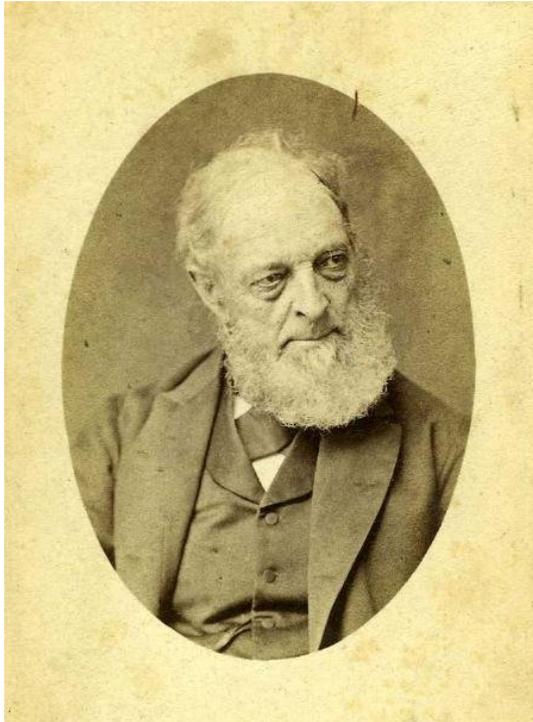


Obadiah Short 1803-1886



In 1861 Obadiah Short recalled his childhood in Norwich in *Recollections*, which he wrote in a small, leather bound notebook that is now in the museum's collection. It is a fascinating record of his humble origins and the hardship of his early life. He makes frequent references to his family who were all involved in the weaving industry, and he describes his extraordinary grandfather Cubitt who had two thumbs on one hand and used to weave with one leg. He gives accounts of activities in Norwich such as skating on the river Wensum, bull baiting, the fairs, Guild day, riot and processions. Short has created in this manuscript an extraordinarily vivid picture of Norwich in the early nineteenth century and conveys the extreme poverty and hardships of the time.

Short started in the weaving industry as a child winding bobbins and went on to learn to weave bombazine. In 1834 he joined the textile firm of Willett & Co as a designer of patterns for silk, and remained there for more than fifty years. He had become interested in drawing and painting as a young man and taught himself by copying the paintings of Norwich School artists James Stark, and later Alfred Priest. He also made pathological drawings for the Hospital. Short exhibited with the Norwich Society of Artists in 1832-3 as well as with various other loan exhibitions. His subjects were mainly landscapes of views in and around Norwich, and, as his obituary records, 'Although he did not attain to the production of 'high art', his works were faithful delineations of landscape scenery selected with a fine taste ...'

Manuscript notebook by Obadiah Short (1803-1886)

Presented by Mrs E. LeFevre (great-granddaughter of the artist) 1964
NWHCM : 1964.590.2

The punctuation and spelling has been transcribed as it appears in the original manuscript. Each paragraph represents a page.

1861
Recollections
Obadiah Short

I was born on the 26 of July 1803 in the parish of St Augustines in the City of Norwich, in the first court past the Bethel yard and Baptized in the Lord Saint Augustine's Church. My father Joseph Short was the first son of Joseph and Mary Short, the former of whom was one of a family of Shorts of Lexfield in Suffolk One brother whose name was Obadiah after whom I was named

once lived at Gateley in the same county Another Brother whose name was Cornelius who was known to me and I think also another Brother. My Father, whom I can but just remember was a Maltster as was also his father – they also worked on Mousehold at the opening or making the Road past Ketts Castle when the Heath was taken in about 1801 – My Father married when young to Elizabeth Cubitt of St Augustines Cotton weaver – and times being bad, went as a substitute for a Gentleman

with the East Norfolk Militia, for which I have understood he received 26 Guineas The Coy was then lying at Colchester, and my Father having had a good Education for those days was soon made a Corporal as he was a smart[?] young fellow.

My Mother who was also young (neither of them being quite 18) often went up to Colchester to which place I remember being taken when not three years old, My Mother ...

to stop at Colchester for a few weeks, then she would return to Norwich, and so to weaving and earn some money, and away to Colchester again till the Copy was removed too far off to visit travelling by wagon

I remember we used to go to the Black Horse St Giles St and that bywaggon

I cannot remember much about either Father or Mother at Norwich I remember them only twice?, once when I by accident fell from the top story to the kitchen, when I knocked my front teeth out, and my poor old grandmother Dressed them

Into this place[?] again my Father & Mother both being present, 1806, once and only once more do I at all remember my father in Norwich and that was when he made a rude kind of cart or wagon with four wooden wheels and dragged me in it to without Pockthorpe Gates, but I do remember well that I

was very poorly clothed, and not too well fed, when I was put into Breeches (as it was then called) I remember they were not mended with what I should now call suitable colours

My Mother had two children

Besides me both Boys who died in their infancy and are buried in Saint Augustines close by my Great Grandfather Cubitt – of the religious character of my Father & Mother I cannot give any account, all that I know of my father, that he was a good soldier, for about 1808 he Volunteered into the 40th foot, my Mother went with my Father to the Regiment to Spain, and continued with it till her Husband till she fell sick, in the retreat of Sir John More called the Retreat of Corunna 1809

My Mother was sent with the Sick & wounded to Lisbon Hospital when she died. I could never hear for certain what became of my Father, as the lost letters which he sent us immediately after those weeks retreat even the War Office could not ascertain, yet as he was a Sargent I should have thought this account would be sent, but I could never make anything out about them but when many Soldiers came home from the war one told one tale & another to another

for in those days the people (Related to those who had died in the war) treated those who returned with Beer and all kinds of drink and sure enough as long as the Beer was forthcoming so long the news lasted either true or false. My Mother was a weaver of both Silk & cotton. I remember she used to weave up a garret in St Pauls Churchyard. The only time I ever remember hearing her speak, was, at this place when she used to weave & sing (war songs) and the only words I can

recollect were a part of a war Song. This was part of an old song. (When she heard the Great Gunns Rattle still she cried fight on my Boys) My Mother often went to the Regiment at other time lying at Colchester She stopt a short time & then came back and earned some more money then she would go again till my Father Volunteered in the 40th Regiment of Foot and went with the Regiment to Spain and was with the army under Sir John Moor

In the Retreat to Corrunna My Father sent a letter (the last he wrote) saying that the Army was in Retreat over hills & Mountains for the Week, which was the Retreat of Sir John Moore and where Sir John Moore was killed, and buried on the Ramparts of the City. My Mother was carried with the sick and wounded to Lisbon Hospital and after a short time she Died. My father sent no more Letters after the one in which he said that My Mother was dead

I never heard what became of my Father – though my grandfather wrote to the War Office more than once but could never hear anything of him Though some of the men from the same company came home after the War but they told all manner of tales to be treated with Beer – I had an Uncle My Mothers Brother Wm Cubitt by Name who was also a soldier in the Royal Artillery (a Driver) who was also in Spain at the Battle of Victoria in 1814 (and before that time) and I have heard

that at one time he was keeping guard over the Horses in the field where there had been a Battle Fought, and a skull of a man was lying on the ground, and seeing it he took it up putting his finger into one of the eye sockets, carried it about with him a long while when he was tending the Horses – apparently without any object and Reluctant to lay it down and the thought struck him afterwards whether this was not the skull of my Father. I have often heard him speak of the affair

Another of my Mothers Brothers went into the Army about 1808 and was only gone a few weeks and was killed of Flushing and I have often heard my grandmother say that she was sure she heard him call when he was away, one night in her sleep she heard him call three times as if had been down a long lane which proved to have been about the time he was killed or weather he died of the wounds is not known

I remember hearing a great deal of talk about the war (though I was young) and was always looking for my Father coming home with a wooden leg or with a crutch and though I was so young that I scarcely knew what War really did mean yet I was always dreaming in the night of great tumult and fighting but independent of the war I might have been frightened in the Rooms in which I slept for my Grandfather Cubitt was Sexton at St Laurences parish, and the church yard

being small, graves were often opened before the corps was decomposed and so the coffins were broken to pieces to make room for others, and sometimes whole sides of coffins were brought home by my grandfather when it was dark and placed in the room in which I slept which was no uncommon occurrence and now I am speaking of my grandfather Cubitt I may mention that he was lame having broken his thigh twice and he had two thumbs on one hand, he always dressed in Black and white

he was at church and opened pulpit door for the Minister he always made a low bow

What I am now speaking about was about the year 1810 about the time when Hanover was taken by the English for at that time of Mail Coaches the news came every day by the mail coach to the Angel Inn Market Place at twelve o'clock when hundreds of people were waiting to hear the news and sometimes the Horses would be taken out, and Ropes fastened to the back and it would be dragged round the city in token

of the peoples joy when any great Battle had been won by the English I remember seeing my Uncle John Short and the Top of the Mail Coach (when it was being dragged the city) with a sixpenny Loaf Stuck on the top of a pole in token that Bread would soon be cheaper when the war was over, and on days of this description when the Evening came Bonfires would be made in the Market Place from wood

collected from the streets yards and other places. Procession would go round the city and in their way spouts gutters shutters and anything that came in the

way would be brought to the Market Place and Burnt in honour of the Victory and Bells would ring Flags would be hoisted on each Steeple, and rejoicings would be made according to the nature of good news from the seat of War. My Uncle Cubitt whom I have mentioned before

was in the Royal Artillery and went to Spain, was at the Battle of Victoria in 1814 was discharged and came home, but in 1815 thousands of men were soon wanted, so he enlisted again but did not go – after which he settled down to weaving, married and died about 1846. I had an Aunt my Mothers Sister Bridget. She married to Samuel Wilkes silk weaver, this woman was a good Bombazine weaver – She and her husband learned me to weave

They were both Methodists about 1810 when Calvert Street Chapel was built but after many years she died in the Faith of Christ in the Church of England 1868 they had two Daughters now living, 1847. Samuel Wilkes was a religious man but of no education but very clever, a good weaver but a high calvinist

I have said that my grandfather Cubitt had two Thumbs on one hand and as he had broken his thigh he used to walk with

a crutch, he also was a weaver, but used to weave with one leg he was once Sexton of St Augustine's Church [?but] bit afterwards of St Saviours Stump Cross his family came from Frettenham Norfolk

My Grandmother Cubitt family came from Felthorpe – her maiden name was Bowles. With this Grandmother & Grandfather I was left when my Mother went to the war with my Father – they were very poor

and at this time corn was very dear so I know they were obliged to eat the less themselves to give to me. About 1810 I might if my friends had choes have been sent to the Duke of York School at Chelsea but they would not let me go so they took me to the Guardians to obtain Parochial relief – and in those days people were forced to go once a fortnight – the workhouse then was a place [of] Terror – and if you are not a good boy you

shall be put into the workhouse – at this time I was shown into the Room where there was an old man cutting the Bread for the dinners of the people of the Workhouse I shall never forget the small slices of Bread which they had for their dinner flour was at a very high price But I was never put in the Workhouse – but I was put to work very early, to fill Bobbins to the weavers

I was learned to fill at home and when I could do it pretty well, I was sent out. My grandmother took me to the Duke's Palace Plain - one morning at six oclock, the place for Boys and Girls who wish to let themselves for the week I soon obtained a place for 1.9d per week. I was at various places at one of which I was paid to nurse the Child and fill Bobbins to my mistress – which place I held for some time

[page inserted -1806

I ought to have mentioned before that I remember before Foundry or Carrow Bridges were built – the Banks of the River were quite different to what they

are now 1848. they were very green and the sedges coming up to the walk-way – in 1806 my grandmother took me down the meadows in July to see the Gregorians come up the water in procession and land at the Ferry. (Church Close) they had Bands of music and all the Boats and Barges on the River came up from Thorpe. I well remember this their last T... and that it was a rainy Evening

this was four years before Carrow Bridge was built and at this time a path led some way down the meadows by the side of the River some way towards Thorpe and Butter hills was quite open as a play place for children and a path led down to King Street Gates – and the old tower on ... Butter hills was a snuff mill which was set on Fire by Lightning some years after – while it was Inhabited by a Mr Gooch a Fortune-teller since then it has been in Ruin]

[continues]

but I did not like filling Bobbins so the next place I got was to turn the weels to the cord spinners in St Martins, though this was very hard work and very cold in winter time yet this was much better than being confined up an old garret with three or four looms – I was turning the cord weel in 1814 that sharp winter but for fourteen weeks the men could not do much work and the River beyond the New Mills was frozen up near all the time – so that I was often on the Ice

both by day and in the Evening sliding and skating with one old wire skate. My Grandfather Short was a Malster lived at the Malt-House at Fullers Hole watering so that I was very often in the Kiln hole at the Malt House before a great fire roasting potatoes

About this time and for some years after I have often seen waterfowl on the River Especially the Little Grebe or Dabchick Many of these small birds were seen on the water at one time, but I have not seen any for these 30 years and at this time there was not above six boats on the water beyond the Mills – now 1867 there

must be more than 100.

I used to Sliding and Skating many times in the Evening an amusement which I was very fond of – about this time my Uncle Short used to fight pitch Battle for money, he being very strong. I have never heard of his being beaten so as to lose. My grandfather Short did not discourage it, and if he had it would have been of no use, at this time I could not Read but I often used to look at a large map of Norfolk which hung up in their House & by that I learned something of the

use of Maps and was always trying to read it and at last I was able to make out some of the names of the places another thing which took my attention was what they called a sampler or piece of needle work of my Grandmother Short, of certain grotesque figures and a Verse of poetry, which the old lady read to me, and afterwards I managed to read it for myself and which I never forgot. The following is the Verse

We stand exposed to Every Sin

While Idle and without Employ
But Business hath our passions in
And Keeps out all Unlawful Joy

They also had four pictures painted on glass, after Hogarth, the Enraged Musician, the Distressed Poet, the Roast Beef of Old England, and the Tailoring to Brantford[?] to Vote for his friend John Wilks – and I once remember my grandfather while looking at the old map, telling me the tale of St Walstan who was born at Taverham and buried at Baber - Very correctly

for old Joe Short was not an Ignorant man for both my grandfather and grandmother were educated pretty well for the time being, but she was a perfect home spinner at this time they used to keep two or three lodgers, and they would often be up late on the Saturday night having a little Beer, but the old man would be up on the Sunday morning at four o'clock to turn the malt. I never remember him going to Church, they had really good furniture for those times – two Elm Tables

an eight day clock and a smaller clock Brass and hutch[?] in which they kept the Flour[?] Several good Beds &c. My Uncle Short entered the Local Militia, a Norwich Regiment - they used to parade on the Castle Hill before the present new Buildings were made – and my Uncle was not much used to discipline so he would go and lay down on the grass instead of going with the Ranks, but that was rather too much of a

stretch of liberty to be allowed – in this time they used to bait Bulls with Dogs, for they used to say the flesh of Bulls was too Rank to Eat before they had been Baited – and this was a very barbarous sport and amusement for Monday evenings – this used to take place at a Meadow without St Martins Gates by the River and a large Breed of Bull Dog were kept for the purpose a strong post was put

into the Earth with a large Ring attached to it and a Rope fastened to the Ring with the other end fastened to the Bull. The Rope about twelve yards long the Spectators all round and the men with the boys in front of the Bull, it all the while 'Eyeing the Dogs at the same time would scrape a hole in the Ground with his foot and put his nose into the Hole and would wait the attack of the Dog – who would make a Spring at the Nose of the Bull but if the Dog failed

pin[?] the Bull by the nose the Bull would toss the Dog up into the Air and the owner of the dog would try to catch him or break the fall – this sport would go on for some time till the Bull was pinned by his nose to the ground or else the Dogs would be afraid to attack the Bull, once a Bull which being baited broke from the Rope and there being a great many people

some were driven into the River others into the Dyke – so that many went home not so dry as they came out, so that many did Remember drawing[?] up to the Bull Ring &c. these Baits always brought together all the Ruff in Norwich when a great deal of Beer was consumed and mostly finished up with a fight – and I may just mention that the old fair called Magdalen Fair was held without Magdalen Gates – one mile from Norwich

this was a Fair for Horses &c. the Sunday before the Fair it was called going to the Fairstead. Many people used to go from Norwich on the Sunday previous in course there was plenty of Beer drunk I have seen quite a street of Booths built up of Boards & Sailcloth with Benches & Tables and a long Board at the entrance laid on the ground for Dancing the Hornpipe. This was a noted place for wrestling wrestling matches were common in those days

and drinking fighting and wrestling was kept up the whole day – and as the Fair Day there was no lack of Profane Ballad Singing. This Fair was past by about 1819. Tombland Fair was more respectable which was then kept on Tombland – my first recollections there was two of the old Flying coaches near the Etheldred gate house and only two small Shows[?] but about 1812 a company of Horseriders came and since then Shows have Much

Tombland Fair was held at Easter and Whitsuntide at Easter the stalls & Shows were taken down on the Thursday night and removed to just beyond Bishops Bridge for Easter Monday and Tuesday I remember the first Elephant being exhibited at Bishop Bridge Fair sixpence each. The Fair occupied the space all beyond the Bridge up the Hill past the Gas House I well remember buying cider a halfpenny per Bottle Treacle[?] & water

The water was fetched from the spring which at this time flowed in a very copious manner from under Ketts Castle - but when the Gas House was made the Spring was Broken up, and since that time the Building through which the water came has gone to decay and is now all removed. I shall just say, that under Ketts Castle many years back much chalk was dug-out and about 1815 these old vaults were opened and I went with some

Hundreds more at the charge of one penny each to look over these Vaults which [were] very extensive – some very large, and into one place the people had to creep on their hands and knees and to make it more wonderful some mysterious writing was to be seen on the top of the vault which some one had made the poem of letters with a lighted candle smoked on the Roof of the Vault but now to return to my occupation in turning the cord wheel – The first year

I used to turn the wheel to my master a Rope Spinner but he went into the Cambridge Shire Militia so I lost my master and I found that he was one of the best on the ground for he did not beat the boy as some did. I had to turn the wheel on a cold winter night 1811 when there was plenty of weaving and the windows and the weavers lights under St Martins Wall was like an Illumination I certainly was afraid to come home in a dark night past a certain old pump under St Martins walls

Then again the Great Comet of 1811 used to frighten me while I sat in the dark shed all alone but when I left work and got past the old pump under St Martins Walls, and came in sight of the almost invisible oil lamp I used to

pluck up courage and whistle and sing. I certainly did suffer a great deal of cold at this place but I liked it much better than filling Bobbins

So when my master went away I did not leave the cord ground but the Master of the ground took me to be his Boy, and to go at Errands, Clean Boots & Shoes, Glass, Knives & forks, Dress lamps & Flax. My Master Thomas Thurlow was a large Master Rope and cord Spinner and had a very good trade so I had many Errands to attend to. I used to go with Miss Thurlow my Masters sister on Saturdays and

Wednesdays to Market to bring home the meat (for they kept a good House) and when my Mistress had bargained for a joint of meat she would ask for a penny for the Boy – so I have often got three pence in one market day (for I had only 2s 1d per week) but always on a Saturday and sometimes on Wednesday, I and another Boy always had a good dinner for the Servant maid saved all the Broken Victuals till Saturday for the

Boys and that was my best meal in the week. I remember how we used to clear off the meat and all manner of broken victuals which was warmed up in the Latchpan for us. Soon after I had been in this place My Mother & Father Died. This old gentleman wore a wig and a three cocked Hat, and on the morning when he was buried which was in the wintertime, I was called into the Kitchen to sit by the Fire to make Toast

for the Bearers &c a job which I thought was very honourable – while working at this place in the Evening when at home I used to make Valentines which I learned of my Aunt my Uncle Cubitts wife they were made of a sheet of fools cap paper – Doubled in the form of a triangle then I used to prick with needles of different sizes put into corks of handles these Valentines I used to make and sell them three pence each

some of them were very pretty. One morning I brought one to the cord-ground for one of the men, who took it and showed it to Henry Thurlow my masters Nephew who took it into the parlour to show the Ladies – but they would not believe that it was done by the Boy Oba – so I was sent for into the parlor. My master said Oba did you do this Valentine

yes sir was the answer, then you shall come and do one to night in the parlor, that the Ladies may see that you can do them – so when the Evening came I took my paper and the needles and a piece of Flannel and went into the parlor sat down at the Table commenced my work and in the course of ten minutes satisfied my master & mistress that I had done the Valentine

and received an order for one for which I received six pence. My Master was a very passionate man and woe be to the Boys who came under the lash – which was a piece of cart Rope Doubled and twisted which the Boys called Pudding – that was the sauce for those who had done wrong, but I never had a taste of pudding more than once - though I once got into disgrace

for I was once sent in to Heigham Street to Mr Blakes for £10.0.0 worth of Two penny pieces – we took a Skep or Basket to put them in and in coming home, when about opposite the Barn Road down by the water there was a Horse being shot – so we left the money in the Skep in the street and went to see the Horse shot when we came back we found our master

in charge of the Skep and the money – but he would not show his anger in the Street and by the time we got home he was a little cool – so we neither of us got any pudding but I did not forget it of some time – the cord ground was between St Martins & St Augustines near St Martins Street indeed from one street to the other was all garden ground Trees of all kinds. Those apples &c were very tempting

but I think they were as safe as they would be in these days – though there was no police only the old constable for the Boys then could assemble and play in the streets without let or hindrance if they only played – time I was at the cord ground we Boys often went into the water in the summer at the New Cut I learned to swim very young – some man

took me on his Back and Swam across the River, and told me how to go the right way to swim. It did not take me long to undress, for I would leave my shoes at the Ground so that I had only two articles of Dress to kick off and I was into the River. My Master was very Strict with us yet he was a good master we thought, so on Shrove Tuesday morning we all had a penny coquille

for which we used to sing the following verse

Shrove Tuesday morning

The very first meal

I hope my master will

Give me a Coquille

I go to work without any noise

and when I go home I shall have a great prize

it was the practise of Mr Thurlow to make all the Boys and Apprentices to leave work when there happened to be any executions – so we all went and he said it might be a warning to us, so that for the best 45 years of my

life I have seen all the executions in Norwich though I cannot say that ever it done me any good. I once saw five men hanged at one time. I remember that one day I was tempted to leave the work without sufficient leave to go and see a Balloon go up, this was a Mr Steward who was to ascend from Pr....[?] Gardens - Ipswich Road – but in coming from among the trees either the Balloon caught the trees as some said the Valve was opened so it only Rose to drag over

the top of the trees and over the fields into the Peafield, Lakenham – when the mob gold hold of it and in ten minutes tore it into a thousand pieces and took a Chimney Sweep and put him in the car and carried him through the market place, as for Mr. Steward he went for a soldier and was

never heard of again neither did the authorities take any steps about it. I ought to have mentioned my great great uncle, My grandfather Cubitt had an Uncle named Robert Cubitt. We used to call him Uncle Bob he would often come and see my Grandfather when we lived in Bayfields Yard Stump Cross – up stairs in two chambers, he was a worstead weaver these weavers often wore a green apron and their waistcoats did not Button but they used to be laced like womens stays

lest the Buttons should injure[?] the cloth. He lived in St Georges Tombland Church Yard up the first stairs and these stairs were nearly Broad enough to drive a Donkey cart – I always had an invitation to call on Uncle Bob on the Guild day when he said he would try and fine me a penny in some of the holes if the Bordered floor – and I knew there were plenty of holes. I always calculated on obtaining the penny – so I always called upon Uncle Bob – Now Uncle Bob

was rather a tall man and with his laced up waistcoat (which might be an old soldiers jacket common in those times for weavers) and the legs of a pair of stockings for arms sleeves – that to see him in the loom weaving with the hour glass by his side was quite a sight – however the penny was always ready but I often cast an eye into the knots of the floor but when my Uncle Bob came to see my Grandfather he Brushed himself up a little but there was the

everlasting laced up waistcoat. My Uncle Bob like other Bobs in those old days of yore he used to wear a long Brown coat all Buttoned down before with large Buttons – all an inch and an half in diameter – these Buttons the Boys used to play pitch Buttons with the large one we called pitchers – I remember falling into disgrace for cutting these large Buttons from off the old clothes I do not remember which politics my Uncle Bob profesd[?] but my grandfather Cubitt was an orange & purple or Tory – but old Billy Starkey Ex Sexton of St Saviours

was what was then called a Revolutionary I remember they used to sit round the fire and talk over the subjects of the day – old Billy Andrews always wore the old sextons coat, which was very long that when he was seated his coat used to hang on either side the chair and I was very fond of laying on the harth under the skirts of poor old Billys coat – these old chaps always wore neck cloths these were long strips of calico doubled and tied in front

My grandfather Uncle Bob and old Billy sat round the fire but my grandmother did not like it because old Billy used to get so near the fire and he also used to chew tobacco and was not very nice with it. My grandfather also smoked a pipe but he was a very tidy old gentleman but I cannot recollect wether my Uncle Bob smoked or not – the conversation in course often turned upon grave digging funerals or weddings old Billy always said when a person died in the parish and was buried

in another that they died with their legs on because they went out of the parish to be buried – but why I went on the guild day for my penny I do not know

except that the guild day was a great day to some people - and Uncle Bob being near the Cathedral and as many people would take their children to the guild and also to see the Mayor and corporation go to church, he living on the spot always found me up a penny

I always was very fond of seeing the Guilds, and the Mayor and Corporation

going to church when the New Mayor was chosen on the first of May, a Flag was always hoisted on the Parish Church steeple[sic] in which the Mayor Elect resided and this was kept up till the Guild six weeks after the Guild was always held in the parish in which the New Mayor resided. On the guild Day the bells would ring and the Mayors parish would make the Guild, that was what it was called – Flags would be put across the street and from the windows and the poorer sort of people would hang out anything they had in the shape of a Flag

Even their Bed covering some would hang their pictures out and dress their doorways up with green boughs and garlands of flowers would hang across the street. In the poorer parish a Bob & Joan would be put out of the window. These Bob and Joan, as they were called represented a Man and a woman, made with old clothes stuffed with straw a mask for the Face, and a pipe stuck in the mouth of the man. They were placed on a shelf out of the window and they looked a most loving couple some ugly enough

but I could never make out what was the meaning of the Bob and Joan. Sometimes Arches would be built across the street and many other devices in token of respect to the New Mayor – I remember one guild held in St Saviours, that my grandfather made a small loom, and all parts appertaining to a Loom, and he also made it to work with a boy to fill bobbins the weaver was a Large doll and the winder a small one, this was Exhibited at two Guilds – and was also in the procession at one of Smith & Gurneys Elections, about 1815 or

the Mayor and corporation would go to the Cathedral in the morning in grand procession all in their robes & coaches, the mayors officer and the standard bearers and a band of music and Snap in front of all. This Snap was made of wicker work in the form of a Dragon [small ink drawing of Snap] with a man inside to carry it and to work the mouth with a line. Snap always went about the Day before the Guild to pick up a few shillings which they did by going round to the aldermen and the Mayor, and the principle inhabitants, when all the Children in the city would

[???] out to his Snap who would go up to the Door of each Gentlemans House for sixpence for which Snap would open his mouth and if any children were in the family one of the younger ones would come and put the sixpence into Snaps mouth sometimes with great fear. Old Snap had no lack of company in all his journey for he was always accompanied with a large number of Boys and Girls particularly of Boys, who were always on the look out least Snap should get their cap or Hat for Snap was always supposed to be trying to get

the Boys caps – mothers again would bring their little children to see Snap when the poor little things would be frightened out of their wits – others would bring their children near enough to touch Snap and to pat him to convince them if possible that he would not hurt them poor Snap had a hard days work the day before the guild as it was in the warm weather, but Snap was always protected by two men – Snaps original abode was in St Andrews Hall till the Corporation ceased

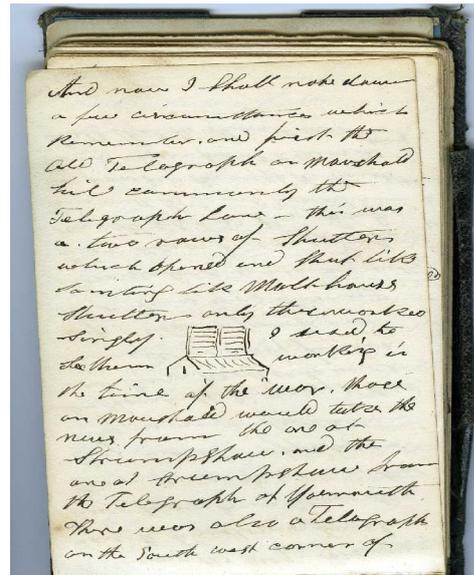
to attend the cathedral on the guild day on the bringing in of the Municipal Reform bill the last guild was held in St Andrews parish, which saw the first and the last Mayor. When Snap had finished his days work, he always made his last stop at the Green Dragon in Cocky Lane, for the wet refreshment, then he was taken to St Andrews Hall till the next day morning, when he would go to the Guild Hall to go the first in the procession to the cathedral, which was always strewed with sedges

and meadow flowers all down the pathway in the Nave, for the Mayor and the Corporation to walk up. This was the last Remnant of the old custom in laying down the floor carpeting for the year, what was called the Rush bearing[sic] the last place which retained this custom was the town of Darlington in Yorkshire, and then sweet sedges were mostly brought from the meadows without St Augustines Gate – and the day before the Guild Boys would go and gather large bundles and bring them in to the city and sell

for pins, and would cry Rick a Rick a Raker a one pin Squaker which the Boys put in their mouth (having striped off the outer Leaf) and would produce a pretty loud squeaking noise – after the Service at the cathedral, there would follow the Mayors Feast at St Andrews Hall, and the Ball in the Evening – the afternoon the people would go to the Guild and one feature which took the attention of the people was the Wifflers, with their quaint costumes of 16th century and the Blunt Swords with which

to clear the way – these men used to twist or twirl their swords so close to their own person that they would approach very near the Spectators without shedding any Blood and their performance would mostly finish up with a jump and at the same time turning themselves round with their swords raised up erect above their heads [?These] with the Grand Procession paraded through the streets and Snap in front to clear the way of all that he should meet

And now I shall note down a few circumstances which Remember and first the Old Telegraph on Mousehold hill commonly the Telegraph Lane – this was a two rows of Shutters which opened and shut like something like Malt house shutters only they worked singly [small drawing of shutters, see illus] I used to see them working in the time of the war, those on Mousehold would take the news from the one at Strumpshaw, and the one at Strumpshaw from the Telegraph at Yarmouth. There was also a Telegraph on the south west corner of



the Castle like [drawing of telegraph on Castle battlements] but I never saw it at work - and now I am talking about the Castle I must mention the Norfolk prisoners going from Norwich at the Lent Assizes. People used to be up by six in the morning in the month of March and go to the Castle Ditches to see the prisoners go away to Thetford – to receive their Trials. I have seen many wagon loads go off, their feet were chained to the bottom of the wagon and a Guard placed behind with a Blunderbuss in his hand to shoot any that might try to escape

This sight would attract a great many people – another sort of attraction was the many pitch Battles which used to take place on Mousehold Heath on the Sunday morning between 1818 and 1825 hundreds of young men & boys would be seen going to the Fight about eight o'clock – these Fights were mostly between young men from 18 to 22 at this time the Barbarous sport of cockfighting was often practised and also up to 1824 people would go to the Mountabank these would be a kind of Horseriding, and jumping and sometimes it would be

a good performance this was often on a Monday Evening for many people at this time kept a quiet[?] Monday, and I heard my Grandfather say that in his day many did not go to work til the Wednesday morning. The Mount a Bank. this wasing Horseriders – they would perform and ride the City – they used to publish Bills of their performance and offer Prizes for a shilling Ticket which those who thought they should obtain a prize used [to] purchase – the prizes were sometimes a Copper Teakettle
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a gown[?] piece and sometimes a sack of flour or a live pig these Mount a Banks used to attract many people the last mountabank that I remember held at the corner of Southwell Road in a field on the left hand corner as you enter from St Stephens road, about the year 1818 the performance was very good I must not forget the Riot which took place in Norwich in 1815 at the time the

corn laws were in full play many people were very hard put to it to get food.
Thomas Wm.

Coke afterwards Earl of Leicester was the upholder of those Laws, and the people had used Mr Coke rather Roughly in the Streets in so much that many thousands people assembled in the market place, in the afternoon I was sent in to the market with a parcel and to my surprise the market was full of people and the Black Brunswickers an Horse regiment then laying in Pockthorpe Barracks was drawing up in the Market the Mayor and the corporation came down from the Guild-Hall to read the Riot Act

In course I got through the crowd and took my place close to the Mayor, and heard the Riot act read – and the people were told to disperse but they did no such thing and there being a great uproar the Mayor told the German commander to fire on the people but the commander to told Mayor he dare not do any such thing that it was more than his place was worth – no sooner had the Mayor said these words than the mob went in a body through London Street to the Mayors House

in St Saviours Church Lane, and stopping in front of the Mayors House, in one minute all the windows were smashed in – after this there was a guard of soldiers patrolling the Lane for weeks – these Black Brunswickers as they were called, had Black Uniforms with the Deaths head and long Bones on their caps [drawing of skull and crossbones]

An old custom which I remember when I was a Boy, on Shrove Tuesday the Bell was rung by the Sexton of St Paul on that day at twelve o'clock

but what for I never could learn, but I know it was a custom for all people to have pancakes on that day. We used to cal them Fryers[?] I once heard that some woman carried the old Sexton a plate full of pancakes in to the Steple what is the origin of pancake I do not know Except it was the day before Lent – at Christmas time when I was a boy it was the custom with nearly all the working classes to rise early on Christmas morning, at 4, 5 or 6 o'clock make a good fire send out for Ale

to the Public House toast some Bread, and fill a large dish with Beer and place it before the Fire and put the toasted Bread into the Beer, and then put sugar with the Bread and then it was called Sugar Sops[?] I remember my old uncle Cubitt rising on Christmas morning at four o'clock, made a large fire, got some beer, to enjoy himself, and fell asleep and slept the fire out.

The Lamplighter

When I was a little Boy the Lamplighter used to have a procession on the first night

of lighting the lamps now these lamps were only small globe lamp with a small tin and a small portion of lamp oil, with a small cotton wick – and when they were light it just made darkness visible the Lamplighter used to carry a large torch in his right hand and the Ladder on his left shoulder I remember seeing a great many Boys running after them to see the great blazing torch the Boys would cry out as they ran after them –

Lamp lighter – cow.....
Flea B..... &c

Another old custom which I do not remember to have seen since 1809 and that was on St Crispins day when the Shoemaker Clubs would go in grand procession by torchlight many people would turn out to see them I never remember to have [?seen] them only once whenever [I?] remember these days well recollect the Great Broad Gutters in the middle of the street when there was no under drainage, when every yard or alley had its gutter running into the Street

and in the winter time when the frost broke up there were large pot holes in the Ice and you must look sharp lest you get your foot into one of them near up to your knees for then there was high water after much rain or when the Frost Broke up such as in 1814 – and before this time I have seen St Marys Church yard all under water – and Boats rowed up St Martins Street as far as Jenkins Lane

Also all the way along the Quay side was overflowed the reason was White Friars Bridge was not wide enough for the water to pass. Fye Bridge at this time was very narrow, only one cart could pass at a time, and when a flock of sheep or drove of Cattle passed they used to be so squeezed, that they almost stuck fast. The present bridge was built 1829.