



THE BRUNDALL & BRAYDESTON CHRONICLE

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Have you got something to share? Items for publication should be sent to The Editor, Orchard House, Blakes Lane, Brundall NR13 5JN. Tel: 01603 716115 Email: enquiries@brundallvillagehistory.org.uk

How does your garden grow?

Henry Morse & Sons was a major business in Brundall from 1924 to about 1965. This image dates from the later years.



When Brundall
bloomed in
America

A 1934 catalogue, 'Star Roses' from the Conard-Pyle Company in Pennsylvania, USA, lists *Mrs Henry Morse* as "one of the most popular of all pink roses". It was "a reliable exhibition rose capable of winning blue ribbons"— and you could have it in your American garden for 75 cents.

Coming up roses

Is your garden blooming this summer thanks to the extra time many of us have had at home?

That is something which is very fitting for Brundall, because the village once had a thriving horticultural industry.

It's said that coaches used to stop just so the occupants could admire the sight and scent of fields of roses.

One of the best-known was Henry Morse & Sons, whose fields covered a large part of the east end of the village around Highfield Avenue.

The business was started in 1902 by Henry Morse at Eaton. Two of his sons, Ernest and Frederick, set up the Brundall nurseries in 1924, while a third, William, stayed at Eaton. At the peak of their trading the brothers were working in the region of 80 acres between them.

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Ernest and his wife, Florence, lived at The Knoll in Highfield Avenue, while Frederick and Emma lived in Blofield Road. Rose fields linked the two properties.

The firm gained an international reputation for its contribution to horticulture and its influence in originating and introducing several rose varieties. Many Brundall villagers worked for them over the years.

In 1961, an EDP report described the brothers' "undiminished enthusiasm for roses". They had 100,000 plants in their nurseries and they despatched orders around the world.

Brundall, of course, had the advantage of having a station, from where flowers could be sent around the country, and during the 1950s and 1960s many thousands of blooms were sent to London.

Local florists were not ignored, and many were regularly supplied with fresh flowers from Brundall.

Ernest founded the Westfield Mission in 1934, which was built in the grounds of his home and which, rebuilt, flourishes today.

Fred retired in 1963 and Ernest died in 1965, and the land went the way of so many other sites at that time – it was used for housing.

Articles compiled by **Celia Sutton**.

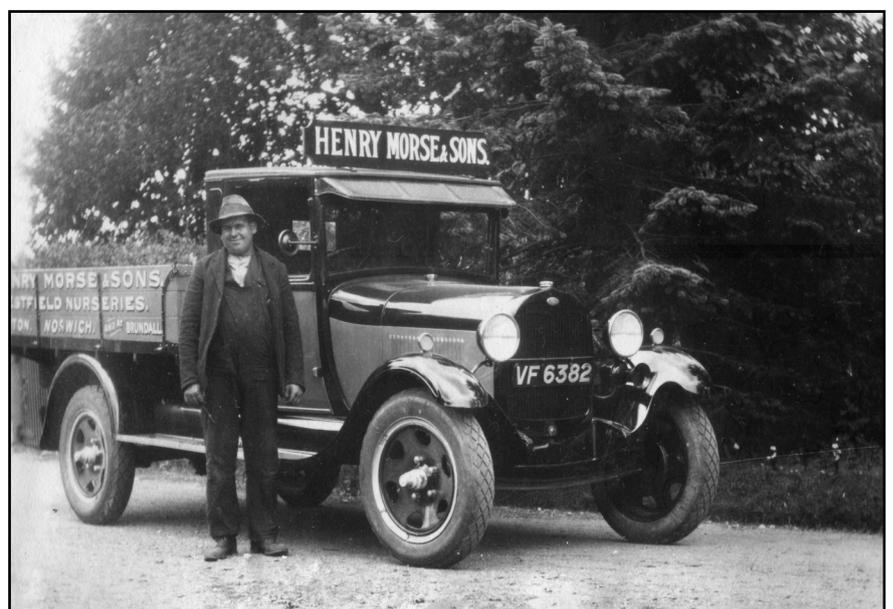
More about the business can be found, written by Jackie Warnes, in *The Book of Brundall and Braydeston* (Halsgrove, 2007, pp62-63)

Thanks to Ronald Tooke's daughter, Rosamund Scoles, for providing information and photographs relating to the Morse and Tooke businesses.



Above: Henry Morse (front centre) with his children in the early 1930s. Back: William, Ernest and Frederick. Front: Lily, Henry and Mabel.

Below: A driver for Henry Morse stands proudly next to a delivery truck—it is a Ford Model AA truck, circa 1930.



How a wartime internee fulfilled a promise to Ernest Morse

Henry Morse & Sons introduced new rose varieties, although not one named 'Brundall', as far as we know.

There was *Westfield Star*, *Westfield Beauty*, *Henry Morse*, *Florence Mary Morse* and more. Some can still be found: Norfolk rose grower Peter Beales' catalogue includes *Ernest H Morse*, described as very fragrant. The story of how it was named was given in a local paper in 1964.



Ernest (above) was at that time 81. The paper recorded that "a new and important bloom developed in Germany" had been named after him. "Its creator is Wilhelm Kordes, a grower with a long-standing international reputation. He and Mr Morse have been friends for nearly half a century, and the new rose fulfils a promise Herr Kordes once made that he would give Ernest's name to one of his flowers."

The two had met when Mr Kordes was interned in England during the first world war.



Above: Ronald Morse Tooke at work in his nursery in the 1960s. Until this time all the nurseries would have been hand-weeded and hoed. Photo: Alan Savory.

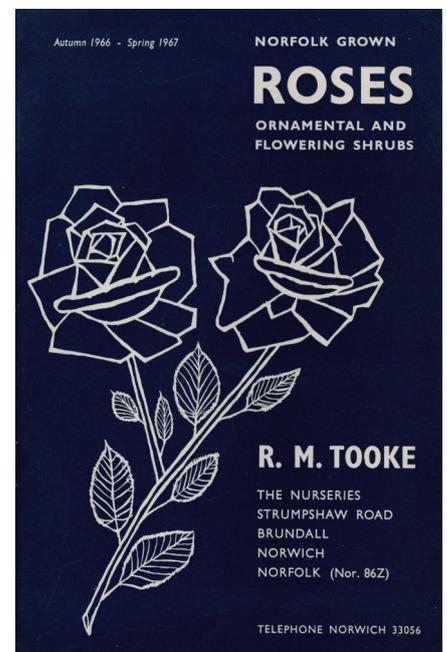
Below: Tooke's 1966-1967 catalogue

The Morse brothers were not the only rose growers in Brundall. Ronald Morse Tooke, grandson of Henry Morse and nephew of Ernest, Frederick and William, had worked in electrical engineering before joining the RAF for the second world war.

After the war he retrained in horticulture, and, while not invited to join the Morse business, was offered land to rent from his uncle and established his own four-acre nursery on Strumpshaw Road. He soon acquired a second field on Blofield Road, known as Deacon's Field.

Having bought the Strumpshaw Road plot, he sold it for housing in 1966-7 and transferred the entire business to Salhouse, where he continued growing roses, trees and shrubs until 1977.

During the 1950s and 1960s Mr Tooke was contracted to supply Selfridges in Oxford Street with



fresh blooms twice weekly during the summer to display in the new garden department. The flowers were sent by overnight train from Brundall Station to Liverpool Street and then by special delivery to the store on a Sunday and Wednesday.

Community Archives: Skills, Support and Sustainability Project

This Norfolk Record Office initiative, supported by the National Heritage Lottery Fund, began its work in April when two qualified and experienced archivists were appointed: Laura McCourt, the Community Archives Project Manager was joined by the Community Archivist Robin Sampson. Covid-19 restrictions and government regulations on social distancing have prevented representatives of the thirty partner community archive organisations from meeting each other and personal visits by the two officers for assessments have been impossible. A Norfolk Archives Network Forum has been set up to encourage conversations between partners and to share resources and information although simple phone calls and emails have been especially productive. A recent message from Laura states: *"We are still hoping to schedule in initial meetings with all 30 of our project partners over the course of August-October, Government advice willing."* Although I retired from a professional career in archives and museum management in 2015, I have kept up my membership of the Archives & Records Association and the Museums Association. Your committee has agreed for me to take on the co-ordination BLHG's participation in the Community Archives Project and I have begun a fundamental review of BLHG's digital archive collections and their associated records. Over the next few months I shall be picking the brains of several BLHG founder members whose knowledge about individual donors and donations will be a key resource. With the momentum of NRO's Community Archives Project, it will be possible to develop a formal BLHG Archive structure and introduce universal archive cataloguing standards.



*The group meets in 2006 as *The Book of Brundall and Braydeston* is prepared.*

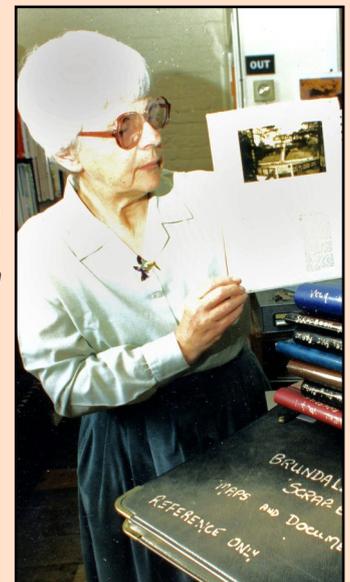
What's in the BLHG Archive?

It was Sheila Evans (pictured), Brundall's first county library assistant from 1974, who began collecting photographs and documentary evidence of the village's past for the benefit of local schoolchildren and laid the foundation of a future archive.

In 2005, as *The Book of Brundall and Braydeston* was in preparation, a group of local enthusiasts embarked on a comprehensive investigation into Brundall's history. This led not only to a renewed study of Sheila's scrapbooks but also the donation by local people of hundreds of photographs, documents and oral history accounts.

Following publication of the book in 2007, and as a result of the success of this gargantuan team effort co-ordinated by Barbara Ayers, BLHG was formally founded.

At the time, most of the collected material was digitised by founder member Gerry Hawkins and originals gratefully returned to their owners. Sound recorded interviews and the scrapbooks were transferred to Norfolk Record Office. Since then, new digital images have been added continuously. Selected images from the Archive can be enjoyed on our website, in BLHG's illustrated publications (such as *Brundall Past & Present 2017*) or within the pages of the *Chronicle*, as can be observed in this edition. Our sincere thanks go out to all donors, past and present, who have generously contributed towards the preservation of Brundall's ever-evolving story.



In partnership with NRO and the other Norfolk community archives, we will be taking our very first steps towards a joined up record-keeping system across the county.

Training for cataloguing work by BLHG volunteers can only take place when

the above basics are in place and the general lockdown and social distancing measures are eased of course. Looking ahead positively, we hope that by early 2021 BLHG will be starting to make significant progress.

Chloe Veale

Editor's note: Although auto-despatch of this edition by email was possible, we decided once again to send the *Chronicle* direct to your home in its traditional format. We thank Interprint for their reprographic services.
Please note: Only one person, wearing protective equipment, has been involved in the despatch of this Chronicle.