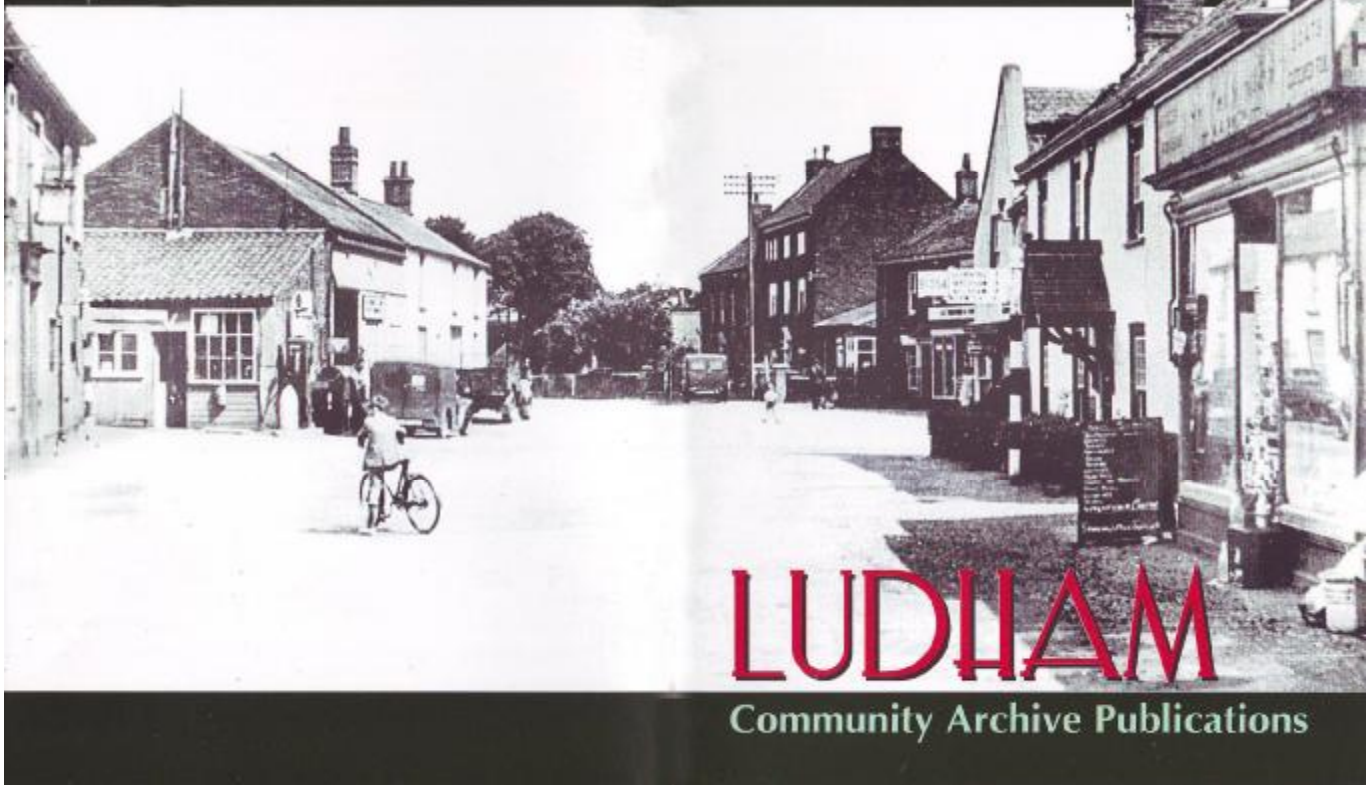


STAITHE ROAD
Revised Edition
By Beulah Gowing



The Ludham Community Archive Group

The group came together during the Jubilee year of 2002 to celebrate it through a community event in the village. The result was a textile triptych, which was completed with the collaboration of over 100 residents of the village. It is now on show in the Parish Church of St. Catherine's. We were supported in this enterprise by the Arts Officer of North Norfolk District Council, Brenda Seymore, and by our Art Tutor, Nicky Maule.

While the project was in progress we introduced local walks, led by knowledgeable villagers, to learn more about the community in which we live. Winter walks also evolved from this. We were also introduced to a method of recording the information that we were acquiring during this process and it was at this point that the archive aspect of the project really began.

Ludham Archive is held on computer and continues to expand as further information comes to light. Photographic, pictorial and a variety of other images, supplemented by reminiscences form the basis of the archive. In addition, many people have been interviewed and the results recorded. All of this is seen as a beginning of what should become a continuing process to record the evolution of a changing community. Archive materials are open to access by villagers and can be seen at regular evening meetings. Dates of meetings can be found in the monthly parish newsletter.

The archive provides the source of material to make publications available as CD Rom and other visual media, as well as pamphlets and booklets.

STAITHE ROAD

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STOCKS HILL

Staithe Road starts at Stocks Hill by the crossroads in the centre of the village and was known as Common Road at one time. Stocks Hill was also known in the past as Church Plain and the Church was then responsible for its upkeep but as things became more expensive, the responsibility was passed to the Ludham Council. It was, no doubt, the site where the stocks were once situated, in which law-breaking locals were locked as a punishment, to be jeered at.

The large stone, which now stands by the door of the Alfresco café, used to be by the churchyard wall on the south side of the road. It was used to mount horses and is believed to have arrived during the ice-age as a glacial erratic. It was moved to its new site when the road was widened. According to a village elder, his grandfather remembers it being used as a whipping stone, another local punishment. Large stones were also used as markers for boundaries and also for the 'dole' stones which marked land portions before the enclosure acts. However, they proved to be too portable and could be easily moved in the night, so hedges then became more commonly used.

CROWN HOUSE dated 1752, had earlier been an inn named The Rose and Crown, with a large public room for auctions and meetings and a cellar. From 1851 Robert Newton was the innkeeper, publican and post-master for fifty years. His son, Woodbine, was a letter-carrier at thirteen years of age and possibly had already left school. The last time the building was licensed as an inn was in 1908 when Eldred Slaughter kept it, as well as being a fish curer in a building opposite the Church Room. He had pony and trap transport - the village was busy with horses, cars and bicycles.

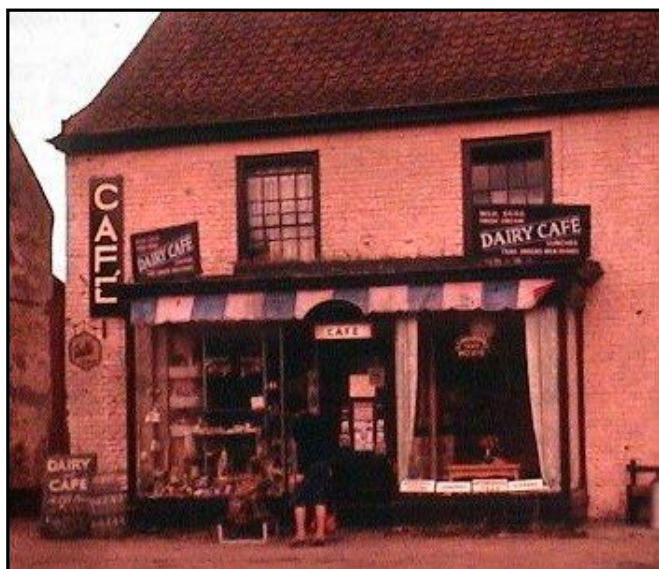


Robert's grandson, Ebenezer Newton, was born in 1859. He was a corn merchant and by 1908 was living in Crown House which was then no longer an inn. He was also a coke and coal merchant, a posting and carting merchant, a contractor, a carrier to Great Yarmouth and a shipping agent for emigration which was then encouraged by assisted passage which helped the young settle abroad to find their fortune. The coal wagon could also be cleaned out, re-seated and converted to convey

Sunday School treats to picnics on nearby beaches or on demand. He eventually obtained a coal lorry and later, his sons worked in the business with him. Ebenezer also had chickens that strolled down the Norwich Road, which was narrower in those days, with the cockerel in the lead. It was not wise to challenge him as he would attack.

A Newton descendant still occupies Crown House and Barclays Bank rented one room from the family for a time, for local banking needs on Thursdays.

There was no bus service until 1922 and then there was one from Yarmouth. The driver slept at the King's Arms before returning the next day. Electricity arrived in the village in about 1928 and sewage in 1974.



THE BUTCHER'S SHOP

This building has changed owners and appearances many times over the years – being in turn a hardware shop, a dairy and a grocer. Thomas Abbot Daniel was born locally at Broadmead Farm, Turf Fen and became a grocer here in 1869. He then left to become the first Bank Manager in Stalham. He and his two daughters travelled by pony and trap to Yarmouth each Saturday to fetch money for the following week. His customers complained that the coins reeked of fish, having been handled by the fishermen, so Thomas and his daughters spent Sunday nights washing them.

In 1941, Mrs Ethel Powell, the then grocer's wife, lost her life through enemy action during the Second World War. A hit and run plane sprayed the village with shell-fire and a bullet ricocheted from the table in the back room where she was sitting and killed her. Her husband died a month later from shock.

BOB'S COTTAGE

This has also been a shop, selling china and drapery. It was kept by Clarissa Fairhead, a spinster whose father was a carrier to Yarmouth and Norwich, taking eggs, butter and vegetables produced in the locality, to market. Clarissa lived to be 91 and died in 1907. Her son, Walter, had died from a fit three years previously, aged 65, on the Manor doorstep where Dr Gordon had his surgery.

Bob's Cottage used to belong to the Throwers of the Old Post Office opposite.

The adjoining cottages are possibly Victorian, as they had slate roofs earlier than others nearby.



The house NEXT DOOR TO BOB'S COTTAGE was once a fish and chip shop with a small bay window, kept by Harry Grapes and his family. A fish and two pennyworth of chips didn't break the bank in those days. It was nice and central and in a good position to gain trade. It was a common site to see customers with their bundle of newspapers and to smell the appetising aroma. Harry's business outlived the other two fish and chip shops that were in competition. Of course, fish was limited during WWII but he managed to fetch some, in his little green two-seater car which had just room for him and a crate of fresh fish.

Often mutton fat was used for frying which had the peculiar effect of hanging about in the mouth for ages. Harry also made wooden toys during the war, painted vividly in red or green. There was a great demand for them from the soldiers stationed at the local base.



THE OLD POST OFFICE opposite was a bed-and-breakfast at one time and a small café for simple snacks such as beans on toast.

Mr Chapel and then John Dale had previously run the Post Office but it was kept by George and Helen Thrower from 1923, the day of their marriage. Groceries, ice cream and patent medicines were sold here and there was also a taxi service. There were jars of sweets from which to buy a penny-worth on a Saturday and George walked the river banks with an ice box containing Lyons ice cream on Sundays. There was also a 'stop-me

-and-buy-one' tricycle out and about on Sundays.

Barclays Bank was attached to the local Post Office and was very convenient for local tradesmen. During WWII, quite a lot of National Savings was paid in as part of the War Effort. Most areas had a Spitfire Week and local ladies would encourage savings to be made.

Beulah Gowing remembers travelling to the Barclays Bank branch in Wroxham with the King's Arms takings in a paper carrier bag and she felt quite safe in those days, on a bus which was crowded with hopeful shoppers and servicemen on a day's pass.

People used to walk more then, often dressed up in their best, to see and be seen perhaps, either to Ludham Bridge or to Potter Heigham Bridge, to watch passing boats and to converse with other walkers. Ludham lads, dressed up in their suits specially for Sundays, had open-necked shirts and often a cap or half a jar of Brylcreem plastered on their hair.

SUNNYSIDE

This house has recently (2002) been renovated inside and out. Stripped of all plaster, it revealed its different ages of development. No foundation or damp course was found – there was an earth floor under the boards and under the plaster over the front door, shells were revealed embedded in the brickwork (see picture). They are believed to be either a good luck symbol or to keep evil spirits at bay.





They have now disappeared. Next to the main fireplace in the living room a small wall oven was revealed – raised barred grate with hobs.

This building now has a damp course, new plaster, and has been retiled, with a new brick chimney and window frames.

LUDHAM MANOR

This building dates from a very early age, perhaps even the 'Manor of the Bacon' in the 1300s and aerial photographs show its position of importance in the village, although it is understood that the Manor has now been delisted because of the many alterations made. It has three staircases and many passages. Some older stonework was visible and a clay mud wall.

Occupants included the Hadden Brownes and the Bishop of Norwich, both of whom owned much rented-out property in the village, Dr.

Gordon who had his surgery here and Colonel Worship, all making alterations in their turn. Beulah Gowing, then aged about 8, remembers the 'Worship auction' held on the front lawn in a marquee.



Mrs Emily Gertrude Armitage was here in 1937. Captain Armitage was her second husband, her first being German and unfortunately their son, Otto died quite young. She then made her third marriage, which did not last, to a local man just before the 1939 war.

The Lady of the Manor was very generous to the village. Lavish parties were held with gifts for everyone who attended them. She also bought up local cottages which were then sold at a very low price.

A shop was opened in the former army huts selling novelties and a garden trail ran through the woodland to attract holiday makers and locals. This was dotted with sculptures, riddles, mottoes, surprise scenes in boxes, and a fairy house (find the fairy!) which all caused amusement and demanded much concentration. It is fondly remembered! Concert parties formed and plays were performed on erected stages in the Nissen Hut in the grounds. There were ferrets in cages, black and white rabbits hopping about, sheep, peacocks and a cockatiel. The pond was a welcome pool for those wishing to learn to swim and, by the Yarmouth Road entrance, a rustic seat was positioned with cut-out letters, 'Newton's Corner', named for an old wherryman who had lived opposite. He always wore a faded smock or jersey. The other back of the seat invited you to '*Sit ye down and mardle*'.

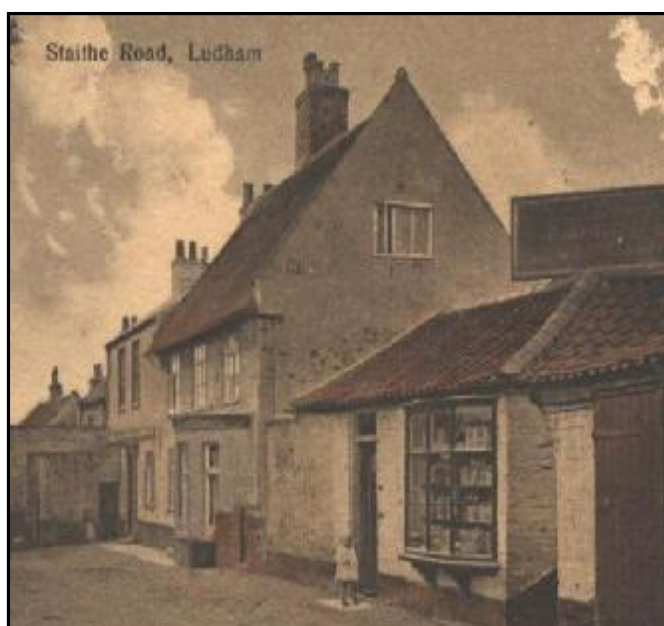
During the 1939 war, Nissen huts had abounded in the grounds and the First Aid Post was held in one of the Manor rooms. One day, the villagers joined the soldiers in a tear gas exercise. Beulah was a messenger and remembers that it was not easy to ride a bike at speed wearing a 'snorting' gas mask, much to everybody's amusement.

MANOR GATES AND MANOR CROFT

together were formally the Spread Eagle Inn and later the Temperance Hotel and Lodging House. It is a very old building and has had many licensees, one of which was Winter Clarke who was also a baker. His ovens cooked the bread and meat of the parishioners who had few cooking arrangements, as was the custom in those days. The Clarke descendants still live locally. Thomas Ward, a Methodist, who was also a baker *and* a farmer, took over the Spread Eagle and renamed it the Temperance Hotel and it was possibly he who made alterations to the next adjoining house, with a door that leads through on the first floor.



The Rev. Walter Bathurst had a downstairs apartment and the French doors on the churchyard (west) side were for his convenience before Ludham Old Vicarage (now a nursing home) was built.



Beulah remembers that in 1932 there was a small adjoining shop which sold clay pipes, tobacco, confectionery and yards of black liquorice. It became a fish and chip shop which failed, a milk depot in WWII distributing cod liver oil and orange juice to the villagers for their children and later, living accommodation.

TOWN HOUSE

The Town House was sold in 1790 for £50 and the money invested for the Parish Poor Relief, although it is not clear if this is the original house. Work-houses were then being built which relieved some of the burden of parish taxes. The decorative brickwork under the guttering is the same design as Fritton House which was built in 1797 by T.M. Cook,, a builder who married into the Slipper family. There were four cottages, that stood in the lower part and were still in use in the 1950s, which have now been demolished. They belonged to the Manor. They were one up and one down and each had a small path leading to them from a roadside gate, a linen line, a shared pump, a wash-house and pail sanitation.



Some of the older cottages in the village had ladders with wide steps to reach the upper floor, small windows and plank doors. These cottages were probably condemned before being demolished. Council houses were now being built and it was a long awaited luxury to move into square, light rooms with baths which were few and far between before the War. A tin bath in front of the fire may have been cosy but was no match for a nice new bathroom.

THE SURGERY

Care of the sick of Ludham has been in evidence since medieval times – there was an infirmary at St. Benets Abbey, and since the Medical Act of 1858, the first legal recognition of medical qualifications, there have been a succession of doctors living and practicing in the village - Samuel Huke, 1837 to 1887, lived at the Manor; James Gordon, 1887 to 1918; and Evelyn Kempston Brown who lived in Staithe House, which was known as Riverside at the time, and practiced from 1918 to 1947. They are all buried in Ludham Churchyard. Dr. Peter Wilson followed, also practicing from Staithe House from 1947 to 1964 and then by Dr. David Gabriel from 1964 to 1982.



The present surgery at Ludham was built in 1977 and was extended in 1987. A branch surgery was built at Stalham Green in 1962 by Dr Gabriel who lived there from 1960 until he moved to Ludham. Further extensions were made to the Ludham surgery in 2002 which gave more convenience and space. The practice now covers a large area.

LUDHAM DYKE is tidal so when the salt tides occurred large fish and pike were much in evidence. Land drainage falls from the Catfield Road into a reservoir, piped under School Road and comes round the marshes into the dyke. The land near the dyke was built up to make it stable for houses but it had previously been marshland with kingcup, iris, bulrushes, willow-herb, cuckoo pint or lady's smock. Goats were grazing, beehives were humming, water cress and mushrooms were growing. The extra soil came from the widening of Norwich Road which included several yards of the churchyard and involved disturbance of remains previously laid to rest.



Dr Gordon, who lived at the Manor, claimed that the old Staithe had always had a mooring toll paid and it was said that he bribed an elderly wherryman to agree, to the disgust of local people. He took the case to a London court and won because the opposition was unable to travel from Ludham - they could not possibly afford to do so. Therefore this became a private dyke and Womack Staithe became the working Staithe.

STAITHE HOUSE

This was the old Staithe House and the old Staithe here was much in use in the 1800s. John Clark, a merchant, owned the house in 1879 and built the public Staithe, the Spread Eagle further up the road and founded a store as well as a boat fleet. The Excise Officer was often in attendance as Wherries brought up wines, spirits and perhaps tobacco. They were in small kegs or wooden barrels and duty had to be paid. There was continuous water trade.

Farmers and industry used Wherries to convey their clay, stone, hay, timber and bricks from the Womack Staithe opposite, and of course coal and coke were delivered to the quay. There was sand to load from our various sandpits and lime from the lime kiln, which is at the back of Staithe House. There is not much left of this now because the domes collapsed nor of the brick kilns over by Womack Staithe, which were demolished in the 1960s. John Clark junior and his brother, Samuel, were both successful in the business and one of their Wherries was named The Samuel and another was named *Harriet*, after their mother and sister.

Dr Kempson Brown moved here in 1922. He was the son of the Rector of Catfield and was an understanding and well-qualified family doctor. He extracted teeth without numbing the suffering patient and could produce at least three different coloured medicines. There was no waiting room so patients queued outside. One could come with a cold, which had probably advanced to pneumonia, and still have to wait in the cold. It was interesting to hear the variety of complaints and advice given to patients within. On departure, the usual words were, *'Take this; keep warm; good morning* He. never refused help, even to those who could not meet the bills and he and the District Nurse were on call night and day. He had a large, comfortable car; there were only about three in Ludham at the time.

RICE COTTAGES

There are two of these and they have both been recently renovated. They were built by a farming family named Rice in 1884 on the site of a former clay-lump dwelling, which collapsed on July 21st 1875 after a week of heavy rain. A diary, written by a gentleman on holiday, recorded that he went to inspect the ruins in 1875.

THE BAPTIST CHAPEL (Strict and Particular)

The square chapel was demolished in the 1970s after it had become a hairdressers. The number of services in the chapel had gradually declined as the local preachers died. The building was airy with large windows facing south but the north side overlooked the pig yard and they grunted and squealed their way through the services.



Beulah remembers attending the children's anniversary performances and thinks that Mrs Harmer played the harmonium but she wonders how much demand there was in 1821 when it was built, as there were already three churches in Ludham.



HOLMERE

In 1922 this was a small cottage, the home of Mrs Bentley. In 1929 it was owned and occupied by Henry Green and later, until 1965, Ernest Adcock lived here with his wife. Each owner made alterations and built extensions, so there is nothing remaining now to show its humble beginnings. It has become a gentleman's residence.

Mr Adcock was of the tobacco firm of Adcocks and drove a lovely light blue and chrome touring car with a soft top. Sometimes on a trip into Norwich, he would take Beulah's father and sometimes Beulah herself was included too. This was during the war when such luxury was unheard of. Arriving

in Norwich, he had a parking space out of sight of his staff so they were unaware of his arrival. A change of jacket and cap were seen to be necessary before he walked to the warehouse and the change of clothing was reversed before we came back to Ludham. It was just as well that your workforce was unaware of the profit you made!

However the Adcocks were good at organising events to help with the war effort and this included the WVS canteen in the Church Room for the servicemen.

THE MOWLE

The Mowle is another lovely little cottage. It was occupied in 1851 by a wherryman and his family. He may have worked for Mr Clark at Staithe House, on his Wherries. By 1929 it had become the home of Mrs Dashwood Howard; the youngest daughter still lives here. There used to be a lane by the side of the south boundary which led down to the river.

MANOR FARM

This has had several farming occupants over the years and is an old picturesque building. The Rolls family have farmed the land through many generations and have seen many changes in farming methods.

Beulah recalls that she used to get the butter from here during the war. Eating farm butter was always an interesting experience to those not familiar with it - best in the late spring when the cows fed on grass but during the rest of the year, fishmeal and turnips gave it a strong, unpleasant flavour.

John Dale was here in 1929 before Mr Roll and Thomas Syer in 1937 – a name you may be familiar with as an entertainer - Nigel Boy Syer attended Ludham School – he specialises in Norfolk squit.



The Modern Conversion Of Manor Farm

THE WHITE HOUSE

This was young John Owen Bond's house (of Bonds Store in Norwich). He was trained as an architect, was married to Florence Bowhill and built Womack View, the original name of the White House. There was a capital B in the wrought iron gates. He gave a garden party every year for the employees from the Norwich store and Beulah helped her father to serve the free liquid refreshment in a large marquee, in about 1937. Father pushed their blue handcart with the advert, '*Young and Crawshay Gold Medal*



The original building before alterations (Womack View)



Modern Conversion - The white House

LOVER'S LANE

This lane leads in a half circle to Norwich Road at what used to be the pound where stray animals used to be impounded – Crossways Bungalow now stands on that site. Lover's Lane also leads to Ludham Hall which was the Bishop's Grange, built in 1450 and destroyed by fire in 1611. It was rebuilt and repaired in 1627.

Sixty years ago, Lover's Lane was a real green lane with banks, hedges and a tangle of overgrowth and brambles. Further up the lane, centuries ago, was a post mill. The deeds date from 1699. It blew down in 1895, was rebuilt and blew down again in 1898. The round stone foundations were there many years later and the adjoining cottage, which has been extended and altered considerably, contained some clay lump within its original structure.

THE DUTCH HOUSE

This is dated 1603 and was formally known as Walnut Tree House when Mr Hayhurst, the school master, lived here in 1929. He was the head-master at Ludham School from 1896 to 1924. His family were all girls and one died as a child after an accident in the schoolroom and another daughter died through diphtheria as an adult. He and his wife were a kindly old couple, well liked by parishioners and former pupils.



Rear view of The Dutch House

When Edward Seago, the artist, bought the house, he built a matching extension at the rear. Several rooms lead through with corridors from the original to the extension and there are steep staircases with ropes to pull yourself up by.



A Later Picture - Front view of The Dutch House

Edward Seago had the honour of a friendship with members of the royal family. He painted a portrait of the Queen, and the Duke of Edinburgh used to take young Charles and Anne in a rowing boat around Womack. The Queen Mother planted a weeping willow on the Dutch House river bank but it is not known whether it is still there. Both the Queen Mother and Princess Margaret were regular visitors and we always knew when royalty would visit. A message would arrive and Annie Thompson, the cook, would make chicken in aspic, a favourite dish of the Queen Mother. Often, locals would line the streets or stand by the Dutch House to receive a famous smile and wave.

Annie's brother, Charlie, was the gardener; both were unmarried and they lived in a cottage in

Lover's Lane. There used to be a house in the walled garden area between these two houses which was identical to Hall Common Farm and thought to be the same sort of age. Ed Beevor lived there at one time but it burnt down.

HALL COMMON FARM

This is an interesting farmhouse. It belonged to the Bond family and George Bond, born 1836, had six children, the fifth being Robert Bond, born 1843. He became the founder member of Bond's Store in Norwich, now known as John Lewis. Robert died in 1924 but his son, John Owen Bond, lived in the White House at the entrance to Lover's Lane.

Edward Seago's parents lived in Hall Common Farm later and his brother, John, who became a big game hunter in Africa.



Hall Common Farm

We are grateful to everyone who has supported us in this project, particularly our local sponsors who are listed below.

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