would be doing country dancing, Mrs. Thompson playing the piano.

There was a small private school in Reepham at this time, run by a lady by the name of Miss Bull at Brewmare. She did not have many pupils and when she closed some of them came to "the proper school". A school of that kind would probably not be allowed today.

We had no such things as school uniforms, most boys wore short trousers, often of corduroy, but some still wore the old fashioned knickerbockers which came below the knee. Some wore heavy hob nailed boots and in winter leather buskins like their fathers wore on the farms. We always wore our caps out of doors, to go out bareheaded was unthinkable. Many of the boys had their hair cropped very short with just a quiff at the front. The girls all had long hair, often braided into pigtails; when the new infant teacher, Miss Saunders, arrived she caused quite a sensation by having bobbed hair, the first to be seen in Reepham. I have a photo, taken of the infant class when I first started school, in which nearly all the girls are wearing white pinafores over their dresses. That is all I can remember about how the girls were dressed.

The sanitary arrangements were rather primitive, no piped water or sewage in Reepham in those days. The boys and girls lavatories were back to back but each opened on to its appropriate playground. Both were over a deep pit, which was emptied during the summer holidays. There was a wash house in each playground in which was a pump, connected to a soft water tank, into which rainwater from the roof was collected. There was also one of those old fashioned sinks and an enamel bowl for washing hands. A bucket and a mug in the corner of the playground provided drinking water.

Everyone left school at fourteen except for those clever enough to pass for a scholarship to a grammar school, these however were rather scarce in Norfolk. Elementary school children were taught enough to work

on a farm which was considered enough by the powers that were. The working classes were expected to know their place and not expect too much education, which would not be good for them.

There was no artificial lighting in the school, electricity had not reached Reepham then. At the end of a winter's day it was often too dark to see to read or write. One improvement that was made in these years was the installation of a hot water system to improve the heating, making the parts furthest away from the fire a bit more bearable. This however was only put into the coldest rooms.

In spite of somewhat inadequate facilities the teachers did a very good job. It cannot have been easy teaching a class of thirty odd with an age range of two or three years and of different abilities. The teachers set a good example in dress and manners. Mr. Thompson would never have tolerated the scruffy dress that some teachers have to put up with today. Pupils were taught good manners and to be clean and tidy; not all children were taught good manners at home

There were various people who visited the school from time to time. One of these was Nurse Walker, otherwise known as the "chat nurse", from her job of examining heads for head lice. Occasionally she found some. Another was Dr. Campbell, the school doctor, who came once every year. Children were medically examined three times during their school career; or oftener under special circumstances. The school dentist, who was called Mr. Milligan, also came once a year. He operated in a van parked in the schoolyard. Fearsome tales would be told, by those who had been in to those still to go in, of the tortures he had inflicted on them; but really he was a very good dentist. Someone else, whose visit was awaited with trepidation, both by pupils and teachers, was the school inspector. Everything was usually all right.

The headmaster's dearest wish was to have a Central School in Reepham with himself as headmaster. There were plans to build some Central Schools in Norfolk, at the same time as there were proposals to raise the school leaving age to sixteen. These plans were all scrapped when the financial crash of 1929 caused government spending to be drastically cut. Nothing was done about the schools until after the war.

The headmaster occasionally used the cane. There was none of this nonsense about corporal punishment that is heard today. We accepted it. We knew if we got the cane it was usually deserved, and soon over. Much better than staying in after school and writing out "I must now do ..." whatever it was. If you misbehaved you expected punishment, and a cane across the palm of the hand might sting a bit, but only for a minute. It did not turn us into violent hooligans either. Girls were hardly ever caned. If one was caned, it was by Mrs. Thompson in private. This would be for a serious misdemeanor. Boys of course were caned in public.

The school day always started with prayers with all the school present except the infants. They then returned to their own classrooms for Scripture followed by arithmetic. After that on some days there was physical education in the playground; the nature of which was limited by the unsuitable surface. The rest of the day was devoted to subjects such as English composition, history and geography. History was mainly concerned with kings, queens and battles. We learnt by heart the dates of all the kings and queens of England from 1066 on. I wonder how many of us could recite them now? I know I could not. Mr. Thompson did try to include some social history, which seems to be more use than mere recitation of dates and certainly more interesting. Also, as part of the arithmetic lesson we used to recite the tables. This proved useful in later life when calculators had not been invented. The young seem lost without those useful gadgets. We also used to recite "Twelve pence one shilling" and so on. No need for that any more!

On Friday afternoon for the first period Classes One and Two used to split up; boys to Mr. Thompson for what was called Hygiene and Physiology; girls to Mrs. Thompson for sewing and other feminine pursuits. The former subject was apparently not considered suitable for girls, at least, not in the presence of boys. We enjoyed these lessons, partly due to the fact that by judicious questioning Mr. Thompson could be diverted to talking about his war experiences in Egypt. Occasionally, he would go on long enough so there was no more time for the lesson. Then he would say we had probably learned as much from that as we would from the lesson. We found it more interesting anyway.

So much for schooling in Reepham in the 1920' s. As far as I know none of us ever did anything very spectacular, but I think I can safely say that neither did the school produce any criminals. They all turned out to be reasonably good citizens. As another schoolmaster said to me "It is not buildings that make a good school".

HIGHWAYS AND BYWAYS

The roads in and around Reepham may appear to have been where they are from time immemorial but this is not so as I shall attempt to demonstrate. One road that has changed over the years is **Station Road**. Once it was known as The Back Lane, that is to say the length from the station to the Methodist Chapel was so called. It was a very narrow lane with hedges on either side and apart from two old cottages which stood where the Methodist Schoolroom stands, there was not a house in the road until the Newland Villas were built in the 1880's. The railway arrived at about the same time. Newland Villas were built by Arthur Collison for J. J. Bishop. This was the first job done in the area by Messrs. Collison. They came from London. Mr. Bishop lived in London where he had a removals business, Bishops of Pimlico. I believe the firm is still in existence. Mr. Bishop also farmed at Kerdiston. Newland Villas were named after Newlands farm which he owned. The next house to be built was next to Pightle Way. This was built by Mr. Owen Goddard, a cabinet maker. His wife was a school teacher. He had a large garden from which he sold produce. This has since been built over.

There was no further building until after the First World War. On the opposite side of the road, near Stoney Lane, six council houses were built. The road was widened at this time and tarred for the first time. This was about 1923. Up till then it had been very rough and dusty.

A few years later four more council houses were built and also Trevone, which was built by Mr. Williams, the local Excise Officer who moved from the old Swan, a former pub, on Dereham Road. This was followed in 1935 by Mrs. Frost's shop and house, (nos. 49-51) and her son's bungalow, (no. 53). There was no more building on Station Road until after WW2.

There were few houses built in Reepham in the immediate post war period. While lots of houses were going up in other parts of Norfolk, Reepham stood still. It was not till a piped water and sewage works came in the late 1950's that the building rush started. The first to be built in Station Road was the bungalow "Greentiles" (opposite the Chapel) in the 1960's. Since then the road has been completely built up, (it was then known as Newland Villas Road)

The lower part of the road, from the Chapel to Town's End Corner has also changed. Looking up from Town's End we see three small cottages bearing the initials WB, which I believe stand for William Bircham, the brewer, with the date 1863. Next to them are three larger houses³⁷ with their backs to Station Road now, but when they were built in the early eighteenth century the road went past their front doors. This road was diverted to its present route at some time before the cottages were built in 1863. These three houses were originally two, but were made into three many years ago. The first house, with the higher roof, was once the home and workshop of a glove maker; the other was a small farmhouse. The barn and other buildings that used to belong to the farm were demolished when the sale ground was made into a car park and the road widened. Till a few years ago these houses still had their original Georgian windows and doors, but unfortunately have been modernised and lost most of their character. The road past these houses used to be known as Sale Ground Hill. Just past the houses was an entrance to the sale ground and the barn. Next to the barn were pig pens which were parted from the road by a corrugated iron fence on top of a flint wall. The road was very narrow with no footpath, not very safe for pedestrians. Beyond the pig pens was a well from which water was pumped by an oil engine for cleaning the pens at the end of the sale. At one time it was pumped by a windmill, but although wind is free it is not reliable, so the windmill was replaced. The sale, run by Messrs. Ireland, was one of the biggest in this part of Norfolk. Most of the markets around only sold pigs and poultry, not cattle as Reepham did.

Reepham was a busy and noisy place on market days, (and dirty). I wonder what some of the present residents would say if they met a herd of bullocks on the road (or stepped into what they left behind). Now sadly it is just a memory, the colourful characters who frequented the market are seen here no more, "Satan" Gibson, poultry dealer from Hevingham, Isaacs the Jew, who bought old hens, Billy Brookes from Horsford who bought pigs, Hubert Large from Swanton Morley, who bought bullocks and many more. Then there was Larter's cockle stall for those requiring a snack to keep them going. Also there were the drovers, later to be replaced by cattle floats which added to the congestion in the confined space in the sale ground and on the narrow roads. Traffic was always a problem, even when it was mostly horse drawn. All the local butchers would be there to buy their meat on the hoof for the next week and of course the farmers who came to see their beasts sold or to buy.

On the opposite side of the road was the property of Dr. E. V. Perry, a local practitioner who lived at Eynsford House on Dereham Road (we only knew it as Dr. Perry's). The house called "Shrublands" was occupied by Mrs. Laskey, a widow. Dr. Perry had another wing built on to this house in which he lived when he retired, Mrs. Laskey looking after him. The house was left to Mrs. Laskey when the Doctor died. The next house was also built by Dr. Perry for his gardener-chauffeur Mr. Nicholls. This house was built about 1922 and was left to Mr. Nicholls on the death of the doctor. We now come to what was a row of four cottages, the first of which was occupied by George Self, painter and decorator; the last in the row was occupied by another of Dr. Perry's employees, William Tubby.

Opposite to these houses was a double gateway, entrance to part of the Brewery House grounds. This contained many trees, including some fairly rare specimens. These had to go when the houses were built and a road was made through it (**Old Brewery Lane**). However a dangerous bend was thus done away with. Next to the Long Loke was a yard and buildings; here was the slaughter house belonging to W. Utting, who had a butcher's shop in the Market Place. At one time it had been the premises of Ebenezer Kiddell, wheelwright. A building here was where the old manual fire engine was kept.

I should have mentioned earlier the oil depot, opened in the 1930's by the Anglo-American Oil Company, (afterwards Esso). Here were tanks containing petrol and paraffin and drums of oil. A tanker lorry used to make deliveries to local garages etc. This site was later taken over by Norwich Corporation Electricity Department, and in 1948 by Eastern Electricity but was still known to one and all as "The Anglo".

Another road which has changed its course is **New Road**, not really new, all except the newest part is more than a hundred years old. It used to be called Cabbage Court Road, the two rows of terraced houses on it are properly called Cabbage Court. They were built in the early nineteenth century by a tailor, cabbage being a term for cloth left over and taken by the tailor as a perk. This tailor built two rows of houses out of the proceeds. The new part starts below Cabbage Court, the road formerly went off to the right of the present road, through the grounds of Moor House. It was diverted when Moor House was built in 1888. The diversion involved the demolition of two cottages and the old Black Lion public house. The pub was rebuilt on its present position, the date 1889 can be seen on the gable. The council houses were built in the 1920's. The grounds of Moor House. It was diverted when Moor House was built in 1888. The diversion involved the demolition of two cottages and the old Black Lion public house. The pub was rebuilt on its present position, the date 1889 can be seen on the gable. The council houses were built in the 1920's. The rest of the building is all quite recent. Where the road is now into **Richmond Rise** was a lane called **Orchard Lane** The name of the latter has somehow got transferred to the lane from **Cawston Road** to the Moor. This lane used to be called Moor Lane or Tuft's Lane. The junction of this lane with Cawston Road was called Tuft's Post and the piece of land beside it was Tuft's Pightle. Who Tuft was and what his post was I have no idea. Cawston Road has been diverted slightly. Before the railway arrived there were six roads meeting at what is now Station Plain. However the railway reduced it to five by making Dalling and Cawston Roads use the one bridge.

Ollands Road, was once called Hall Road. Starting from the junction with Church Street, Randell's (now the Spar shop) was then Eglington and Beaver. Mr. Sidney Eglington, known as Togo, but not to his face, had as his partner Heslop Beaver. Mr. Beaver later left to go abroad to Lebanon, where he died at an advanced age. They were agricultural engineers etc. At the end nearest Church Street was an ancient building, timber framed and wattle and daub. This was once a pub, The Farriers Arms, commonly known as The Horseshoes. Next to this was the house occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Eglington. It had a red brick facing, but I believe was wattle and daub at the back. Next to the house was the travis where Walter "Progums" Rudd and Jimmy Plume used to shoe horses. Then came an open space in front of the carpenter's shop; here was the furnace where tyres were heated and also the wheel plate on which wheels were shod. Next to Malthouse Yard was the office and the "long shed". All these were cleared away to make room for the present shop. and other buildings. On the opposite side of the road was the old malt-house, also part of Eglington's premises except for the area occupied by Wilkin Bros. who had a small milling business. The far end of the maltings, in St. John's Alley was turned into a hall for the Salvation Army by Mr. Eglington, but it remained his property. Beside his main business Mr. Eglington also had an undertaker's business. When he sold out to Messrs. Randell he still retained the undertaking business and he had premises off Ollands Road, at the Pightle next to the Long Loke. He had Glebe House (*next to Newland Villas*) built on Station Road and lived there. Mr. Eglington was involved in almost every aspect of life in Reepham; as parish councillor, vice captain and captain of the fire brigade, a prominent Odd Fellow, in fact very little went on in which he did

not have a hand, or at least a finger. The Vicar, the Reverend B. P. Luscombe, used to describe him as “our worthy mayor”.

It may be appropriate at this point to have a word about St. John’s Alley. Its name derives from George St. John, who lived in the house in the Market Place called Carlton House and the shop, (*now the Bridal shop*) with all the extensive premises behind in which he manufactured candles. He was the last representative of an old established Reepham family.

A large part of Ollands Road was taken up by the grounds of The Ollands, a large house where lived E. Philips Oppenheim, well known author of spy stories. Built in 1832 for William Bircham, the brewer, it was later sold to J. A. Kendrew Esq. It has now been demolished and houses built on the site. The name The Ollands came from the land it was built on which was a croft of that name.

Mill Hill is the site of a former windmill owned by a man named George. When William Bircham built The Ollands he planted trees near the windmill, so stopping the wind and making the mill useless. This angered Mr. George, who is said to have got his own back by building the row of cottages opposite The Ollands, causing Mr. Bircham to build a high wall to stop being overlooked. I cannot vouch for the truth of this.

Opposite Mill Hill is a house that was then called The Limes (1920’s). Here lived Miss Georgianna Sharpin and her brothers, Walter and Hobart. Lastly in Ollands Road was the Crown pub, licensee Walter Ward, later Arthur Andrews. Crown Meadow on the opposite side of New Road was a venue for fairs and circuses and a stopping place for gypsies, (or didicois). One well known Romany family, the Grays, were regular visitors to the field. Nobody had any objections to them, they were very respectable people and generally welcomed. The women went from door to door selling pegs and other odds and ends and the men did a bit of “dickey dealing”. My employer, Mr. Reeder, the baker, bought a pony from them once and had no complaints. Gypsies are not the layabouts and rogues they are sometimes made out to be. I never heard of anything being stolen while they were around, though I would not guarantee that there was not an odd pheasant in their pot occasionally.

Kerdiston Road. On the right was the yard of the Methodist Chapel with its stable, gighouse and graveyard. There is now a bungalow built on it. The graveyard where the founding fathers of the chapel were buried has been desecrated, their bones removed and buried elsewhere. I wonder what those old Wesleyans would say if they could see it now. Next to the chapel used to be three rather dilapidated and very old cottages which belonged to the chapel until the 1930’s when they were sold. In the yard in front of them was a well from which they obtained their water. They had a brick wall in front and a large ash tree stood in the middle. They were demolished about 1960. Next was a market garden belonging to the Vardigans family. This is now full of houses and named **Silver End**.

Opposite was a field belonging to Irelands the auctioneers, a kind of extension to their sale ground. Here was held the annual Michaelmas sale on the nearest Wednesday to 11th October, old Michaelmas day. On that day rents were due, tenancies changed hands and farm workers changed their employer. It was the time of year when lots of people were on the move and the Michaelmas sale was a convenient way of disposing of surplus implements, furniture and various odds and ends. Crowds of people looked for a bargain. At times it was a venue for a fair after they stopped going on to the Market Place and even before it sometimes took an overflow from the Market Place. It was also the venue for circuses. Next to this field was a pightle belonging to Fords, the bakers, reaching as far as the end of **Smuggler’s Lane**. On the opposite side, where the house called Pepper’s Close now is, was an orchard belonging to Watts Austin, former butcher. (Incidentally this piece of land is called Peppers Close on the tithe map). Mr. Austin also had the next piece of ground, on which stands the house called Greenfields with a corrugated iron shed on it. It is said that this was the site where plague victims were once buried but I know of no other evidence to substantiate this. Next to Greenfields stands another pightle and beyond this used to be a post marking the boundary between Hackford and Kerdiston. Further along were the Kerdiston clay pits. There were two pits on the left close to the road, in which all the dustbin rubbish of Hackford was dumped. (The other parishes had no refuse collection). On the other side of the road was another pit with trees growing in it and water in the bottom. Next is the end of **Catchback Lane**, then a little plantation or coppice and then a meadow running down to the railway embankment. In this meadow used to be a little pit or pond in which great crested newts lived. A beck runs under the road here in a culvert under the railway bridge. This is known as Smithel Beck, really Smithfield, the name of the meadows that join **Worlds End**.

Further along on the right were three gates side by side, the two outside ones were into fields and the middle one was into a loke leading to some meadows. This was known as Parsons Three Gates and said to be haunted by the parson's ghost. I know no other details as to who the parson was or anything else. Further along, still on the left hand side is the remains of the base of Kerdiston Cross. There used to be a similar one in Hackford parish near Sun Barn Pit, destroyed when Sun Barn Walk was made. Another similar one in Whitwell just beyond the railway bridge has also now gone. Beyond the cross on the right is a very large and very old elm tree. This is known as Grandmother tree, so known for many years. It was Grandmother tree when my grandfather was a boy in the 1860's. How it got the name I do not know. The land going off to the right leads through **Kerdy Green** to Wood Dalling. On the fork were the white gates of Manor Farm, the trees which lined the drive are still there.

We next come to Old Hall Farm, the hall itself was not here but in the Giant's Moat in the meadows beyond. That was the original Manor House and believed to be the seat of the de Kerdeston family. Past the farm and turn left are some houses on the right hand side, generally called Kerdiston Clay Lumps, built of clay lump and thatch by the old Aylsham Rural District Council about 1921. They were not a great success. Traditional building materials have to be used in a traditional way but these were built in a modern style, unlike the old clay lump and thatch houses with low eaves to protect the walls. There were originally two pairs of houses but one got burnt almost to the ground and was turned into a bungalow and the roof was tiled. The other pair is now also tiled.

Next to the Clay Lumps is a narrow lane going from one road to the other, called **Blind Lane**, more or less pointing in the direction of the Giants Moat. It may have been connected at one time. There is a story of a ghostly coach, drawn by headless horses and driven by a headless coachman coming from the direction of the Giants Moat and through Blind Lane. There is a possible connection with the story of Sir Thomas Boleyn driving in a ghostly carriage over a number of bridges in Norfolk. The Boleyns did own this manor at one time. However that is mere speculation. Kerdiston Road from Smithfield onwards was called Castlegate. Gate is an Anglo-Saxon word for road or street, so this means the road to the castle, alluding to the castle or manor house which once stood within the Giant's Moat. The Giant by local tradition was that member of the de Kerdeston family whose tomb is in the chancel of St. Mary's Church. The effigy was always known as the Kerdiston Giant when I was a boy.

Now to **Reepham Moor**, starting at the Moor Corner. Where the fir trees are on the corner once stood a farm house. This was demolished when the Moor House was built. The Moor House was built by Samuel Bircham about 1888, at least that is the date over the front door. Sam Bircham, related to the brewers, was a solicitor in London. He did not live in the house for very long and it was let to various tenants. In the 1920's it was occupied by Ernest Hudson. There used to be a well known brand of washing powder called Hudson's Soap and Mr. Hudson was said to be that Hudson. I do not know if he was but we used to call him "Soapy" Hudson. In his later years he was pushed about in a wheelchair. The house on the corner, opposite the Black Lion was occupied by his gardener, Mr. Barkway. He had another gardener, John Frankland and also a garden boy. The gardens were always immaculate.

The Black Lion was built at the same time as the Moor House, as can be seen by the date on the gable end. It was built by Sam Bircham to replace the original pub which he pulled down when he built the Moor House, together with a row of cottages. These were on the other side of the road and the road was then the other side of the gardener's house and stables and came out near the Moor Corner.

The landlord of the Black Lion in the 1920's was John Marsh and after him, Tom Horn, who had previously been in the Moor Farm. The house opposite, once the veterinary surgeons, then had two cottages attached. These are all now incorporated. The large house was occupied by the Dennis family. Henry Dennis was a chimney sweep, he was originally from Norwich but his wife came from Stiffkey, from whence the family moved to Reepham and were of course known as "Stukey blues". The house was later occupied by William Overton, who had had the bakers business in Church Street, and had been forced to retire due to ill health. Mr. Overton had a Trojan car with which he did a bit of hire work, advertising it as a Clean, Cheap, Cosy ride.

On the other side, a bit further on was a General Store run by John Andrews, a retired policeman. It had previously been run by Philip Hunt who moved from there to Station Plain, where he had the former laundry made into a shop. Collison's builders yard was on the other side of the road. The two cottages opposite

Collison's were built from the bricks from the demolished farmhouse on Moor Corner. Next to them was a row of ancient thatched clay lump cottages which were demolished during the last war.

Next to the thatched cottages in the 1920's stood a barn. Originally on this spot was an old farm house which was demolished by the owner, Sam Bircham, and the barn built in its place. The house had a steep roof and the barn was made to resemble it. The farm was really more a small-holding. In the 1920's and 30's it was farmed by Fred Neale, who at first lived in the house called "The Old Monastery", and later lived in a dwelling made from two railway carriages. The whole farm is now built over.

This part of the Moor is called Stocks Hill, as on the opposite corner was where the Reepham parish stocks once stood. Just round the corner are three houses, two of them thatched and one tiled. The next house, which has a porch, is said to have been the Reepham Rectory at some time. Next is the block which contains The Old Monastery. It was given this name by a man named Lovick, a retired Superintendent of Police, who lived further along the Moor. He is supposed to have done some research and found out that there had been a monastery there, but this has been denied by people who should know. It was he who had the plaque put over the door with the head of Edward III. Mr. Lovick fancied himself as a gentleman. He usually wore a grey bowler and also spats. Behind his back he was called Blue Blood.

Next to the Monastery were some dilapidated old cottages belonging to an old lady, named Mrs. Rowlands who lived in one of them. They were demolished in 1939. Beyond the footpath to Salle was a row of seventeenth century cottages which have since been converted into a single house. Next to these on what is now part of the grounds of Moor Lodge, once stood some more houses known as Whitehall. These were demolished many years ago. Opposite is the house then occupied by the Mr Lovick mentioned above. The Moor Lodge was occupied by H. T. Owen, manager of Barclay's Bank, and his wife, a daughter of Canon Wilkinson, a former Rector of Reepham.

Beyond Moor Lodge is another group of cottages and beyond them is Manor Farm. In the 1920's this was farmed by two elderly ladies, the Misses Boddy. They had attempted to farm it since the death of their father, but unfortunately they had not been brought up as farmers but as ladies of leisure, and left the running of the farm to an employee, who made more out of it than they did. Scrupulously honest themselves, they believed others to be the same but learned the hard way. Eventually they had to leave the farm and moved to a cottage on Whitwell Road with very little to live on but the old age pension. The next tenant of the farm was Arthur Hubbard.

Further along used to be a lane, known as Sandy Lane, which crossed the railway by a crossing which was used by farm vehicles. From the railway it crossed a field and connected with a lane which led to Cawston Road. This used to be regarded as a public right of way. I do not know if it really was or not, at any rate it has disappeared without trace, like so many others which used to be walked freely when I was young. Another footpath ran from Moor Farm to Reepham Common. This apparently has also been lost (and so has the common).

The next thoroughfare we look at is now a mere footpath but it was once a main road. This is **Bar Lane** which until about 1800 was called Gracious Street and was then demoted to the status of a footpath. The name apparently comes from the fact of its being the way from Whitwell to its parish church. Gracechurch Street in the city of London was known as Gracious Street in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but was formerly called Grasse Church Street. It gets its name from the church of St. Benet Gracechurch, originally Grass Church, perhaps because it was roofed with turf, as Whitwell church may have been originally. At least the name had some connection with the church we may be sure.

So much for Gracious Street, now we come back to the 1920's. The house at the end of Bar Lane was a fish and chip shop. On the opposite side, adjoining the Greyhound, were three houses which have since been demolished. The smallest one of the three had a half door like a stable. I remember seeing the old lady who lived there, with the top half of the door open looking over the bottom half as a horse does in a stable. A bit further along were two more houses end ways to the lane. These are still there but made into one. They backed on to a building where pigs were kept and were not very salubrious. On the opposite side of the lane were cowsheds and a drain in the lane was very smelly.

There were allotments a bit further on, and on an adjoining piece of ground quoits used to be played. At the end of this section of the lane, at the junction with **Robins Lane** was a clapgate and on either side of the

gate, what was then Holah's Pasture, was a small lodge. These have now been demolished. Robin's Lane, incidentally is nothing to do with the bird, but from someone of that name. The other side of the pasture gate was another clapgate and yet another one at the Whitwell Street end.

In **Whitwell Street** the first house was the Star pub, a timber framed building with a brick facing in the front. Next to this were two ancient timber framed thatched cottages. These have been demolished and replaced by a bungalow. Next are two more old cottages which have been made into one. Then two pairs of brick and tile cottages of a later date and then Dairy Farm with its barn of 1790. Just past the junction with Duffus, or Dovehouse Lane is a small bungalow which was built in the 1920's for the cost, it is said, of £50. Next on the left are a pair of Victorian cottages which have been enlarged recently. On the right is Ivy House, which is probably Georgian. Opposite is a stile to a footpath which crosses the beck by a footbridge to Great Witchingham. Further along is a cluster of old cottages and a row of terraced houses known as Bilham's Hill; apparently from John Bilham, who is described as a machine owner in White's Norfolk Directory of 1845. Beyond this point the road becomes a narrow lane, little more than a footpath and joins Mill Road.

Stoney Lane starts at Station Plain and ends by the railway bridge on Kerdiston Road. On the left hand side were nothing but fields but on the right was railway property. The only building near the road was a tarred wooden building which had once been occupied by a family as a dwelling. This was replaced by a garage, which was used by Messrs. Stimpson and Hurn who had one of the station granaries. A bit further along were the cattle pens where on market days cattle were loaded on to trucks for London. A large number of fat bullocks went from Reepham market each week, from Whitwell station as well as Reepham.

Just past the cattle pens was a post marking the boundary of Reepham and Kerdiston and on the opposite side one marking the boundary of Hackford. Up to this point Reepham is on the right and Hackford on the left of Stoney Lane.

At the bottom of the hill was a bungalow made from a railway carriage. This site has an interesting history. In the early 1920's a man named Dick Woods returned to Reepham from Canada, a disillusioned emigrant. He bought this piece of land and put on it a sort of shepherd's hut and here he lived. He tried several ways of making a living. He went from door to door selling small items and on Saturday nights he had a stall on the market place from which he sold hot peas. After a year or two of this Dick married and got a regular job on a farm at Brandiston which had a house with the job. For many years afterwards Dick and his wife could be seen at weekends riding round the countryside on a tandem. His place on Stoney Hill was taken by another returned wanderer, an elderly man named Henry Juby. Henry was a boy working on a farm at Kerdiston when he was involved in some boyish mischief. Being afraid of his employer's anger he ran away. It was rather like the old boys adventure stories where the hero runs away to sea. Henry made his way to the coast where he got a job on a ship and eventually got to America, worked as a cowhand for a time but worked his way over many parts of the country. A book of his experiences would have made fascinating reading. About 1925, after about fifty years away, he decided to come home to Reepham. The railway had not been built when he left and when he got off the train at Reepham station he did not know where he was. However he soon got his bearings and made his way to his sister's house at Hackford Vale. He took the site at Stoney Lane from Dick Woods and there he lived for the next ten years or so. I remember seeing him wearing one of those broad brimmed hats made familiar by the cowboy films. About 1935 he went back to America but to his disgust he was refused admission. Back in England again he refused to be beaten and went to Canada. He said it would be easy to walk over the border. That is what he did it seems as he was away for another three or four years, returning just before the outbreak of war. He did not go away again but died in Reepham at a good old age.

Meanwhile the Stoney Lane site had been taken over by Fred Egmore, a chimney sweep. He had a railway carriage put there and lived in it with his wife and family. They were there until the 1950's when an elderly couple named Brett, who were Londoners, lived there.

The last person to live there was Dudley Bush, an eccentric character whose father was a builder at Cawston. Dudley is still remembered by many Reepham people. Someone has taken the place over and is doing some work on it*. There may be another chapter to the Stoney Lane story.

* Since this was written it became "The Wooden Bungalow" and kept the name for some time after being rebuilt in brick.

Back Street merits a chapter of its own.

(THE) BACK STREET

That is how we used to call it, The Back Street with a sign to prove it. In my younger days this street stretched from the rear of the Sun Inn down to the George and Dragon corner; but now the bottom half has a sign saying Church Street. To an old native like me this seems all wrong. Other roads in Reepham are also differently named from those they had in my younger days.

However, this description, starting at the rear of the Sun Inn,²⁹ will include the part now called Church Street. The Sun belonged to the Norwich brewers, Steward and Patterson, Pockthorpe Brewery. The Watson family were the licensees for many years. The pub was altered considerably in the 1920's. I do not remember what it looked like before that. Next are the backs of the other houses on the south side of the Market Place, thus explaining the derivation of the name. Ivy House²⁸ was the home of Mrs. Wilton and family in the 1920's. She ran the telephone exchange, (not many phones in those days) until Barclays Bank took over Mr. Jewell's the druggist's shop. Mrs. Wilton moved across the road, taking the telephone exchange with her. Mr. Jewell moved to Ivy House, turning part of it into a shop. Ivy House is now Purdy's, the solicitors office and the shop, after various uses, is now a florists. Ivy House has no outlet to Back Street.

Next to Ivy House was the Post Office²⁷ in what was called Iona House, home of the postmaster Donald Kendall Chapman and his two sisters, Hilary a semi invalid, and Olive who kept house and helped in the Post Office and shop. The Post Office is now a greengrocers and the Chapman's front room is now part of Diane's Pantry.²⁶ The main part of the latter was the shop and dwelling of a butcher, William Utting, who had taken it after Watts Austin, the last of a long line of butchers of that name. After Mr Utting retired a Mr and Mrs. Bennett had a fishmongers business there. Next is the rear of the King's Arms,⁵² formerly stables. Where the concrete path is next to the street was formerly a lean-to building which took all the droppings etc. from the stables which were eventually carted away to manure the fields. This added to other smells in the street, which included fish and chips, baking bread, beer, smelly drains, pigs and cows. Not a very pleasant environment. Sewell Eglington's cows came along the street twice a day to be milked.

Next to Pudding Pie alley was a high wall, totally enclosing the garden of the Bircham Institute till part of it was demolished to make an access from the street. It is now in a ruinous state and rather an eyesore.

The next buildings⁵³ were originally the stable and Coach House belonging to Hackford House. When Sam Bircham gave Hackford House to Reepham to become the Bircham Institute these buildings were the Scout Headquarters and were not included in the gift. The Scout troop was run by Mr. Bircham and at his death the Scouts troop died too and the buildings became vacant. They were later sold to Mr. J. Symonds who turned them into a house and granary. His wife started the fish and chip shop. This is still going after seventy years or more, under various owners.

Then came three old cottages, built endways to the street. The first was Bob Gray's barber's shop⁵⁴ with the traditional barber's pole outside. He had two lurcher dogs and was reputed to do a bit of poaching. His prices for hair cuts were four old pence men and two pence boys. He lived with his wife in the cottage next door. About 1933 Mr. Gray was taken into Thorpe Mental hospital. The story goes that Spriggs the butcher was having a shave when Bob started behaving in an alarming manner so Spriggs got up from the chair and ran off down the street with lather on his face and a towel round his neck. The shop was then taken over by barber, Clifford Plume who was only sixteen at the time. The cottages were demolished by John Ringwood. He built the present house on the site and named it "Llamedos" (try reading it backwards). He converted the former blacksmiths shop into a hairdressers shop for his wife Christine. As well as being a builder Mr. Ringwood was a professional wrestler, fighting under the name of "Reepham Ringo". He was accidentally killed when a trench that he was working in collapsed.

The Town Hall⁵⁵ was built by subscription in 1860 as the Hackford and Whitwell parochial school which it remained till the 1890's. It was replaced by a new school in Whitwell parish. Much altered, it is now known as Reepham County Primary School. The old school was then called Hackford Parish Hall until the three parishes of Reepham were united under one parish council when it became Reepham Town Hall, and despite claims by the church it has always been the property of the parish.

Back Street has a sandy subsoil for its whole length, unlike the Market Place which is a chalky clay. The churches are probably built on sand, a better foundation for a building than clay, despite the biblical parable of the house built on sand. Many of our medieval churches are built on sand. When the new church was built at Bawdeswell in the 1950's the architect James Fletcher-Watson had all the foundations dug down to the undisturbed sand. At the bottom of the street by the corner of the churchyard it is running sand, a sort of underground stream which caused quite a problem when the sewer was being laid. This may not now be the same as I believe the water table is lower than it was then. When the sewer and water main were being laid a man's skeleton, said to have been about three hundred years old, was uncovered in the middle of the street. I found a small copper coin nearby dating from Charles II which may have been buried with the body. Who he was and why buried in the street is a mystery. Unfortunately I subsequently lost the coin.

The first house on the southside of the street was the Duke of York public house,⁵⁶ said to be the oldest pub in Reepham. The landlord Mr. Tom Bacon was a real character, such as is not seen nowadays. He was an unusual publican in that he was a teetotaler. He also farmed a little land, worked on the sale ground on Market days and was refuse collector and night soil mover for Hackford Parish, the only one of the four parishes that ran to such luxuries at that time. After he had rubber tyres put on his night soil cart someone stopped and asked him what place this was he replied "Reepham, the only place with three churches in one churchyard and a po cart on rubbers" The horse he used he acquired about the time the Duke of Kent married Princess Marina, so the horse was named Marina. Marina pulled his cart for many years.

Somewhere on the corner near the entrance to the Duke of York yard is where the three parishes of Reepham St. Mary, Hackford and Whitwell meet. According to H.E. Hawes' "Reepham in Threes" a man, walking thirty paces from St. Mary's Church gate towards the Duke of York, will be standing in all three parishes. There is a fragment of an ancient cross, preserved in St. Mary's Church, said to have stood where the three parishes meet. I believe that this could have been the original churchyard cross, placed there before the churches were built. No doubt some would disagree.

On the other side of the street, starting from the former Duke of York pub is a row of small terraced cottages, built, I believe by William Sewell. He lived further along the street at The Oaks. At the end of this row is another small cottage, joined to a much larger house⁵⁷ which in the 1920's was occupied by John Russell, watch and clockmaker. Adjoining this is a smaller building, formerly a lodging house.

One of the cottages had a large sign on the front saying H. Watson, tailor. It is said Mr. Watson once had a shop in Cromer which failed, causing him to return to his native town of Reepham; (he was I believe brother to Fred Watson of the Sun). Mr. and Mrs. Watson had two daughters, one of which married Lee Hall, eldest son of John Hall the harness maker. He worked for Purdy and Holly solicitors and was secretary of the Eynsford Lodge of Odd Fellows. The other daughter married Cecil Miller, son of Mrs. B.M. Miller newsagent in the Market Place. There was also a son called Colin. Another resident of whom I shall write later was Alfred Burrage, a baker. I must also mention the Wyers who used to sell sweets at their door and ice cream in summer. James Wyer, nicknamed Swimmer, used to have a stall on the Market Place on Saturdays selling ice cream. The small cottage next to John Russell's was occupied by Mr. Sam Lynn. and his wife. People often addressed him as Mr Ling but his name was Lynn as in King's Lynn. After the Lynns departed it was taken by George Dunnett and his wife. Mr. Dunnett was over ninety years of age. There were not many of those around in those days.

Next to The Lodging House is Rookery Farm,⁵⁸ occupied in the 1920's by Mrs. Holah. She carried on farming after the death of her husband, George. She had a grown up son and daughter, Stanley and Violet, and a younger son and daughter, George and Nancy who were at school with me. When Mrs. Holah retired, the farm was taken over by Alfred Steward. He came from Marsham and had won a bit of money on the football pools, or so it was said. This enabled him to take on the farm and run it successfully for many years. However his life was not without trouble. When he came to Reepham he had a wife and two daughters and another daughter was born at Reepham. While this girl was still quite young Mrs. Steward died. Later on Mr. Steward married Queenie, daughter of Monty Bishop, landlord of the Kings Arms. The two older daughters both got married and later on sadly died. The younger daughter, Doreen, married Austin Burton and went to live at Dairy Farm, Whitwell Street.

Next to Rookery Farm stands the house at the end of Bar Lane.⁵⁹ This used to be a shop, occupied in the 1920's by Ambrose Frankland and family who sold fish and chips. Ambrose and his wife, whose maiden name was Skipper, were members of the Plymouth Brethren who had a meeting place in the Market Place

next to Hiltons (now the Town Office). When another fish and chip shop opened at the Towns End the Franklands gave up and moved to a Council house on Station Road. The house was then taken by carpenter Cecil Miller and his wife. The shop window was used to display gravestones. The Millers later moved to the Mill House on Ollands Road. The shop window was removed and replaced by a door and the place was used as a garage for some years and later turned back into a house.

On the other side of Bar Lane is the Greyhound,⁶⁰ the only pub in Reepham, except for the Duke of York, which belonged to the Norwich brewery of Youngs, Crawshay and Youngs. The landlord in the early 1920's was named Godfrey. I do not remember him very well but the next landlord was Arthur Medler. The Medlers had three young sons, Raymond, Arthur and John who went to Reepham School. Arthur was killed in a road accident some years ago, I do not know about Raymond but John is still going strong, I believe as a timber merchant etc. at Felthorpe.

Next to the Greyhound yard is Eglinton's yard.⁶¹ This goes through to School Road but is not a public right of way. There was a pump in the Greyhound yard which was used by all the houses round about. On the left of the yard is the old bakery office, which in the 1920's was occupied by Herbert Neal and later by Albert Reeder. George Douglas, who worked for Mr. Neal, was found drowned in Booton claypits. This tragedy led the Neals to give up the bakery business and move to Station Road. On the right hand side of the yard was the house and shop, miscalled "The Old Bakery",⁶² that was occupied by the baker. This bakery goes back to the eighteenth century and was then occupied by the Scurll family. Readers of Parson Woodforde's Diary will remember Woodforde's servant whom he called Briton and who was the son of Mr. Scurll who had this bakery; not the bakery in the Market Place as some people think. The cottage adjoining the house was used by Sewell Eglinton as a dairy.

The Oaks⁶³ was the home of Miss Edith Eglinton and her nephew Sewell William Pescod Eglinton junior who farmed the land which went with the house. The Eglintons were descended from the Sewell family, who built wagons and houses and were farmers, undertakers and goodness knows what else. They had occupied the property for many generations. Apparently they never threw anything away and when Sewell Eglinton died there was an amazing collection of ancient implements, tools etc. which were sold by auction and raised a large sum of money

Next to The Oaks was the house and shop occupied by the Wilkerson family who sold, beside grocery, a bit of almost everything. The Wilkersons originally came from the Broads area, where Mr. Wilkerson had once been a Wherryman. He had a pony and cart with which he ran a regular round selling paraffin and various other items, announcing his presence with a cry of 'lamp oil'. The shop later passed to his son George who ran the business for many years.

One of the next cottages was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Chilly. Mr. Chilly was a signalman at Whitwell Station. Mrs. Chilly was a Scottish lady from somewhere near Fort William, I believe.

The first house in the next block of buildings was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. W. Freeston. The adjoining house was used by Mrs. Freeston as an egg depot with a board on the wall announcing this. Most people in those days (1920's and 30's) kept a few hens and could here dispose of any surplus eggs. Mr. Freeston was a coal merchant in a small way with a depot at Whitwell Station. Nelson Yard⁶⁴ has a row of four terraced houses⁶⁵ set back from the street and then there is Nelson House.⁶⁶ This former public house was the home of the Pask family who had a tailor's shop at the Town's End. Mr. William Alfred Pask was apprenticed to a tailor in Reepham in the 1870's and afterwards set up his own business. Married three times he raised a large family and lived to a great age. It is said he could remember seeing a public hanging in Norwich as a boy

The house with half timbering has been given the name The Cardinal's Hat.⁶⁷ Why, I do not know. The half timbering is only on the street-side, the rest is brick. Until about thirty years ago it had no access to Back Street, the only access was by Sun Barn Yard which was its postal address. It was acquired by George Anderson an architect by profession, who made a doorway into the street and restored the house to what he thought it was like in Tudor times. He called the house "Candle Court". George Anderson had an interesting history. He was the illegitimate son of Herbert Smith, a butler, and a Swedish maid. George was brought, as an infant in 1895 to his grandparents Mr. and Mrs. Smith who lived at Whitwell, where Mr. Smith was employed at Leeds' tannery. The Swedish lady it seems went home to Sweden. In 1904 Stephen Leeds died and his tannery was sold to Major Timothy White of Salle Park who closed the tannery and dismissed all the workers. The Smiths were left destitute and had to apply for relief from the parish. There was no redundancy

pay or unemployment benefit in those days. They then moved to the lower end of Back Street, now known as Church Street. George grew up in Reepham knowing nothing of his origin until he was joining the army in World War One. His father told him the story. He had not been told who his parents were and did not know that the Smiths were his grandparents. After the war, although his father did not approve, he decided to go to Sweden to look up his mother's family. He was warmly welcomed. He became an architect in Norwich and was involved in the restoration of Norwich Cathedral. He married a Miss Venables, the daughter of a Methodist minister and had one daughter, Margaret, who also became an architect. On retirement he bought the house as related above and lived there until his death.

Nothing seems to be known about the early history of this house except that it dates back to Tudor times. Mr. Anderson had an idea that it might once have been Hackford Rectory. My guess is that it was the farmhouse for Sun Barn Farm or that it could have belonged to the adjoining malt house or perhaps they all went together. The part of the malt house⁶⁸ next door was once a house, and for a time, a florist's shop.

THE OLD BAKERY

The following article was written in the early days of the Reepham Society as a contribution to the Newsletter, it was also published in the now defunct magazine Norfolk Fair. This was in the 1970's. Dick Joice was a Norfolk farmer who became a presenter on Anglia Television in its early days and appeared almost every day. A programme that he used to present was called "Bygones" He was guest speaker at a cheese and wine party at Whitwell Hall given by the Reepham Society. This was an annual event at that time, (about 1970).

He was not expecting anyone to recognise the bread rasp and was somewhat disconcerted when I did. I had not seen one since the 1930's. It was identical to the one I had used about forty years before in Reeder's Bakery in Back Street, and it brought back a lot of memories. Later on I also recognised a tool for taking bark from trees to use for tanning. Dick was not very pleased. Dick Joice is no longer with us but I believe his collection of bygones can still be seen at Holkham Hall.

On a personal note, I started work at the Old Bakery in 1934; the proprietor then being Mr. Albert Reeder and his son Walter. Neither father nor son had been long in the baking trade. Mr. Reeder senior had been manager of a shoe shop in Cromer and Walter had been a grocery assistant. The most experienced person working there was Mr. Alfred Burrage, a pensioner who worked part time to supplement his pension (ten shillings per week in those days). He was born in Norwich, the son of a master baker I believe and had followed his father in the business but failed it seems through drink. However, he knew the baking trade thoroughly and I got a good grounding from him.

When I wrote the article I did not know much about the history of the bakery, but I have learned since that it was owned in the eighteenth century by the Sewell family who figure in Woodforde's' *"Diary of a Country Parson"* The servant whom the parson calls Briton was the son of the baker.

The shop and house were next to the street, but the bake office (as it was called) was and still is at the bottom of the yard – a low lean-to building with a big chimney. It had a stable door entrance and in the middle of the room was the trough (pronounced to rhyme with dough) in which the dough was made, and on the right was the table on which it was scaled and moulded. At the far end was the oven, built of brick, known as a side flue oven, with a coal burning furnace on the left. When the oven was fired the flames would circle round the oven to the flue on the right.

One dough would be made overnight. Sacks of flour, or more correctly half sacks (140lbs), were stacked next to the wall behind the trough. Two sacks were shot into the trough, enough for one batch. Water had to be carried in pails from a pump in the Greyhound yard next door. (No piped water in those days). Water was heated in the oven in an iron boiler and, when the correct temperature, was added to the flour. Yeast and salt were dissolved separately and the whole lot mixed by hand, then wrapped up to keep it warm and left till morning.

Early next morning the oven would be stoked up and the dough taken from the trough and put on the table. While this was being scaled, moulded and put into tins someone would be making another “faster” dough which would be ready for use when the first batch was drawn.

By the time the first batch had proved in the tins, the oven would be up to temperature, the smoky pieces of coal raked from the furnace and the oven swabbed out. The swab was a wet sack attached to a long pole and used for cleaning the floor and walls of the oven. The tinned loaves were placed in the oven using the peel (a flat shovel with a long handle). The furnace was blocked off from the oven by the boiler, full of water, and a piece of sheet iron, to stop the loaves nearest the furnace getting burnt. After forty five minutes the bread was ready, using the peel again; this brings me back to the bread rasp, used for removing any black which might have got onto a loaf from the oven sides. The next dough was then scaled off, the oven flashed, the process repeated. Though this method seems crude, the product was much better than the “stuff” produced by modern bakeries.

After the bread and other goods had been baked, the next job was cooking peoples’ dinners. Many of the houses did not have ovens and electricity was too expensive, so, particularly at weekends, joints of meat, Yorkshire puddings and many other items were brought to the Bake Office to be cooked. The charge I believe was 2d per item, not what could be called dear. Bakers did not make a fortune from this service, but as the oven was already hot, it was all profit. The same thing happened on Christmas morning with Christmas dinners, but the oven had to be specially heated on this occasion.

The price of bread during these years ranged from 3¼d to 4¼d per 2lb loaf, less than one tenth of the present price – and a loaf today is only 1¾lbs.

There were two other bakeries in Reepham – Ford’s in the Market Place and Morley’s in Church Street – but alas now there are none.

THE IRONMONGER’S SHOP

The ironmonger’s shop of Edward Gibbs & Son was said to have started in the eighteenth century and was supposed to be the oldest ironmongery shop in Norfolk. The first mention I can find is in Pigott’s National Directory of 1830 where Mary George, is listed as an Ironmonger and Colour and Seed Dealer. This is similar to the entry in White’s Norfolk Directory of 1836. In Harrod’s Directory of 1868 the name is William George. White in 1883 lists S&W Leeds. Edward Gibbs took over in 1888.

As a small boy I frequently visited these premises as my grandfather worked there. An ironmonger’s shop may not seem the most interesting place but I found it fascinating. The shop with its smell of linseed oil, turpentine and goodness knows what, stairs leading to mysterious cellars or attics that contained all sorts of interesting things. Most intriguing of all was the seed room, up a winding staircase and three stories high, through a doorway with a sign saying “Mind your head”. This was where the grass and clover seeds were mixed for hay.

Occasionally I was allowed to accompany my grandfather when he went with a horse and cart delivering iron bars to blacksmiths in the district. I remember Millet’s of Sparham and Barret’s of Lyng among others. The journey to Lyng was particularly exciting as it meant going through the river; the present bridge had not then been built. Another blacksmith was Mr. Hardiment at Kerdiston where the horse was shod. I also remember going to Weston House and also Heydon Hall. These trips were to deliver paraffin I think, I may be wrong. It was a long time ago and I was very young. Sadly, for me, these trips came to an end when Mr. Gibbs replaced the cart with a motor vehicle. A man named Henry Rose drove this. Grandfather never learned to drive it.

My grandfather, Thomas Piercy, worked at the shop for Stephen Leeds for some years before Mr. Gibbs took over the business. He was born in 1861 and lived with his parents at Thorney Farm, Kerdiston, where his father was steward. Aged fourteen he left school (the old Hackford and Whitwell school, now Reepham Town Hall), and worked with his father on the farm till 1879. He decided that he did not care much for farm work and got a job with S. & S.W. Leeds, Ironmongers and Steel merchants at fifteen shillings (75p) per week. The two Leeds were uncle and nephew, both named Stephen, not to be confused with Leeds the tanner at Whitwell who was also named Stephen. The elder Leeds lived at the shop and the younger at Church Hill,

in the house now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Betts. After some years, Thomas decided to join the Metropolitan Police but when the Leeds heard of it they promptly raised his wages to a pound, which persuaded him to change his mind.

The two Leeds both died within a short time and the business was sold to Mr. Edward Gibbs. The Leeds widows lived together at Church Hill where young Stephen's son, Willy, also died of consumption.

When Mr. Gibbs first took over he knew the ironmongery trade but not so much about the seed side of the business and relied on grandfather's knowledge. The two were about the same age and became more like friends than employer and employee. Grandfather's eldest son, Fred, was apprenticed at Gibbs but was killed in an accident in the shop. Another son, Wilfred, took his place. After serving his time he went to work for a Norwich Ironmonger. He volunteered for the army in the 1914-18 war and was killed in action in 1916. Grandfather stayed at the shop till he took his pension at the age of 65, and even then he still went in part time almost until his death in 1930, making 50 years all told.

This piece was intended to be about the ironmonger's shop but has turned out to be mostly about my grandfather, but perhaps it will be of some interest to those who are interested in the past; it is a piece of social history anyway.

Sadly, the shop is no more, the buildings remain but have been converted to other uses. These old fashioned ironmongers have had their day; they either had to change to meet present day requirements or perish. Many of the goods that were their stock in trade are no longer needed. With no horses on farms, blacksmiths have no need of iron for horseshoes. There is not much demand for paraffin and shotgun cartridges are mass-produced, not filled by hand as my grandfather used to do at Gibbs. On the seed side there is a similar story, with no horses eating hay there is none grown and no demand for hayseed. Cattle are not fattened in yards any more so there is no demand for swede or mangold seeds. Much as we may regret the passing of these traditional trades, change is inevitable. Ironmongery and seed merchanting is one of many trades that once flourished in Reepham that have now gone.

THE BAND HALL

The United Methodist Chapel has now disappeared and two houses now occupy its site in Fisher's Alley. In this Chapel before the 1914 war Mr. Horace Howard, a farmer at Booton, started a bible class for young men that proved quite popular. However early in the war with Zeppelin raids and blackout restrictions, Mr. Howard reluctantly decided that he could not carry on the class. Mr. John Walker had recently arrived in Reepham to open a branch for Wallace King, the Norwich furniture store. Mr. Walker was a strong temperance advocate and he suggested to Mr. Howard that a Band of Hope should be started in the Chapel after a Band of Hope had been successfully running at Sparham. Mr. Howard agreeing, the Reepham Band of Hope was launched and soon had 100 members including men of the Middlesex Yeomanry who were billeted in the town. Mr. Walker was assisted by Mr. C. Guyton, carpenter and Mr. Sam Barrett and family, a farmer in Whitwell.

The Band of Hope, which was not confined to United Methodists but had members from all denominations, rapidly outgrew the Chapel and larger premises were needed. An army hut was found on Mousehold Heath which was purchased by Jesse Bircham, a Reepham chemist who also bought for £70 from H. E. Hawes the site in Sun Barn Yard where once had been some sort of pig and poultry market before Ireland's market started in the 1880's. The hut was erected on this site and given to the United Methodist Society by Mr. Bircham. It opened in 1922 and was called the Methodist Hall. It was chiefly for the use of the Band of Hope but also for any other Methodist purpose. It had wooden forms for seating, was lit by acetylene gas and heated by a coke-burning boiler.

In its new home the Band of Hope went from strength to strength. Membership increased to several hundreds, weekly meetings were well attended by people of all ages. Some of the leaders were talented singers or instrumentalists who passed on their skills to others. Choirs and musical groups were formed and a great deal of unsuspected talent was discovered. A football club was formed to play in a local league and did so with some success. Perhaps the most successful product was the brass band, which is still going strong under the name of Matthews Norfolk Brass.

The Band of Hope flourished through the 1920's and early 30's and then it started to decline. John Walker and others died and people moved away and so on. In 1934 under the Act of Union the various Methodist Societies united to become the Methodist Church, the Chapel in the Alley was closed and with the demise of the Band of Hope, the Hall became redundant and it was decided to sell it. The band was still flourishing and managed to raise the money to buy the Hall, which was renamed the Band Hall, the band now being Reepham Town Temperance Band. There was of course a serious purpose behind the Band of Hope but a lot of fun was had too which perhaps accounted for its popularity.

REEPHAM VOLUNTEER FIRE BRIGADE

White's Norfolk Directory for 1890 states under Reepham "The Fire Brigade comprises two engines, two Captains and twenty men. For over a hundred years an engine has been stationed here." This puts the beginning of the Brigade to the latter part of the eighteenth century. Exactly how it originated is not clear except that it was not supported by public money. Each time it attended a fire, payment was made by the insurance company involved, but who provided the cash to purchase the first engine we do not know.

I first remember the Fire Brigade in the 1920's. The engine was worked by hand by two or three men on each side working the pump. Water was always a problem as there were no fire hydrants in those days. When the fire was in the town they would use the Sun Barn Pit which was where the present fire station is now. Outside the town they had to use the nearest pit or stream. (They are always pits, not ponds in Norfolk.)

It was quite a long process getting the engine to the fire. Somebody had to report a fire to the captain who would then go to the church and "jangle the bells" which called out the firemen and the farmer who provided the horses. Then the fire engine had to be loaded on to a trolley and driven to the fire. If the fire was on a farm the farmer would usually send his own horses to meet the engine hoping to get it there faster.

A lot of the fires were of haystacks which had over heated and among the equipment of the brigade were hay knives for cutting the stack and cromes, which are long handled rake-like implements for pulling the burning hay away from that which might be saved.

The captain at this time was George Fisher, who had a grocery and drapery shop in the Market Place. Sidney Eglington, agricultural engineer, was Vice Captain. All the rest of the firemen worked in and around the Market Place in shops, etc.

By about 1930 George Fisher had retired and S.P. Eglington had become captain. The old manual fire engine was sold together with its trolley to a farmer of Wood Dalling and a steam pump was acquired, from Lowestoft, I believe. It was a magnificent machine with lots of gleaming brass. This put Reepham one up on the old rival, Aylsham who was still using its old manual engine. The steam engine still had to be towed to a fire and was soon discarded in favour of a Dennis motorised engine. The brigade also acquired uniforms topped up with a cap similar to that worn by sailors.

About this time Thomas Cook of Sennowe Park, Guist, who had his own fire brigade on his estate, started to organise competitions on his park where fire brigades from all over Norfolk competed for a trophy of some sort into which Reepham enthusiastically entered. I cannot remember if they ever won. Mr. Cook later became Sir Thomas Cook, MP for North Norfolk and was known in the national press as the firemen's MP until he was defeated in the 1945 election and disappeared from the scene.

The Second World War saw the end of the volunteer brigade. All fire brigades were united in the National Fire Service. Reepham's Dennis fire engine was taken over by the government and despite the fact that it was not bought with public money and had been bought by the efforts of the firemen, no compensation was paid. Most firemen carried on in spite of their disgust at their treatment but some left. Some people who registered for National Service were directed to the fire service as auxiliaries. They had to sleep in the fire station on certain nights on standby in case of fire. I forgot to mention that the fire engine was then kept in the former Primitive Methodist Chapel in Dereham Road which had been bought by Edward Gibbs and let to the Fire Brigade. After the end of the war fire fighting was all taken over by Counties, in our case Norfolk Fire Service. The firemen were now called retained men and received regular payments. The old do-it-yourself fire brigade was just a memory, almost forgotten today.

I will end this account with an excerpt from "*A True Story*" by H.E. Hawes, born Reepham 1863, writing about the town in his youth. "Mr. St. John was captain of the Reepham Manual Fire Brigade. Every year at Midsummer time he had the Fire Brigade in the Market Place for a practice. William Bircham the Brewer had four or five water carts of water ready for the occasion. After the practice St. John gave the firemen a shilling each and then the men adjourned to the Brewery for light refreshment (the quantity was best known to themselves). Francis Bircham, second son of the Brewer, got all the boys together and when the engine played water over the Bank Building, he gave the Hip Hip Hurray and then again Hip Hip Hurray!" On that cheerful note we say goodbye to the Fire Brigade.

LAW AND ORDER IN REEPHAM

Riots in Reepham

It may come as a surprise to some people to learn that there have been riots in Reepham, but Reepham has not always been the peaceful spot that it is now. There have in the past been many riots and disturbances. One outbreak that is well documented occurred in 1830/31.

In the early nineteenth century there was widespread poverty and distress among the rural population. The enclosure acts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had created a class of landless labourers. Many of these had previously had their own piece of land in the common field and grazing rights on the common. Some of the smaller farmers could not afford the expense of fencing their share at the enclosure and were forced to sell to the larger farmers, and were thus reduced to landless labourers. The cottagers too who kept a cow on the common and rights of collecting fuel also became totally dependent on wages. This naturally suited the farmers who now had a tame labour force which would no longer be looking after its own affairs when the farmer needed it most. Wages were very low and with no land and common rights lost, starvation was imminent. The rich became richer, the better off became rich and the poor became very poor indeed. The smaller farmers, the once proud Yeomen of England, had become paupers.

This situation naturally gave rise to widespread discontent and occasioned outbreaks of rioting. A great deal of resentment was directed against the threshing machines which some farmers had installed. These worked by horse power thereby depriving the labourers of their winter occupation of threshing by hand in the barn. Without this employment many families became destitute in winter and had to go into the dreaded workhouse. An additional cause of distress was the decline of hand loom weaving, which had been a part-time occupation for many families in Norfolk and was being replaced by power driven looms in the mills of Yorkshire and Lancashire.

The disturbances of 1830/31 began in Kent in April and quickly spread over the whole of southern England, including Norfolk. Threatening letters were received by large farmers, members of the gentry who were also magistrates, and by parsons who were often also magistrates. The parsons at this time were classed with the gentry, in fact they were often younger sons who were provided for by presenting them to the family living. They took the money but often left the work of the parish to an underpaid curate. Their income came from tithes, which had often been commuted for a cash payment, which remained the same in good years and bad. Many parsons, not all, demanded their pound of flesh regardless of the farmers' ability to pay. The amount of rent the farmer had to pay the landlord, and the tithe he had to pay the parson was the farmer's excuse for the low wages he paid his labourers, hence the labourers' hatred of the parson. When the day of reckoning came for those who had taken part in the rioting, it was often the parson who showed the most vindictiveness towards the labourers. So much for the Christian spirit.

Reepham was very much involved in these disturbances. In mid November two or three hundred people from Cawston, Salle and other of the surrounding villages came to Reepham demanding wages of 2/6 (approx. 12p). Unfortunately or otherwise a detachment of cavalry had arrived in the town a short time before them. The magistrates, with the constables and the military stopped the crowd at the entrance to the town, where they were addressed at great length by the Rev. John Bedingfield Collyer, on "the dangers and follies of their tumultuous proceedings" and how they were liable to the "penalties of the law". Whether because of the exhortations of Mr. Collyer or from the presence of the soldiers, the people went quietly away. Either on this or another occasion Sir Jacob Astley was pelted with stones by a mob in Reepham. Soon after this a meeting of magistrates and landowners was held at Reepham, in the Kings Arms, for the purpose of swearing in special constables and to discuss matters arising from the disturbances. At this meeting a number of

resolutions were passed regarding advancing the labourers' wages. While the meeting was in progress a crowd of labourers assembled in the Market Place. The Rev. Collyer, who was in the chair, spoke to them from the Inn window, telling them of the resolutions that had been passed for their benefit and again warning them of the consequences of breaking the law, and that the government would adopt every means to remedy the things complained of. With this the crowd dispersed. We do not know if they believed that the government would do anything to relieve them, if they did they were mistaken. All the government of Sir Robert Peel apparently did was to encourage the courts to severely punish the rioters brought before them for machine breaking and other offences.

A number of incidents took place in the vicinity of Reepham. On the 23rd November, 1830 a threshing machine was destroyed at Themelthorpe, two days later one was destroyed at Kerdiston and another at Whitwell. On the 29th there was a riot at Sparham. Other incidents involved the destruction of agricultural and non agricultural machinery at Cawston, Foulsham and Lyng. (There was a paper mill at the latter place.)

In the first of the trials which followed the riots, sentences of death and transportation for life were handed out wholesale, but later there was a reluctance of juries to convict. In the end 487 persons were transported and 29 were hanged; 2 from Norfolk were hanged, 11 transported and 59 nine jailed. This was the last rising of the labourers. After this they were too depressed to protest any more. Their condition remained much the same for another generation or two. They were looked upon as second class citizens and were not given the right to vote until long after the rest of the male population.

The labourers seem to have given up hope of improving their lot in this world and instead looked forward to the after life when they would be rewarded for their hardships. The Primitive Methodists made many converts at this time by the work of the preacher, the Rev. Robert Kay in Norfolk. I have told of his mission in Reepham elsewhere. However, Primitive Methodism contributed indirectly to the rise of the National Union of Agricultural Workers. Methodists had the incentive to learn to read the Bible and to become local preachers, getting into the way of speaking in public. The union branches were organised on similar lines to the Methodist Society and the union's aims were based on the Christian Gospel rather than on Karl Marx. Reepham played a part in the organisation of the union.

TRANSPORTATION FOR STEALING A SHEEP

The story of The Laurels, Dereham Road

This house was originally called the Veranda House and this is the story of its origin as told to Henry Edward Hawes by its original owner, his father's uncle, Thomas Lincoln.

When Thomas was about 19 he was apprehended and charged with sheep stealing. This, he said, was wrong. In those days sheep stealing could be punishable with hanging. In Thomas' case he was transported to Sydney, Australia, where he lived for thirty years. During this time he hired a sheep ranch, began fattening sheep and saved money. He married an Australian woman whom he brought to Reepham where they made their home with Mr. John Neale, farmer of Whitwell Street. After a short stay, Thomas made up his mind to build a house on the Dereham Road. He got in touch with a Mr. Gallant and bought a piece of land and built a house with a veranda in the Australian style. On completion Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln moved in. The small house next door to Veranda House, known as The Beeches, was built on a piece of land given as a present to Mr. Neale's daughter Elizabeth for the kindness they received while waiting for the completion of Veranda House. Fred Howard built the house and married Elizabeth.

Veranda House later came into Henry Hawes' possession and he and his family lived there for many years carrying on a business as builder and undertaker until he was declared bankrupt in the 1920's and all his property was sold. He then moved into one of the council houses he had built a few years earlier on Station Road. Veranda House now known as The Laurels was bought by Edward Gibbs, ironmonger.



Hackford and Whitwell School Infant Class 1921 or 1922
Wesley Piercy front row right, nearest to camera



Weighbridge on former Cattle Sale Ground
(now Station Road Car Park)



The Sun Barn (now replaced by houses)
from Fire Station Yard



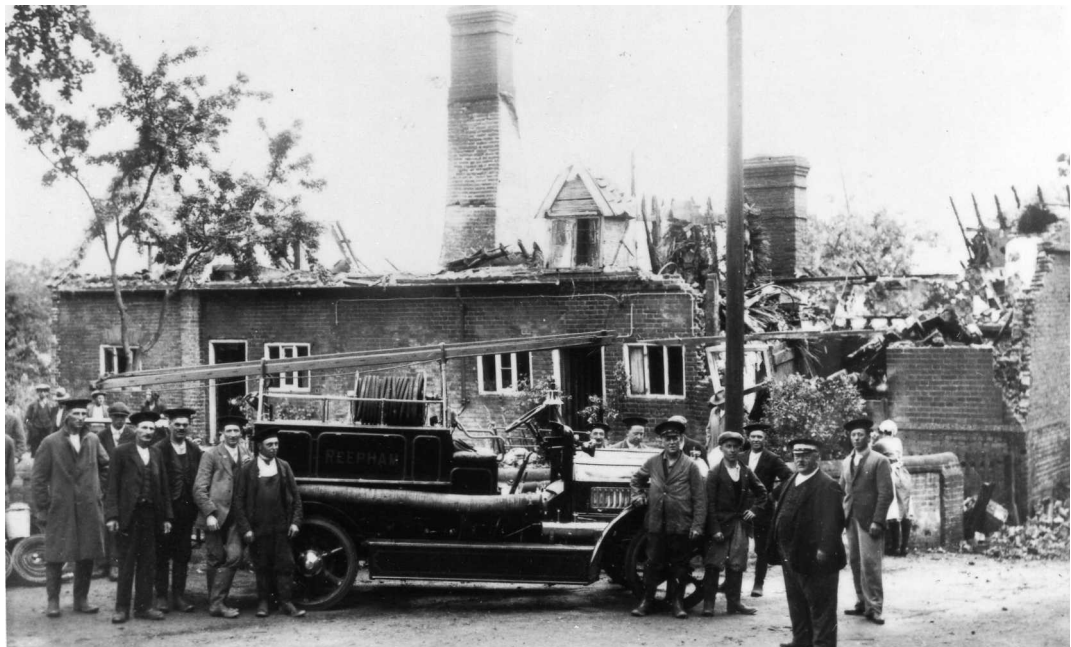
The Old Methodist Chapel



The Maltings looking across Ollands Road from
Malthouse Yard (the wall is not quite so tall now, the windows are
bricked up and there's a big blue tin gate where the outside stairs were)



Reepham Sale Yard



Reepham Fire Brigade
Togo Eglington in command at front right



Saddlers & Harness Maker's Shop circa 1912
(now Robertson's Butchers)



King's Yard in Back Street. (now fish and chip shop). John Walker at left.



The Sun Inn



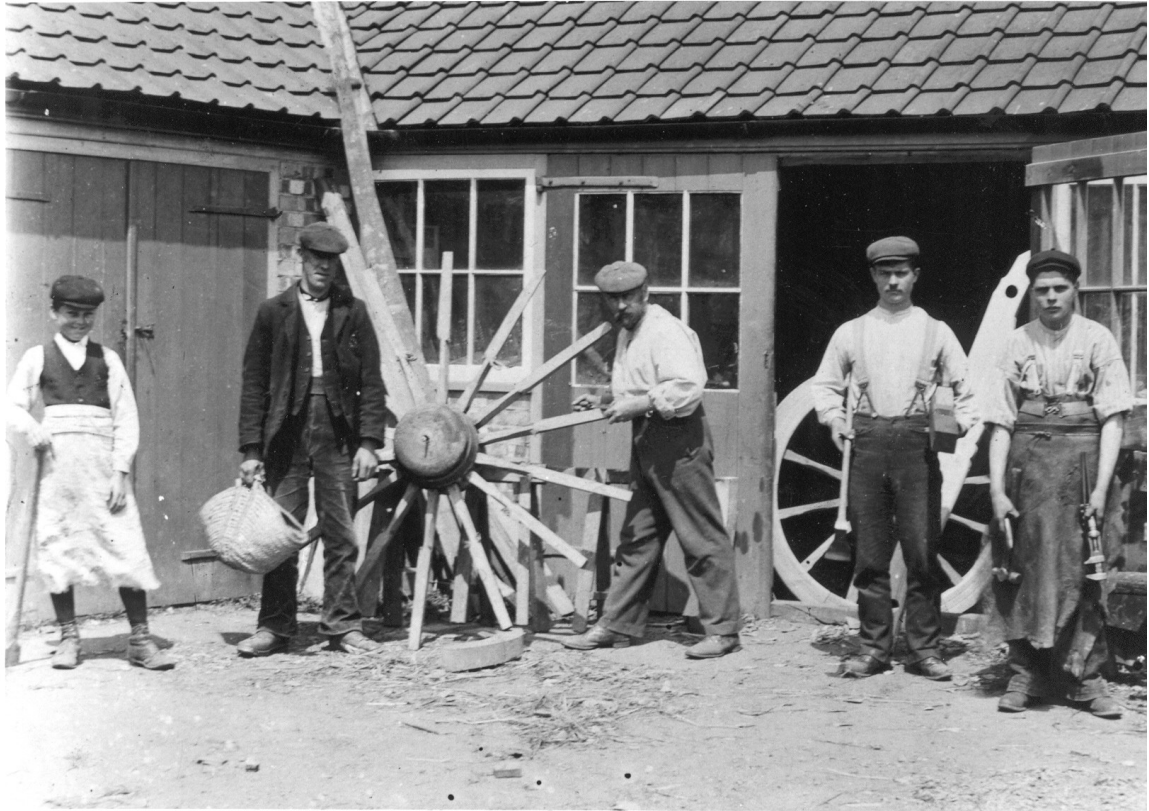
Utting's Butchers Shop
(now Diane's Pantry)



Town's End from School Road



Victoria House, Norwich Road and Garage in George & Dragon Yard



Kiddell's Wheelwright's Yard
Ebenezer Kiddell (Wesley's uncle) right of wheel



Delivery Cart in Gibbs Yard



Reepham Station



Shop in The Moor



British Legion Fête at The Ollands 1953
Mrs Irwin at left, Wesley at the right.