



THE BRUNDALL & BRAYDESTON CHRONICLE

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Official photograph of a class at Blofield School in 1937.

Tony Watson, aged 8 years, is seated bottom left.

Note: Although there was no school uniform at this time, the children are wearing their school house sashes.

Brundall-born Tony Watson, now aged 90, has kindly donated a copy of his memoir of growing up in Brundall to the BLHG Archive. It is a fascinating 8000-word document and we are delighted to publish some short extracts about his early years on Page 3.

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www.brundallvillagehistory.org.uk



NEWS DESK

HELP US TO MARK THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF BRUNDALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

A Brundall Local History Group project has been selected by the "Blue" Co-op in The Street to be one of its Community Fund beneficiaries in 2020. We are supporting the school's 50th anniversary celebrations by charting the many changes that have transformed our village life over five decades in a series of *Discovery Trail* information leaflets. These will engage not only the pupils, their teachers and families, but also the wider community. If you have a membership card for the "Blue" Co-op you can choose to support our special project for the year and the Co-op will give 1% of what you spend on selected Co-op branded projects and services to our fund. If you aren't a Co-op member, why not sign up so you can contribute? Just ask at the Co-op counter for details.

Did you or your children attend Brundall Primary School?

Opened in September 1969, this was the first Norfolk school to be designed with open plan classrooms throughout. BLHG will be staging an exhibition from 1st to 30th May 2020, hosted by Brundall Co-op and Post Office, displaying highlights of the school's past activities. If you have school-day memories to share, please contact us: enquiries@brundallvillagehistory.org.uk. To find out more visit: www.brundallvillagehistory.org.uk.

Brundall Property History Survey

We would like to thank everyone who volunteered to complete our questionnaires about their post-war houses in Brundall. Although not intended as a comprehensive survey, the information we have collected has been very helpful for our research on housing development in Brundall over the past 50 years for the above project. Forms can still be submitted until 1st February 2020.

BRUNDALL'S ANCIENT HISTORY UNCOVERED

There has been human activity in Brundall from the Late Bronze Age, and possibly even the Neolithic period. That is the conclusion of Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA), which ran archaeological test pit excavations in Brundall between 2015 and 2018. Their recently-released report tells us: *"The 46 archaeological test pits excavated in Brundall between 2015 and 2018 have yielded archaeological evidence for settlement in the parish dating from the Late Bronze Age through to the modern day."* Finds from the Iron Age and Anglo-Saxon period are also recorded, with an indication that the village was later hit by the Black Death. A summary of ACA's conclusions is available on the BLHG website, with a link to the full report online at the ACA website. It is currently easy to find on the home page of our site and can also be found under the *Brundall Stories* section. There is also a map showing each of the pit sites. ACA worked with BLHG members Ann-Marie Simpson and Jacky Heath to make sure this dig into Brundall's history was a success.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS AT BRUNDALL MEMORIAL HALL 2020

A CONVERSATION BY THE FARM GATE: A talk by Kevin Parfitt.

Thursday 20th February, 7.30pm Farmer and Methodist lay preacher Kevin Parfitt will bring his box of curiosities and mementoes to give an insight to village life in Bergh Apton, and the history of Church Farm, which has been in his family for 108 years. Members Free. Visitors £2.50.

AN AFTERNOON TEA WITH ELIZABETH FRY: A costumed talk by Georgette Vale.

Thursday 19th March at 7.30pm. We will join Mrs Fry in 1845 and hear her reflect on her life as a Quaker in Norfolk and London and her work as a prison reformer, philanthropist, anti-slavery campaigner and more besides. Members Free. Visitors £2.50.

VILLAGE HALLS WEEK: 25th January : Come and support BLHG and other local groups at the Hall.

MEMORIES OF BRUNDALL IN THE 1930s

Tony Watson

"I was born on 11th November 1929, the second son of Laddie and Joyce Watson. I had an elder brother, Peter, who was born in 1927; a younger brother, John, born in 1932; and two younger sisters, Janet and Mary, born in 1940 and 1941 respectively, and we lived at No.3, Church Cottages, Brundall. My Dad's parents lived at No. 4 and owned both cottages. "



3 and 4 Church Cottages

"When I reached the age of five, I went to Blofield school, there being no school in Brundall at that time. Since Blofield was some two or three miles away, we infants were allowed to catch the No.7B bus in the morning which got us to school a little late; and in the afternoon we were taken up to the King's Head pub a little early in order to catch the No.7 bus back to Brundall. After the infants' class we were moved up to Mrs Thompson's class and had to make our own way to and from school, and get there on time."

"Mr Merrison the milk farmer used to call every day in his three-wheeled van, and we used to put out our jugs and ask for a pint or whatever we needed. He had an oval pail with a ½-pint ladle attached, and you always knew when he had been as he left a ring of milk on your doorstep. Bread came from Howards and Forkes bakers in Thorpe-Next-Norwich. They called on alternate days and brought a variety of loaves in a basket to the back door for selection. Sometimes the Walls ice-cream man would come pedalling through the village on his three-wheeled bike asking us to 'stop me and buy one'. I remember he had a triangular iced fruit lollipop in a cardboard case which we used to like. The Corona man would also call, and Mum would sometimes buy some bottles of fizzy fruit drinks. Incidentally, we used to go to the tip looking for empty Corona bottles as there was tuppence deposit payable on their return. We would take them to Elsie Butcher's shop and exchange them for some sweets. We used to get a Saturday penny as pocket money and I can remember that for this you could get a dozen Bluebird chocolate toffees."

"The old Reading Room was the social centre of the village, and Miss Cross ran the cubs and scouts of which I was a member. I can remember going into Surlingham Woods with her and making plaster casts of bird and animal footprints. I can also remember her taking us all to Norwich in 1937 where we lined up and waited a long time until the King and Queen came to open the City Hall. 1937 was also the year of King George's coronation and the village had a big fete. All the children received an orange and a coronation mug."



Elsie Butcher's shop, The Street 1933

"Before the war in our summer holidays we would go to Braydeston Hills and paddle in the stream. We would also run around the marsh, jumping in and out of the muddy dykes before cleaning ourselves off in the stream. If we had a bad winter with snow, we would take our sledges onto Braydeston Hills and have great fun. In the churchyard opposite our cottage was a large pond (where the Rectory is now) and one winter this froze over. We were playing a game on it when the ice gave way and I fell in. I managed to get out but Mum was not too happy when she saw the state of me soaked to the skin." "Our water came from the well in our garden which was about 30 feet deep.... The lavatory was emptied weekly during the night by Billy Stone with a horse and cart. Billy was also the church verger and lived in Barn Row. He kept his horse on a marsh at the bottom of Church Lane over the railway line. "

Tony Watson: Extracts from *My Formative Years: Growing Up in Brundall, Norfolk 1929-1950*

*A
MYSTERY OBJECT
with a
BRUNDALL CONNECTION*

Housed in the Norfolk Museums Service costume and textile collections in the Shirehall in Norwich, which some members visited in 2019, is a wonderful waistcoat with a link to Brundall.

The story told to the museum, when it was donated, was that it had been worn by the mayor when Queen Victoria visited Norwich during his mayoralty 1847-1848. But there was a problem - Queen Victoria didn't visit Norwich that year.



George Lovick Coleman's waistcoat.
Photo courtesy of Norfolk Museums Service,
Ref: NWHCM : 2013.255.1

The mayor in question was George Lovick Coleman, who died in 1890 at his home in the Street, Brundall. The address was given as number four, which was at the Manor garage end of the village (although numbers have changed over the years). Today, number four is a modern home on the site of the old White Horse pub (opposite Station Road). George was a prosperous draper, with a store on Guildhall Hill, which later became Chamberlins and is now Tesco.

So what was the story of the waistcoat? It is cream silk, short, in the fashion of the 1840s, but beautifully embroidered in the style of the 1790s with floral sprays and Prince of Wales feathers. It is clearly a special garment – and there was one royal visit to Norwich in 1848 which was treated as a great occasion for the City. This was the visit of Queen Victoria's uncle, the Duke of Cambridge, who visited for the triennial music festival in October of that year. He was greeted with great pomp and ceremony, as was recorded in the newspapers of the time. George, as mayor, had an important role. He was described as riding in his carriage to greet the Duke and wearing "court dress". At that time, it would have meant a long coat, perhaps with embroidered edges, and a fancy waistcoat.

The *Norwich Mercury* of Saturday September 1848 reported that it was decided to give the Duke a top-class reception, as in "days of yore": *"The City standards, which had been laid aside for many a long day, were again unfurled – the grotesque costumes of the whiffers, although much faded, were brought from their hiding places, and again bedecked the persons of their former wearers."*

There was a procession, with two trumpeters, a bellman and beadle, with two mayor's officers bearing gold maces. A great crowd assembled in the market place, so much so that the carriages had difficulty getting through. The *Norwich Mercury*, while equally enthusiastic about the visit, was less sure about the procession. They felt that it *"fell short of that imposing dignity which graced our ancient displays of civic pomp"*. George would not have been pleased at that!

George was christened in 1812, made a freeman of Norwich in 1835, sheriff in 1843, mayor from 1847 to 1848. He was registered as owning land in Brundall in 1875, when he was still living in Norwich. The house was evidently built later, as the 1881 Census has him as a widower, living at 4 The Street with two female domestic servants. He died in the village in 1890, in his 78th year.

His obituary in the *Norfolk Chronicle* described his funeral: *"At every house in the village street, shaded windows and drawn blinds marked the respect in which the deceased was held, and indicated the sympathy which the inhabitants extended to his sorrowing relatives. The body...was conveyed from the house to the church in a funeral car, and the mourners...followed on foot."* Several military men in uniform also walked alongside. After his death at least some of his property was sold. The Norfolk Heritage Centre has an eight-page catalogue from 1890, describing a *"collection of pictures, including Norwich School and Dutch masters, property of the late George Lovick Coleman Esq."* in an auction which took place at his home.

Celia Sutton