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## KELSALE GUILDHALL

By C. G. HOLLAND, B.A.

The Guildhall at Kelsale derives its name from the Guild of Saint John Baptist which existed there during the later middle ages. It is not known exactly when or by whom the Guild was founded, but the earliest certain reference to it so far discovered is in the will of John Symbald, of Kelsale, dated 5 July 1439, which was proved twelve days later in the Court of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk: he left 13/4d. to the Guild.<sup>1</sup> More than half the wills of Kelsale people proved in this Court between 1439 (the earliest surviving) and 1539 (when State policy was threatening the existence of such religious institutions) mention the Guild, which was sometimes referred to as the Fraternity of Saint John Baptist. Bequests included sums of money ranging from the numerous small gifts of a shilling or 1/8d. to the £8 left by John Tropynel of Kelsale by his will dated 8 August 1469, to be paid either in money or in kind at the discretion of his executors.<sup>2</sup> An endowment in land was provided under the will of John Loveys of Kelsale dated 14 December 1490, who left to the Guild (taking effect after the death of his wife) a pightle of land in front of John Chaundeler's gate:<sup>3</sup> by this date the Guild already owned at least 40 acres, as can be learned from the records of the Manor of Kelsale (see p. 132).

The precise purposes for which the Guild existed are not known, but it may be assumed that they conformed to the usual type of mixed social and pious activities. Some light is shed on this from certain of the wills. William Bachelor of Kelsale, in his will dated 20 January 1515/6, bequeathed 'to the gylde of seynt John the Baptiste yn Kelsale xl<sup>s</sup>. to be bestowyd upon or toward a vestement or sum other ornament *with* yn the seyd cherch to be usyd and occupied befor the awter of seynt John ther'.<sup>4</sup> This confirms what one would expect regarding the religious side of the Guild's activities, and incidentally provides evidence for the existence of St. John Baptist's altar in the parish church, which is dedicated to St. Mary. On the other hand, John Lynne of Kelsale, in his will

<sup>1</sup> 'Item lego Gylde sancti Johannis Baptiste xxij<sup>s</sup>.iiijd.'. Will of John Symbald, in Register 1 fo. 2v. (Ipswich & E. Suffolk Record Office ref. IC/AA2/1).

<sup>2</sup> 'Item lego usui et proficui Gilde sancti Johannis Baptiste in ecclesia predicta (sc. Kelsale) in denariis aut in valore per discretionem etc. viij libra'. Will of John Tropynel, in Register 2 fo. 188 v. (I. & E.S.R.O. ref. IC/AA2/2).

<sup>3</sup> 'Item do et lego gilde sancti Johannis Baptiste de Kelsale unum pitellum jacen' ante portam Johannis Chaundeler post decessum uxoris mee'. Will of John Loveys, in Register 3 fo. 166r. (I. & E.S.R.O. ref. IC/AA2/3).

<sup>4</sup> Will of William Bachelor, in Register 7 fo. 123 (I. & E.S.R.O. ref. IC/AA2/7).

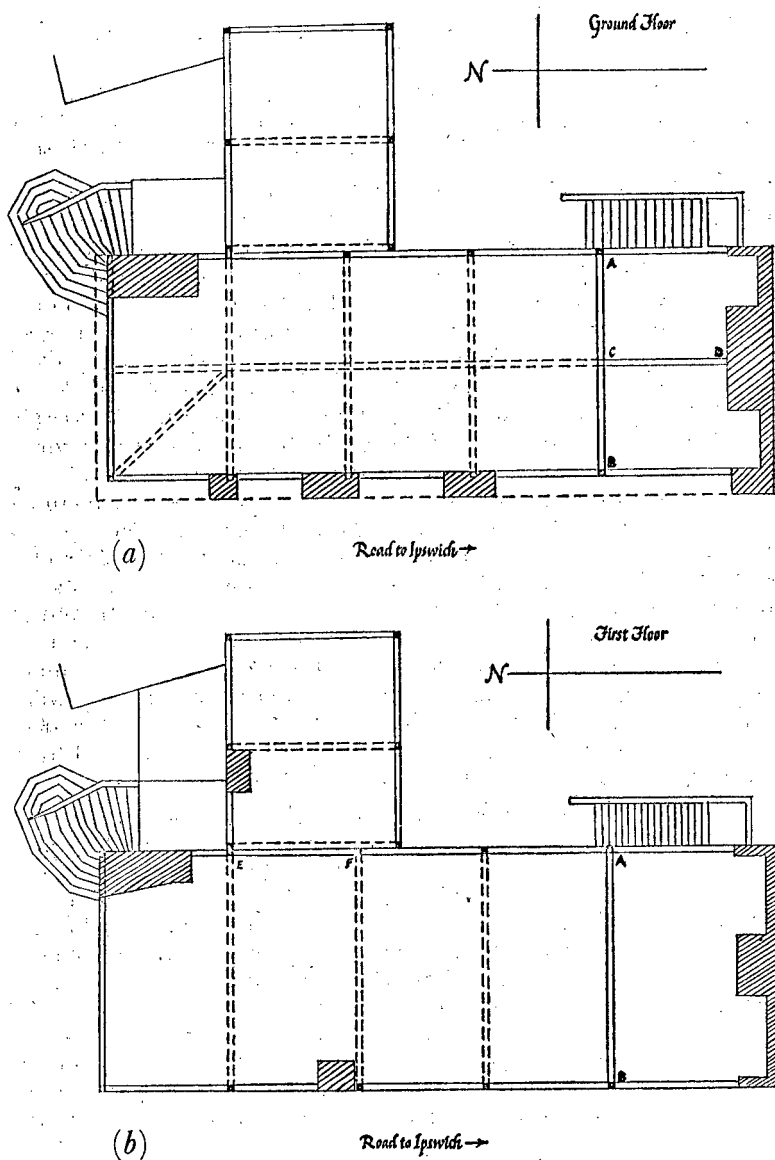


FIG. 12.—Kelsale Guildhall. The diagrams show the mediaeval structure before alteration. Doors and windows are not marked. The shaded portions indicate brickwork. *a*, Ground floor plan. Later insertions or removal of walling are ignored, double broken lines indicate ceiling beams and the single broken line indicates the overhang of the first floor. The walls A-B and C-D have subsequently been removed. *b*, First floor plan. The double broken lines indicate the trusses. The wall A-B has subsequently been removed and the wall E-F pierced to connect the two parts of the building.

dated 10 September 1497, bequeathed 'to seynt John' gyld A brou' pott'<sup>5</sup> (presumably a pot for brewing); while Margaret Johnson of Kelsale, in her will dated 8 February 1500/1, left to the Guild, in addition to 12d., 'a basyn of laton the best'.<sup>6</sup> While the latter may have been intended for religious uses, the former must surely be evidence of the Guild's social activities, which are, in any case, presupposed by the existence of the Guildhall.

The last will to mention the Guild is that of a cooper, John Heylocke of Kelsale, the elder, dated 1 July 1539, who 'being dead yet speaketh' in the following terms, 'I gyf to the gyld of saynt John Baptyst of Kelshalle yf yt be up holdyn and kept iij<sup>s</sup>. iiij<sup>d</sup>'.<sup>7</sup> John Heylocke's fears presaged greater changes than the end of the Guild at Kelsale, which we must assume to have occurred soon after, although curiously no chantry certificate or other positive evidence of the dissolution of the Guild has so far been traced.

On architectural grounds, the Guildhall has been assigned to the late 15th or early 16th centuries in the Provisional List of Buildings of Architectural or Historical Interest (Ministry of Housing and Local Government) which also notes extensive external modernisation to the structure in the late 19th century, as well as earlier restoration. Pevsner dates the building c. 1500.<sup>8</sup> It is unfortunate that we are ignorant of the foundation of the Guild, and that there is no information about its earlier meeting places: but clearly it must have reached a state of some prosperity by the time that the present Guildhall was erected, whether this replaced an earlier and more modest establishment, or was its first permanent home to be built. The will of John Antilbe of Kelsale, dated 15 October 1533, uses terms which indicate that there were no other guilds in Kelsale, a fact which may have contributed to the prosperity of St. John's Guild.<sup>9</sup> Although the brew pot bequeathed in 1497 may have been intended for use in a building other than the present Guildhall, its gift would have been suitable as a contribution to the furnishing of a new hall; and if the supposition that the Guildhall may have been built on the land bequeathed in 1490 should be right, the date of its building must have been around 1495. Such a dating would accord well with the meagre evidence of the wills and with the architectural probability, but it must be emphasised that this suggestion is based only on guesswork. If the land given in 1490 was not the site of the present Guildhall but another territorial endow-

<sup>5</sup> Will of John Lynne, in Register 3 fo. 206v. (I. & E.S.R.O. ref. IC/AA2/3).

<sup>6</sup> Will of Margaret Johnson, in Register 4 fo. 15 (I. & E.S.R.O. ref. IC/AA2/4).

<sup>7</sup> Will of John Heylocke, sr., in Register 13 fo. 145 v. (I. & E.S.R.O. ref. IC/AA2/13).

<sup>8</sup> 'Suffolk', in the series *The Buildings of England*, ed. N. Pevsner.

<sup>9</sup> 'Item I geve to the gilde of Kelsale xs'. Will of John Antilbe, in Register 11 fo. 154 (I. & E.S.R.O. ref. IC/AA2/11).

ment, then this argument falls to the ground: the existing Guildhall site may in that case have been owned by the Guild much earlier than 1490, and the present building erected well before that year.

Although it sheds but an uncertain light on the history of the Guildhall itself, this is perhaps the most appropriate place to give a passing glance at the lands known to have been owned by the Guild. Some at least of these lands were copyhold of the Manor of Kelsale, and among the records of this manor is an Extent dated 20 Edward 4 (1480), surviving in a 16th century copy.<sup>10</sup> This contains eighteen references to the Guild, which are printed in full as an Appendix to this article, and the total of lands involved amounts to approximately 40 acres. Though not conclusive, it is perhaps significant that the Extent makes no mention of the Guildhall. Since the building merited the payment of a separate rent in later days,<sup>11</sup> one might expect that it would have been mentioned in the Extent had it existed at that date; but this negative evidence does no more than support the probability that the Guildhall was built after that date. There is also an interesting entry in an Extent of the Manor of Carlton,<sup>12</sup> which must be dated from internal evidence *circa* 1600, to the effect that in 1538/9 the inhabitants of the town of Kelsale, in right of the Guild of St. John Baptist, unjustly occupied, without having taken proper title or surrender, a toft and an acre and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  roods of copyhold land of the tenement Bulles, which had been granted from the lord's hands 12 Richard 2 (1389); and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  acres which the executors of John Lunys sold to Philip Tilney, kt., 19 Henry 7 (1492). Whether the last acre and a half were included among the lands held in right of the Guild is not clear: neither, unfortunately, is it clear whether or not the toft etc. in the tenement Bulles was granted in 1389 to the Guild of Saint John Baptist *eo nomine*, or only came later to belong to it. In the former case, this would be the earliest reference to the Guild so far discovered. The document is printed in full in the Appendix.

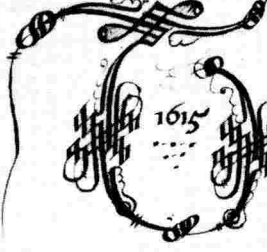
The Carlton Extent also mentions on the same page half an acre of copyhold of the tenement Roys held in 21 Henry 8 (1530) by the Churchwardens of Kelsale for the use and benefit of the parish church of Kelsale. This must be distinct from any of the Guild's lands.

As far as the documentary evidence is concerned, the most that can be said is that on balance it favours a date before rather than after 1500 for the erection of the Guildhall.

<sup>10</sup> I. & E.S.R.O. ref. HB26:444/1.

<sup>11</sup> *v. infra*, p. 134.

<sup>12</sup> I. & E.S.R.O. ref. HB26:444/54, page 35.

	Anno Dni 1615	Page 1
	<p><b>The Account of Thomas</b> Kers and Thomas Suffe Churchwardens for the Towne of Kelsale Hall made the xxij<sup>th</sup> day of March in the thirtieth year of the reign of our Soueraine Lord James sixth King of England or for our whole year ended the day and yere abovesaiden. videlicet.</p>	
	<p><b>Receiptes.</b></p>	
<p><b>Imprimis</b></p>	<p>Received of Thomas w Kers for his yearls share of the Towne lands called Kalsmeb</p>	
<p>Item received of Thomas Collyer for his yearls share of the Towne lands called Kalsmeb</p>	<p>xxij<sup>s</sup></p>	
<p>Item of John Wright for his yearls rent for the Right at St. Chouyslon</p>	<p>xxij<sup>s</sup></p>	
<p>Item of John Chank for his yearls share</p>	<p>xij<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup></p>	
<p>Item of Thomas Kers for his yearls rent for the Towne lands called Kalsmeb</p>	<p>xx<sup>s</sup></p>	
<p>Item of Walter Wrettingham for his yearls share for William Kers and Sir John Wright</p>	<p>xl<sup>s</sup> iiij<sup>d</sup></p>	
<p>Item of Robert Wager for his yearls share for the Towne lands called Kalsmeb</p>	<p>xij<sup>s</sup></p>	
	<p><b>Summa xxij<sup>s</sup> viij<sup>d</sup></b></p>	

IN ACC <sup>T</sup> of the Rents & Ty. Town Lands of Kelsale		
as it was taken by the Treasurers and Trustees of the sd. Town on Friday March 22 <sup>d</sup> Anno Dom 1727, on the School Chamber being of usual place for taking, placing and dating the Acc <sup>t</sup> as also for disbursing of the Monies, Mr. Jonas Grimsthye, & Mr. Will <sup>m</sup> Woods Church-wardens.		
RENTS' P <sup>r</sup> Ann <sup>d</sup>	RECEIPTS	
£ 3. 2 16.00.00	Rec <sup>d</sup> of Tho. Sutton a year's Rent for a pair of Towne Land in his Occupation ending at Mich <sup>l</sup> 1727 p <sup>r</sup> Bill 5. 19. 8 Monies	10 00 04
26.00.00	Rec <sup>d</sup> of the Widow Jackson a year's Rent for y <sup>e</sup> Towne farmed in the occupation ending at Mich <sup>l</sup> 1727 p <sup>r</sup> Bill 3. 12. 00 Monies	22 08 00
03.00.00	Rec <sup>d</sup> of Mr. Rob <sup>t</sup> Harrison a year's Rent for the Towne piece here ending at Mich <sup>l</sup> 1727 p <sup>r</sup> Bill 6. and in Monies	02 14 00
03.00.00	Rec <sup>d</sup> of John Thredder a year's Rent for y <sup>e</sup> Blacksmith's house & Shop in his hire ending at Mich <sup>l</sup> 1727 p <sup>r</sup> Bill 1. 7. 1 Monies	01 12 11
00. 10. 00	Rec <sup>d</sup> of Tho. Bell a year's Rent for a Towne Shop he hires ending at Mich <sup>l</sup> 1727 p <sup>r</sup> Bill 0. 0. 0 Monies	00 10 00

From 1539 to 1572 there is a lack of documentary evidence for the history of the Guildhall. In the latter year begins the first surviving volume of Churchwardens' Accounts for the parish of Kelsale, a splendid series extending, with only a few gaps, up to 1744, preserved among the records of the Kelsale Town Trustees and now deposited in the Ipswich and East Suffolk Record Office.<sup>13</sup> These shed light on the Guildhall during a period after the religious changes under Edward VI had necessitated a new use for the building, which emerges in 1572 as part of the estates administered on behalf of the parish by the Churchwardens. The accounts enable us to trace, often in great detail, the structural history of the building, and its upkeep, over a period of more than a century and a half, and also provide information about its occupiers and the various uses to which it was put. Obscurities remain, due to the nature of the accounts, which often omit details that were self-evident at the time but are now unknown, but a fascinating picture is revealed, and certain conclusions can be deduced with reasonable certainty (Plates XX and XXI).

Although the immediate transition period following the end of the Guild of Saint John Baptist remains for us a blank, after 30 years had elapsed the new order of things seems to have been firmly established at the Guildhall, which was still called by that name.<sup>14</sup> Between 1572 and 1576 a rent of 28/4 per annum was being paid by a certain John Storke for the Guildhall and half of a piece of land called Wilkins. In 1578 his name is replaced by Robert Curtis (elsewhere called 'the Smith') who paid a rent of 24/- per annum for the Guildhall and its hempland, i.e. a small plot of ground going with the property; he continued to pay a rent which varied somewhat (the reason not being specified) until 1586, after which certain changes in the rents are apparent. In 1587 Thomas Drane, also a Smith, started paying a rent of 12/- per annum, which in 1589 is specified to be for a 'forge and hempland', while in 1591 rent is paid for 'smith's shop and houses' by one Pottisford, called in 1592 'our Smith' (fo. 78). In 1593 the rent for this stabilised itself at 30/- per annum and was paid by Edmund

<sup>13</sup> I. & E.S.R.O. ref. GB9:976/1 and 2 (two volumes).

<sup>14</sup> All the following details regarding the tenancies, repair, etc. of the Guildhall are taken *passim* from the two volumes of Churchwardens' Accounts, unless otherwise specified. It should be borne in mind that there is sometimes room for doubt as to the precise calendar year intended by the Accounts, due to the alternation of usage between a financial year running from Michaelmas to Michaelmas and one running from Lady Day to Lady Day. The practice seems to have been as follows:

1572-1574 Michaelmas - Michaelmas, 1575-1576/7 Lady Day - Lady Day,  
1577-1604 Michaelmas - Michaelmas, 1605/6-1625 Lady Day - Lady Day,  
1627-1683 Michaelmas - Michaelmas, 1684-1693 (uncertain), 1693/4-  
1700/1 Lady Day - Lady Day, 1701-1704 Michaelmas - Michaelmas,  
1712/3-1743/4 Lady Day - Lady Day.



Grimsby who remained tenant until 1609. In 1606 the rent increased to 36/8 per annum, but the usual description throughout was 'for the Guildhall, shop and smith's forge'. This increase was temporary, reverting to 30/- p.a. in 1610, when the tenancy was taken over by Robert Askettle, who remained until 'widow Askettle' took over in 1618. However during the Askettle tenancy the description of the property is 'Guildhall, house and hempland', without mention of 'shop' (a complication exists between 1613 and 1617 inclusive, when Askettle was also renting the land Wilkins, making a total rent of 48/- p.a.).

Allowing for the variations of rent due to the pieces of land which different tenants occupied in addition to the Guildhall property, it is clear that part at least of the Guildhall was in use as a blacksmith's forge and/or shop, with a residence attached. In 1580 is recorded the first payment of rent for the 'Guildhall Soller', called from 1591 onwards the 'Guildhall Chamber'. This was occupied from 1580 until 1593 by a Mr. Duke, and from 1595 until 1616 by one Edmund French: the rent during Mr. Duke's tenancy was 20/- per annum, and thereafter 6/8 per annum, although between 1601 and 1616 Edmund French also rented some land called Guildhall piece, or pigtle, for an additional 40/- per annum.

It is interesting to speculate on the possible connections between this chamber, which was probably the upper part of the old Guildhall, and the 'priest's chamber' which receives mention in the accounts in 1575 and 1577, when payments are recorded by the Churchwardens to the Bailiff of the Lord of the Manor (sc. of Kelsale) 'for the Guildhall and the priests chamber', at 4/2 p.a. By 1578 this payment disappears and is replaced by a payment of 1d. to 'the gatherers of the common fine for the Guildhall', which is recorded also in 1579, 1581 and 1595. In 1601 there is a payment by the Churchwardens of 2d. 'for the common fine for Grimsby's cottage' which may possibly be connected with the Guildhall, and thereafter this payment disappears as a separate item in the Accounts. If the 'Guildhall Chamber' is to be identified with the 'priest's chamber' this would indicate the earlier use of this room but there is no positive evidence for such an identification, and it must be remembered that the Accounts contain references to many different parish properties, e.g. the 'Ale Porch', the schoolhouse, and the stockhouse, in addition to the Guildhall and the various dwelling houses that belonged to the parish; and it is by no means always clear whether these buildings were separate structures or divisions of the same building.

So far, then, it appears that the Guildhall was divided into at least two parts, the Chamber and the smith's house and forge. This is not the only division which can be inferred from the Accounts. Various small rents are recorded under the Churchwardens'

Receipts at different times for 'shop at the Guildhall', rents which appear to be separate from the main payment for the Smith's shop. In 1580 James Garstange paid 5/- for a year's rent of 'the shop' while in the preceding year 8d. was paid by the Churchwardens to Michael Eade for a day's work in 'casting and mending' the shop at the Guildhall. More certain evidence is available in the rent of 5/- paid first in 1594 by James Bishop for a shop at the Guildhall, which must have been different from the smith's shop, the rent for which continues independently. This new tenancy coincides with the reduction in rent for the Guildhall Chamber, and probably indicates a change in the internal arrangements of the structure. Certainly the Churchwardens' Payments for 1593 include building items connected with the smith's house. It is also worth noting a payment in 1574 'for plansheringe the stable at the gildehalle—ijs.' (fo. 8r). No separate rents are recorded for this stable, which may therefore have formed part of the smith's house, or may have gone with the Chamber.

Further changes in the internal arrangements almost certainly took place on the termination of the Askettle tenancy of the Guildhall in 1620, for from 1621 onwards the 30/- and 6/8 rents of Askettle and French (for 'Guildhall, house and hempland' and 'Guildhall Chamber') are replaced by Thomas King, paying 40/- p.a. for 'Guildhall and shop', and John Harvie, paying 6/8 p.a. for a 'shop in the Guildhall'. The latter may have been the residual 'Guildhall Chamber', but one cannot be sure. In 1627 these names are replaced by Richard Robson, paying 40/- p.a. for 'part of the Guildhall and the shop', and John Latten, paying 6/- p.a. for the 'Guildhall shop'; and, apart from the replacement of Richard Robson by widow Robson in 1630, who was succeeded by Richard Robson (presumably son to the earlier tenant) in 1634, these tenancies and rents remained constant until 1645 when further changes in the rents took place. Payments for building works were made in 1620<sup>15</sup> at Thomas King's shop and the Guild-

<sup>15</sup> 'Item to Chambars for takinge downe the tylls of Thomas Kinges shed to huue the sparres to make raylles for the buttes	xvd.
'Item for Carryinge of eight lods of tymber to mend the gyeelde hall and Thomas Kinges Shope	xvijs.
'Item to George lovffe to apayer of trysses to lod the tymber	viiijd.
'Item to Pennes for Sawinge of 140 Foot of planke	ij <sup>s</sup> .xd.
'Item to Skynner for fyve dayes worke	vjs.viiijd.
'Item for Strawe and Carradge to make Claye for Thomas Kinges shope	ij <sup>s</sup> .
'Item to Murrell of yoxford for 1000 bricks to pynne with at Thomas Kinge and Garnhame	xjs.
(fo. 169v. and 170r.).	

[At the same time there are various payments for work at the butts, and some of the above entries may possibly refer to this rather than the work on Thomas King's house.]

hall, and this supports the suggestion that the changes in rent reflected alterations to the premises.

Perhaps the most interesting evidence concerning the uses to which the Guildhall was put about this time is found in various payments relating to the Poor. In 1587 a payment of 3d. was made to one Candler 'for the poor woman which lay at the Guildhall' (fo. 62r.); while in 1593 3d. was spent on relieving 'a poor boy sick at the Guildhall' (fo. 103r.). In 1599 6/8 was paid for the carriage of four loads of wood 'for the poor at the Guildhall' (fo. 123r.). In 1614 9/- was spent on '140 foot of board and other things to make doors and windows at the Townhouse where the poor dwell, and for carriage there' (fo. 144r.). In 1627 1/6 was paid for carriage of Widow Porte's household stuff from Carlton Green to the Guildhall, and 8d. for a lock for the widow Porte's door (fo. 4r.). A payment of 3/- for the carriage of eight combs of wheat to the Guildhall for the poor, was made in 1630 (fo. 19r.). From these payments it is clear that the Guildhall was at least being used as a store place for the poor (in 1630) and as a refuge of some description for the sick and poor (in 1587, 1595 and 1599). The payment for widow Porte in 1627 reveals the Guildhall in use as a kind of almshouse, a use which would help to explain the numerous payments for kindling wood which was carried to the Guildhall each year (this would hardly have been paid for by the Churchwardens had it been for the smith's use).

The payment in 1614 presents a problem inasmuch as it refers to 'the Townhouse where the poor dwell' and not the Guildhall. In the Accounts, the term 'town house' is at first sight apparently used of any building owned by the parish. For example, in 1594 there are many payments for building works at the Town House, for the erection of 'the new house there' and the demolition of 'the old house', and a payment to John Hurring 'for building one town house at Palmers'. In 1607 several payments are recorded for building work at 'the town houses', amongst which is a payment of 10/- 'for thatching the new house at the Guildhall and mending the old'. But an entry under 1599 records the payment of 8d. 'to Forde for laying a load of clay at the Town House where Grimsby dwells' and it is known from the rents that Grimsby was a tenant of the smith's shop and house. This would therefore identify 'the Town House' with 'the Guildhall', these being simply alternative names. In this case the payments made in 1594 (as well as those in 1607), may have been for the demolition of an old addition to the Guildhall and its replacement by a new addition. (This date also coincides conveniently with the changes in rents when Mr. Duke ceased to occupy the Guildhall Chamber; but since, on the other hand, the new building in 1594 seems to have been at 'Palmers', it may refer to some other structure quite separate from the Guildhall).

The variant 'Town House' again found favour in the 18th century, being used clearly as an alternative for 'Guildhall', notably in the accounts for 1727/8, when the term 'Town Hall' is also found. The 'Town Hall' is also mentioned in 1733/4 in a context which makes it virtually certain to refer to the Guildhall, both terms occurring apparently indiscriminately.

The identification of the Town House with the Guildhall establishes its use as an almshouse as early as 1614, and as a poor-house of some kind as early as 1587; it helps to explain the repairs to hearths and chimneys at the Guildhall which occur fairly frequently in the Accounts, for each 'pensioner' would presumably have had his or her own chimney. It would also account for the large amount of chimney sweeping which took place at the Guildhall, for which there was a regularly occurring payment in the early 18th century, sometimes as many as six chimneys being specified, and once 12 (1728/9). The latter could have been a payment for two sweepings of six chimneys made at one time, or may indicate the maximum number of chimneys there at that date. This division of the Guildhall as almshouses receives corroboration from the use of the plural 'Town houses' in the building accounts for 1607 ('for making clay and daubing the town houses' and 'for making 2 hearths at the townhouses').

To summarise these findings: it would appear that by the beginning of the 17th century, and possibly from much earlier, the Guildhall was being used as a poor-house, a shop, and a blacksmith's forge and house. It is uncertain how much accommodation existed for the poor, and how many shops existed. It is also uncertain exactly how the Guildhall Chamber was divided, and how much of the total accommodation was housed in buildings added to the original Guildhall.

The building was certainly not neglected during the period covered by the Accounts. Most years contain some payment relating to the Guildhall, although it is often difficult to know precisely which payments related specifically to the Guildhall and which to other parish buildings. For example, in 1642 15/- was paid to a certain Chambers for 2500 tile pins and tiling work at the Guildhall and at the Stockhouse (fo. 58r.), leaving doubt as to whether these were separate buildings or not. Fortunately in this case the accounts for 1636 contain details of the setting up of the Stockhouse, which must therefore have been a separate building, however near to, or distant from, the Guildhall it may have been sited. Various payments referring to the 'Ale Porch' leave doubt as to whether this were part of the Church, part of the Guildhall, or an independent building. However, it seems fairly clear that the Schoolhouse and the Guildhall were separate, since the numerous payments referring to both are reasonably distinct. In 1595 a

payment of 5d. is recorded for the common fine of Palmers, the Guildhall and the Schoolhouse, mentioned separately; while in 1599 6/8 was paid for the carriage of four loads of wood from Nichols for the poor at the Guildhall, and one load to the schoolhouse. Had these two been adjacent or part of the same building it is unlikely that the loads would have been mentioned separately. In 1584 the Churchwardens paid the Bailiff a separate rent for these two buildings, 22d. for the Guildhall and 3d. for the Schoolhouse. The Schoolhouse Chamber in post-Restoration days was where the Trustees of the Town Lands annually rendered their accounts, but a school house is mentioned as early as 1573. It is also interesting to note a payment in 1592 for repairs done to the chancel of the Church 'decayed by the scholars'; so either the schoolhouse was at that time inadequate, or else the churchwardens had been dilatory in making reparation. Confirmation that the Schoolhouse was a separate structure from the Guildhall exists in the separate mention of '2 tenements formerly used as a schoolhouse' when the Guildhall was converted into a school in 1870 (see p. 142).

It would be tedious to mention even a small fraction of the repair work done to the Guildhall between 1572 and 1744. Minor repairs were constantly carried out, and thatching figures largely, as well as mending or rebuilding chimneys and hearths. Apart from the building of the new house at the Guildhall mentioned already, some of the more noteworthy building works recorded are the construction of new stairs in 1574,<sup>16</sup> carpenter's work on the Guildhall Gallery and stairs in 1623,<sup>17</sup> and in 1638 a payment of 1/6 to Francis Reeve and Thomas Harsant for making the floor at the Guildhall and for beating down the wall in the Chamber (fo. 43r.). The following details from the Churchwardens' Payments for 1573 serve as a typical illustration:

'Paied For x combe lyme For the gildhalle	vij <sup>s</sup> .vj <sup>d</sup> .
'Paied for Feching the same	vij <sup>s</sup> .
'Paied to John Hill for rivinge of lath and sawinge of eves borde For the gildehall	iiij <sup>s</sup> .vj <sup>d</sup> .
'Paied to Richard burges For helping him	iiij <sup>s</sup> .
'Paied For xij thousande lath naile for thee gildehall at xxd. a thousande	xx <sup>s</sup> .

<sup>16</sup> 'Paied to John Hill for vj daies woorke too Fell tymber huinge and sawinge and makinge the staers and plansheringe the gildehall (fo. 8r).

<sup>17</sup> 'Item paid to William Base and to John Latten from framing the worke about the Guildhall Gallery and Stayers      xxiiij<sup>s</sup>.  
'Item to Arnold Pynne for sawing the tymber for the gallery and stayers being a C and XI foote at half a crowne the hundred      iiij<sup>s</sup>.iiij<sup>d</sup>.  
(fo. 187v.).

'Paied for three hundred naile to naile thee eves boorde of the same halle	xxjd.
'Paied For Five thousande tyle	xlvs.
'Paied For the tyle carringe	x <sup>s</sup> .
'Paied for xvj thousand tyle pyne	v <sup>s</sup> .iiij <sup>d</sup> .
'Paied to the Tyler his wages and boorde	xljij <sup>s</sup> . iiij <sup>d</sup> .
'Paied to Will'm Rendelson for diginge and dawbinge the scolehowse & gildehall viii daies	vj <sup>s</sup> .viiij <sup>d</sup> .
'Paied to Sander dew for the same work v daies	iiij <sup>s</sup> .ij <sup>d</sup> .
'Paied to John Storke for certayne Iron worke For the church and gildhall	xljij <sup>s</sup> .viiij <sup>d</sup> .
'Paied to John Hill for xiiij dayes and a halfe abowte the Scholehowse and the gildehalle and cuttinge boordes and plansheringe and felling of tymber	xj <sup>s</sup> .xjd.
'Paied for feching a growsell to the gildehalle	iiij <sup>d</sup> .

The last substantial work recorded in the surviving Churchwardens' Accounts appears under the year 1726/7, and involved tiling, brickwork, floorlaying and thatching. No doubt this is to be associated with the small stone bearing the date 1724 placed high up on the west wall of the present Guildhall at its southern end.

The upheavals of the Commonwealth period seem to have made no difference to the running of the Guildhall, although no Accounts are recorded for certain years in the 1640s. In 1642 Thomas Robson was paying £2 p.a. and John Latten 6/- p.a.; by 1645 Thomas Robson alone appears, paying £1 p.a. This tenancy is somewhat obscure during this decade, but apparently widow Robson (or Roberson, or Robinson, as it variously appears), was tenant in 1650 and John Robson in 1651. From 1651 he paid a rent of £1.6.8, increasing to £2.6.8 in 1656, and changing to £2 in 1663, continuing until 1671 after which there is a hiatus in the Accounts.

1675 was a year of some importance, for on 17 August an indenture, which is copied in full into the Accounts (fo. 46r.), conveyed the messuage called the Guildhall and six acres belonging therewith, together with 30 acres called Hawkins or Awkins, three acres called Guildhall pightle, a tenement called Palmers or Shardeloes, and all the lands in Kelsale occupied by James Garnham, to trustees for the following purposes: 1. for the payment of fines, quit rents and other charges on the Town Lands and to discharge them from incumbrances from time to time; 2. to maintain a school in Kelsale for 10 or more of the poorest children to be educated in reading, writing, casting accounts or grammar; to bind such

children apprentices or maintain them at Cambridge University; and to pay a schoolmaster £16 p.a.<sup>18</sup> in equal portions on the 2nd Tuesday in April and the 2nd Tuesday in October; 3. the residue to be spent on the repair of Kelsale church and for the use of the poor of Kelsale. Thirteen Trustees were named,<sup>19</sup> and provision was made on the death of seven of these for the remaining six to nominate seven new trustees. The affairs of the Trust were to be administered by two Trustees or other chief inhabitants of Kelsale, to be chosen by the Trustees on the Friday before Lady Day each year, when the accounts of the Trust were to be rendered in the School chamber, upon the tolling of the Bell.

There is room for doubt whether this indenture was in fact executed. The text copied into the Accounts breaks off without the appropriate final clause, and no copy of the deed is known to exist independently. When new trustees were admitted to the Town Lands copyhold of the Manor of Kelsale on 7 September 1683, no reference was made to the trustees appointed by the deed of 1675 (although the name of the trustee whose death occasioned the new admission appears in the list of 1675, and he may have been the only survivor of that list). The next previous admission of trustees or feoffees for the copyhold Town Lands appears to have been on 11 April 1638, the earliest admission recorded in the surviving court books being on 12 December 1571.

But whether the provisions of the deed of 1675 were implemented then or only came into force in 1683, their terms form the foundation of the Trust, and from that time the Trustees grew in importance at the expense of the Churchwardens, whose accounts gradually decline in significance, since the administration of the bulk of the property which they had formerly handled was now the responsibility of the Trustees. Both accounts are recorded in the same book; at first the distinction is not made clear, but by the 18th century a more orderly format had been achieved, relegating the Churchwardens' Accounts proper to a subsidiary position relative to the main property accounts of the Trustees. The new definition given in 1675 to the purpose for which the profits of the Guildhall should be applied apparently made no difference to the uses to which the building was put. In 1679 the name of

<sup>18</sup> In 1668 the following item occurs (fo. 131v.):

'Item paid by William Wright to Mr. Salter for teachinge the scoole for 2 quarters

8li.

[So the salary appointed represented a continuance of the accustomed amount].

<sup>19</sup> These were Ralph Eade, sr., Ralph Eade, jr., Thomas Eade, William Wright, Thomas Robson, sr., Thomas Robson, jr., James Garnham, jr., all of Kelsale, Ralph Keable of Westhall, Sir John Duke of Benhall, Edmund Bence of Benhall, John Osborne of Carlton, Edward Osborne, son of the above, and James Garnham, sr., of Kelsale.

Francis Howell replaced John Robson, paying a rent of £2 . 15 . 0 p.a.; in 1687 the tenancy seems to have been taken over by William Robertson paying a rent of £2 . 10 . 0, whose name continues intermittently until 1704 when another hiatus occurs in the Accounts. From 1697/8 until 1704 Daniel Grimsbie appears in addition to William Robertson, paying a rent of £1 . 5 . 0 p.a., which in 1711 was being paid by widow Grimsbie.

One of the difficulties which occurs in trying to trace the tenancies arises, it would seem, from the practice of omitting any entry for rent under Receipts whenever debts from the parish to the tenant cancelled out the amount of the rent. This seems to be the only explanation of the way in which certain tenants' names disappear for several years, later to reappear paying the same rent. Until the year 1712/3 the descriptions of the properties rented are only given haphazardly and rarely. Thereafter this detail appears regularly; and from a rental taken on 20 March 1712/3 Thomas Bell appears as tenant of the Guildhall shop at 15/- p.a., John Cooper rented a shop at £1 p.a., and John Ward paid £2 . 10 . 0 for the blacksmith's shop and house. These tenants continue to the close of the account book in 1743/4, a revision in rent taking place in 1726/7 (Thomas Bell, 'shop', 10/-; John Cooper, 'shop', £1; and John Ward, 'blacksmith's house and shop', £3). These changes coincide, chronologically, with the building works mentioned above. The only points remaining to note concerning these tenancies are the specific mention of the hempland going with the blacksmith's shop (1734/5) and the detail recorded in 1728/9 that Thomas Bell's shop was 'at the south end of the Guildhall'.

Another point of interest to note in the Accounts for 1726/7 is a payment of 1/8 spent on the Master of the Workhouse 'when I went to inspect the workhouse at Beccles and to treat with him about his hire being £25 p.a.'. Unfortunately the Accounts do not subsequently show whether or not the Beccles workhouse master was persuaded to come to Kelsale; but a payment of £1 . 1 . 4 was made in 1727/8 for irons to burn coal in at the Workhouse, and the introduction of this new term for the poorhouse would seem to indicate some change in its administration about that time, although the old terms Town House and Guildhall do not disappear from use.

Although not actually part of the Guildhall, an appendage which must have been closely associated with it in the life of the village was the well. The first allusion to this is a payment of 2d. to Pottiforth the smith for mending a bucket at the Guildhall in 1592: this is explained by a payment of 12d. in 1596 to a certain Pecke for a bucket for the Guildhall well, and is further explained by the payment in 1599 of 2/- for two buckets for the Town Well at the Guildhall. Numerous payments occur subsequently, generally for mending a bucket or supplying a new one. But in



1636 more substantial work was carried out, virtually the rebuilding of the well.<sup>20</sup> A payment of 6/8 had been made in 1634 to Christofer Reve 'for drawing of water at his well by the poore of the Guildhall for one yere', so no doubt the Churchwardens had no desire to see the Town Well out of action any longer than could be avoided. A more curious and perhaps tragic item occurs in the Payments for 1669 when 2/- was spent on pales to mend the Guildhall yard and for 'stopinge the well with stakes and bushes to prevent present danger of Falleinge in': in that same year the knacker of Saxmundham was paid 3/6 for a well rope for the Guildhall well.

With the end of the surviving Churchwardens' Accounts in 1744 lack of documentary evidence again prevails. The *Report of the Charity Commissioners* of 1837 (p. 187 *et seq.*) shows that the Guildhall was still owned by the Kelsale Town Lands Charity, and was let as a Workhouse at £10 p.a. for 14 years from October 1825. The occupation by paupers is confirmed by White's *Directory of Suffolk* of 1844, but whether or not this was the sole purpose to which it was put is not made clear; the Town Lands Charity estate then consisted, in addition to the Guildhall, of a house, blacksmith's shop, cottage, garden, a farm of 79 acres 2 roods 19 perches, another of 63 acres 1 rood 19 perches (called Palmers), and eight more acres, all in Kelsale, as well as lands and houses in Middleton and Peasenhall. The 1874 edition of the same *Directory* states that 'the Guildhall was converted into a School and residence for the master in 1870', and adds to the list of properties forming

- <sup>20</sup> 'Item when the twoe Masons came from Beccles to take the well at the guilde hall to make new for their dynners at William Whites (fo. 36r). ijs.
- 'Item paid for a pullye for the well (fo. 37r.). js.viiijd.
- 'Item paid for 3 lodes of brick at Darsham Kell jli.
- 'Item for the carriage of the 3 lodes to the Guildhall xs.
- 'Item paid to Pynne for one hundred board sawinge ijs.iiijd.
- 'Item more paid him for dimidium a C splitting worke js.iiijd.
- 'Item paid for 30 busshelles of Lyme at Aldeburgh' at 4d. obolus the busshell xjs.iiijd.
- 'Item for fetching of the same from Aldeburgh' to the Guildhall vs.
- 'Item bestowed on the lyme burners boyes in beers ijd.
- 'Item paid for the Masons worke about the well jli.xvs.
- 'Item paid to the Masons for mending the Steeple and for work by them don about the Church and for gutters making from the well viijs.
- 'Item bestowed on the workmen when they made an ende of their worke some of the Townesmen being in the company js.
- 'Item paid John Browne for 2 firkins to bottom face the well ijs.iiijd.
- 'Item for small ( ) for the masons worke about ye well iiijd.
- 'Item for 4 lodes of Sande fetching into the Guild hall and yard for the Masons js.iiijd.
- 'Item paid Thomas Harsams wief for a skeppe for the masons to use about the well ijd.
- (fo. 38r.).

PLATE XXII



Kelsale Guildhall, west front.

the estate of the Charity 'two tenements formerly used as a school-house'. As such it continued until taken over by the Civil Defence authorities in 1962.

The writer deliberately postponed an examination of the building as it now exists until after the above had been written. The examination was undertaken jointly with Mr. David Penrose of Elmsett, to whom the writer is greatly indebted for advice on the interpretation of the architectural evidence. At the present time (March 1965), apart from the additions which are clearly no earlier than the 19th century, it consists of a rectangular timbered structure of two floors, on a north-south axis, giving directly to the west on the road leading towards Ipswich, its northern end fronting the crossroads by the Eight Bells Inn. Its southern end consists of a plain brick gable wall, against which abutts a small row of brick-built cottages on the same axis as the Guildhall. The main structure is of five bays of almost equal width, and at the rear (the eastern side) projects a secondary timbered building of two floors extending outwards from the second bay, counting from the northern end, but wider than that bay and consequently overlapping the third bay by about a third of its own width. The upper floor overhangs along the west side and at the northern end, and there is a corner-post with a splayed bracket, uncarved, at the north west corner. At the north east corner an external staircase of brick rises to a doorway at first floor level leading to the secondary timbered building abovementioned, through a small fore structure which masks it from the road. Access to the upper floor of the main building is by a covered staircase built against its eastern side, rising from the yard at the rear to enter the upper floor at its southern extremity (Plate XXII, Fig. 12).

This secondary structure, itself consisting of two bays, although now thrown into the main building, was originally erected independently of it, as is clear from the visible remains of the framing at both floor levels where the two buildings abutt. This would account for the existence of two independent staircases. Although no part of the Guildhall exhibits any considerable detail, the woodwork of the secondary building is somewhat coarser in finish, but cannot be greatly different in date judging from the width of the chamfering on the main vertical timbers, which is only slightly, if at all, narrower than the chamfers in the main building.

The frames of the main structure consist at first floor level of tie beam and king post, the former supported by substantial, undecorated braces, which almost join in the centre, thus forming an approximation to a four-centred arch. The moulded king posts are the only detail to be found, apart from the simple chamfers and stops on the main vertical timbers and the larger horizontal beams. The roof timbers are open to view. The south end con-

tains a central fireplace with recesses on each side; the fenestration is continuous along the west side, and at the north end, which also has another window higher up in the gable and at present blocked; on the east side, at the north end, is another fireplace filling most of one bay next to which comes the opening which has been broken through to the secondary building. After this come windows matching those on the opposite side of the room, above which has been inserted another row of windows (externally these are accommodated by two very large dormer-gables). The last bay on this side has no windows and is pierced by the staircase door only: originally this whole bay (the southernmost) must have been partitioned off from the rest of the upper floor, as is shown by the slot marks on the underside of the tie beam.

At ground floor level, modern dividing walls obscure the original timbers to a large degree; but it is plain that the bay divisions of the upper floor are repeated without exception. The very substantial cross beams support a beam running continuously down the centre of the building lengthwise, which in turn supports the floor timbers. A diagonal beam links up with the corner post at the north west angle of the building. From the comparatively slight chamfering on some of the lesser timbers it would appear that repairs or insertions were carried out in the 17th century. These timbers contrast noticeably with the few visible remains of the original beams which are massive, with wide chamfers. Only at the southern end, where the modern division (called the Welfare Room) occupies a bay and a half of the original articulation, is anything detailed revealed concerning the earlier history of the structure. Here, dowel marks in the vertical faces of the cross beam, and slot marks on the underside of the central beam where it extends across the end bay, indicate that that bay was originally partitioned into two rooms. Such rooms would correspond to the Buttery and Dairy of a typical mediaeval Hall-plan. (This is, of course, the same bay which at the upper floor level was separated off). But another interesting detail exists in the horizontal slot marks visible in the vertical faces of the central beam where it extends across the next bay from the end one. These must have at some time housed the floor timbers, and reveal a change of floor level at an unknown date. Unfortunately the modern internal walls and ceilings prevent an examination of the comparable parts of the other bays downstairs, and in the absence of any clues in the upstairs room as to changes of floor level, it is difficult to deduce anything from this evidence.

There are at present remains of five chimneys. One exists against the north wall of the secondary building. The two most substantial occupy respectively the centre of the south end of the main building and its north east corner (the external staircase

clasps the brickwork of the latter). The remaining two are ranged along the west side, in line with the frames which mark the central bay of the building, and consist of brick structures which extend outward at ground floor level to the projection line of the overhanging upper floor. The northernmost of these two continues up to roof level, but the other no longer rises above the first floor. All the existing fireplaces appear to be of the same 19th century date. The only noteworthy feature concerning the chimneys is that the one in the north-east corner, which possesses a fireplace on the upper floor, is marked on the architect's plan at the ground floor as 'void'. The existing internal arrangements preclude further investigation.

An unexplained detail exists in the roof of the upper room where, in the first bay at the northern end, a rectangular framework rests between the end wall and the nearest tie beam. This construction somewhat resembles the supports for a bell turret which can be found at the west end of some churches where there is no masonry tower. The girth of this tie-beam and its braces is very slightly more substantial than that of its neighbours, which may indicate that this framework is original; and externally the frame in question is buttressed by a brickwork projection at ground-floor level, similar to the projections housing the two chimneys on the west side, but considerably smaller than the chimney breasts. No other external evidence on this point can be seen.

A further brickwork projection of similar nature along the west side is formed by bringing forward the gable wall at the south end, and returning it a few feet at right angles. The face thus provided, which extends from ground to roof, contains at upper floor level the small stone inscribed with the date 1724. If this is the date of the brickwork, it would seem likely to include the whole of the south end.

Reviewing the archaeological evidence, the experience of Mr. Penrose concerning timber buildings in East Suffolk inclined to accept a dating in the second half of the 15th century for the original building. This view is based on the size of the chamfers, the angularity of the stops, and the massiveness of the timbers and braces, considered together with the general character of the plan. Conflating the documentary and archaeological evidence, there would appear to be no contradictions.

The ancient part of the Guildhall as it now stands forms the core of the grouping of buildings, which is considerably enlarged by the substantial village hall called the 'New Building' and dated 1891 (lying to the north east) and the row of cottages attached at the southern end. The dwelling house of some antiquity which connects the 'new building' and the Guildhall at its north east corner was used as a residence for the schoolmaster until recently:

and since White's *Directory* of 1874 refers to the conversion of the Guildhall into a school *and residence for the master*, it may reasonably be assumed that this house was part and parcel of the Guildhall and its appendages, and may even have been the smith's house, with the smith's shop or forge abutting up to the large chimney stack at the north east corner of the Guildhall.

Aside from these particular speculations, the number of chimney stacks is consistent with the subdivision of the ground floor as alms-houses and/or shops. The main room of the upper floor shows no evidence of having been subdivided, except for the last bay at the southern end. The 'Guildhall Chamber' must therefore have been either one or other of these parts, or else (perhaps more likely) the secondary building as it was before being thrown into the main structure. The payment for beating down the wall in the Chamber, recorded in 1638, would then refer either to the opening of the secondary building into the main one at the upper floor level, or else the removal of the partition separating off the southernmost bay upstairs.

Speculation must suffice as to the details of how precisely the Guildhall was divided up and used during the centuries following the end of the Guild of Saint John Baptist. But in spite of its varied history as a poor house, shop, dwelling house and school, enough of its original splendour remains, particularly in the upper floor with its fine open roof, to provide a substantial and impressive survival from the England of the late 15th century, and not as a mere fossil, but with a continuous, if varied, usefulness in the life of the parish throughout its existence.

## APPENDIX

### EXTENT OF THE MANOR OF KELSEALE 1480

(I. & E.S.R.O. ref. HB26: 444/1)

*N.B. Abbreviations have been extended.*

fo.3. Fraternitas Gylde sancti Johannis Baptiste tenet ij Acras de dominicalis terre nuper in tenura Thome' Colvyll, et Redit per Annum—ij s.

fo. 3v. Gardiani gilde sancti Johannis Baptiste pro iiij Acris terre eiusdem tenementi (sc. Sibton) iacentes iuxta longe mer' nuper in tenura Thome Cely et antea in tenura Johannis Cheney et Redunt per Annum terminis predictis equaliter—xvj d.

fo. 4. Gilda de Kelshale pro xxvij Acris terre in Kelshale

nuper Johannis Colvyll vocatis Alkinnes tenent et Redunt per Annum iij precarie carucarie ad ( ) domini et si non habuerunt ( ) recipiunt de domino pro qualibet precaria pro ( ) suo ij d. et si non faciunt servicia dabunt domino pro qualibet Arreragia j d. et Reddiderunt de ( ) vj s. x d. obolum iij precarie carucarie.

fo. 8. Fraternitas Gilde sancti Johannis Baptiste ibidem pro una Roda eiusdem tenementi (sc. Schymmyng) nuper Johannis Bacheler—j d.

fo. 9v. Gardiani Gilde beati Johannis Baptiste de Kelshale tenent ij Acras dimidiam Rodam nuper Johannis Wyld—xiij d. q' viij' per q'.

fo. 17. Gardiani gilde ibidem tenent unam Acram quondam Johannis Wylde—iiij d. iiij' q'.

fo. 27v. Fraternitas Gylde de Kelshale tenet ad firmam j Rodam dimidiam quondam Johannis Thurgell et dimidiam Acram nuper Willelmi mopple in tenura Johannis Baker, Smyth, inter Alias terras (sc. sub tenemento Partriche).

fo. 28v. Fraternitas Gylde de Kelshale tenet unam Acram terre nuper Thome Caas antea Thome Osborne, Redit—vj d. q' di' q' (sc. sub tenemento Ric' Bernard).

fo. 29v. Fraternitas gilde de Kelshale tenet unam Rodam x perticas quondam Thome Cely  
Eadem tenet dimidiam Acram terre— } iij d. q'  
(sc. sub tenemento Howlot).

[The remaining reference would appear to mention the Guild only by way of abuttal]:

fo. 29. Et in manus domini unam Rodam quondam in tenura Willelmi Mopper dict' Joh' Baker, smyth, inter Aliam dimidiam Acram dimidiam Rodam quondam in tenura Johannis Thegar dict' Fraternit' gilde de Kelshale cum alia (sc. sub tenemento Dowsynge).

#### EXTENT OF THE MANOR OF CARLTON c. 1600

(I. & E.S.R.O. ref. HB26: 444/54, p. 35).

#### VILLA DE KESALL

30 H.8. Inhabitantes ville de Kelsall in iure Gylde Sancti Johannis Baptiste iniuste occupant sine sursumreddito capto vel titulo unum toftum et una acra et una roda dimidium terre native

tenementi Bulles que concessa fuerunt ex manas domini 12 R.2.  
Ac una acra dimidium quas executores testamenti Johannis Lunys  
vendiderunt Phillippo Tilney milliti p' 19 H.7.

1 H.6. Avelena Wilkin Addmissa est ex prima concessione  
domini Reditus ij d.

12 H.4. Willelmus Palmer fillius Johannis Addmissus.