

A Norfolk Estate and its Tenants

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Lunchtime Talk, 21 March 2012,
13:00 – 13:45 p.m.

Green Room, The Archive Centre, Norwich
Admission Free



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Good afternoon and thank you for coming.

A Norfolk Estate and its Tenants

- Overview of the Gunton Project
- The Harbords of Gunton
- Working on the estate - paysheets
- Living on the estate - cottage and farm rental
- The emergence of a 'capitalist farmer'

Estate archives reveal a surprising amount about the tenants and labourers who lived in rural communities. The Gunton archive is a particularly fine example. Nineteenth-century tenants on the Gunton estate are extremely well documented and using such records may add colour to one's family history research, so this is the focus for today. We have also tried to highlight this in the *A Norfolk Estate: Its People and Places* exhibition and an accompanying guide.

It would be wrong to discuss the tenants of the estate without first describing the estate and its landowners, to add context to the discussion. I will then give a couple of examples of people who lived and worked on the Gunton estate to show how the records within the estate series of the Gunton archive can be used.

Many of the records in the Gunton archive are excellent examples of record types commonly found in other estate archives, for example rentals. This means that even if your ancestors lived on a different estate, this talk should be of interest.

I'll start by telling you about the Gunton project, before giving an overview of the Harbords, their Gunton estate and its tenants.

The Gunton Project

- Cataloguing the Harbord of Gunton family and estate papers
- *A Norfolk Estate: Its People and Places* exhibition
- Conservation and preservation
- Group visits – tours including relevant highlights from the archive
- Education and Outreach – children’s activities and online resources
- *Lord Suffield’s Cromer* workshops and poster exhibition
- Volunteers – transcribing, digitizing, researching
- Gunton Archive blog (guntonarchive.wordpress.com)

The project is supported by the National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund and by grants from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, and the Friends of the National Libraries.

I am the Project Archivist working on the Harbord of Gunton family and estate papers. The final phase of the Gunton Project started in June, when I was appointed. The project has many goals and is due to finish at the end of May. Our aims can be summarized as preserving the Harbord of Gunton family and estate papers, improving access to them and increasing awareness of this fantastic resource. Although the project will finish soon, the archive will be easier to use and we will have created a number of online resources.

My role is primarily to catalogue the archive. I was also responsible for selecting the items in the *A Norfolk Estate: Its People and Places* exhibition, currently on display in the Long Gallery, here at The Archive Centre.

The project has included a great deal of conservation and preservation work. This conservation is ongoing because the papers were kept in poor conditions before we received them.

We have occasional group tours and during a few recent visits, groups have seen records from the Gunton archive.

The Education and Outreach team have carried out a number of activities for children and are creating online resources relating to these. I have also held a series of workshops called *Lord Suffield’s Cromer*, at Cromer Museum, in partnership with the University of East Anglia. The result of these workshops is a poster exhibition which can be seen at Cromer Library until 5 April.

I am also lucky to have a small team of volunteers without whom many of these tasks would have been much more difficult, if not impossible. They have been learning about estate papers, while producing transcripts for the exhibition, digitizing documents for the workshops and carrying out various other tasks. In fact, one volunteer even helped research a successful tenant farmer, in preparation for this talk.

If you want to know more about the project, I am writing a blog through which I share details about the project and highlights from the archive. The blog can be found at guntonarchive.wordpress.com.

The Catalogue

Harbord of Gunton family and estate papers (GTN)

1. Title deeds and related papers, 13th -19th centuries ✓
2. Manorial records, c. 1377-1870
3. Estate papers, 1688-1964 ✓
4. Legal and suit papers, 1678-1897 ✓
5. Family papers, 1557-1877
6. Papers of families related to the Harbords, 1575-1872 ✓
7. Related organizations, 1846-1933 ✓

Ticked series have been catalogued.

Search Norfolk Record Office catalogues online at NROCAT:
<http://nrocat.norfolk.gov.uk>

It is worth briefly mentioning the catalogue. The collection is currently open, although some items may be unfit for production. This is to protect items which are already vulnerable from being damaged any further. The archive consists of seven series. The series which have been ticked have been catalogued and can be searched using NROCAT, our online catalogue. Interim lists for are available in the searchroom for the series not yet catalogued.

The Harbord Family

- Harbord Harbord, 1st Baron Suffield
(1734–1810)
- William Assheton Harbord, 2nd Baron Suffield
(1766–1821)
- Edward Harbord, 3rd Baron Suffield
(1781–1835)
- Edward Vernon Harbord, 4th Baron Suffield
(1813–53)
- Charles Harbord, 5th Baron Suffield
(1830–1914)

The Harbord family came to prominence with the surveyor-general, Sir Charles Harbord (1595-1679), who bought Stanninghall, Norfolk, in about 1648. His son, John Harbord, bought Gunton, Norfolk, from Francis Jermy, in 1676. The estate grew significantly, through further purchases, inheritance and marriage settlements.

Today we shall focus on the nineteenth century, so I'll move quickly on.

Sir Harbord Harbord was created Baron Suffield in 1786. Harbord Harbord had been born Harbord Cropley but had changed his name when he succeeded his uncle, John Harbord. Harbord Harbord's father William Cropley held the Shelland and Haughley estates, in Suffolk. Harbord Harbord was MP for Norwich for 30 years.

His son, William Assheton Harbord, second Baron, married Caroline Hobart, daughter and co-heir of the second Earl of Buckinghamshire, on whose death, in 1793, she inherited Blickling and other Hobart family estates in Norfolk. This property did not, however, pass to the Harbord family but devolved at Lady Suffield's death in 1850 upon the eighth Marquess of Lothian.

The second Baron was succeeded by his brother Edward, third Baron Suffield, who married Georgiana Venables-Vernon, daughter of the second Baron Vernon, thereby acquiring land in Briton Ferry, in Glamorgan. Edward Harbord stood for the seats of Great Yarmouth and Shaftesbury. He was rather more liberal than his father and brother. He fought for the abolition of slavery, the relaxation of game laws and better discipline in prisons. He was a keen sportsman and was said to have been popular with his tenants.

Edward's sons, Edward Vernon Harbord and Charles Harbord, succeeded him in turn as fourth and fifth Barons Suffield. Charles Harbord had a great impact on the development of Cromer and Overstrand, in the late nineteenth century.

The Gunton Estate and its Surveyors

Major surveys

- Henry Augustus Biedermann, 1780s
- James Wright, 1825-43
- Thomas Rose, 1894-5

Right:

Map of Gunton estate in the parishes of Alby, Aldborough, Antingham, Bradfield, Colby, Cromer, Erpingham, Felmingham, Gunton, Hanworth, Overstrand, Roughton, Skeyton, Southrepps, Suffield, Swafield, Thorpe (Market), Trimingham, Trunch, North Walsham and Worstead.

Created by James Wright,
no date [1825-35]
(Norfolk Record Office,
GTN 3/5/2/47)



In 1883, the Norfolk estate comprised 11,828 acres worth £15,071 a year. To put that in perspective, here is a map of the estate created by the surveyor James Wright, between 1825 and 1835. A number of surveyors produced maps of the estate. The most thorough surveys were carried out by Henry Augustus Biedermann, in the 1780s, James Wright, between 1825 and 1843, and Thomas Rose, in 1894-5. The surveyors produced maps, as well as map books showing particular parishes or farms in great detail. Comparing these reveals a good deal about the development of the estate. Thomas Rose also produced a fascinating written report on the condition of the estate, with accompanying ground plans showing farm buildings. I shall return to Rose's report later.

Was Gunton Hall like Downton Abbey?

Right:
Gunton Hall servants and gamekeeper's wages, 1822-39 (Norfolk Record Office, GTN 3/1/16/38)

1829

W. Day

Servants' Wages, Board Wages, Allowances, and Travelling Expenses for the half-year ending

Description	Name	Yearly wages.	Wages, &c.				Total charge for each.
			Half year's Wages.	Board wages.	Allowance for Clothes, &c.	Travelling expenses for selves & horses.	
Butler	J Parker	87. 10	43. 15. 0			87. 14. 42	131. 9. 22
Steward	H Smith	210. 0	105. 0. 0	6. 6. 0			111. 6. 0
Black	J Horsfield	70. 0	35. 0. 0	6. 6. 0			41. 6. 0
Cook	J Francis	105. 0	46. 2. 5			2. 11. 0	148. 13. 5
Valet	E Peters	40. 0	20. 0. 0			21. 4. 4	51. 4. 4
Footman	J Bane	26. 5	13. 2. 6				13. 2. 6
do	J Smith	26. 5	13. 2. 6				13. 2. 6
Baker	E Carter	26. 5	13. 2. 6				13. 2. 6
Under Butler	W Taylor	25. 4	12. 12. 0				12. 12. 0
Gamekeeper	G Walton	63. 0	31. 10. 0				31. 10. 0
Coachman	W Penham	31. 10	15. 15. 0			44. 11. 4	66. 6. 4
2 nd do	W Mallet	13. 13	9. 9. 0			1. 4. 0	11. 3. 0
Postillion	W Shadders	10. 10	5. 5. 0				5. 5. 0
Boon	J Hardy	31. 10	15. 15. 0			25. 0. 0	140. 15. 0
2 nd do	J Simp	16. 16	8. 8. 0			2. 3. 4	10. 11. 4
Carried forward		277. 13.	112. 12. 0			154. 13.	429. 9. 32

Was the Gunton estate like Downton Abbey? Most of the papers relating to labour on the estate focus on building and repair work but there is one hidden gem, which may help to answer this question. The pages at the beginning and end of this volume are extremely fragile, having been kept in damp conditions before we received it, so it is undergoing conservation treatment and we hope to make a microfilm surrogate available. Here you can see the wages paid to various servants. At first glance, it does appear to support the two-tiered rich and poor view of rural estates, with a nursemaid paid just £8 8s per year and a postillion paid £10 10s per year to guide the horses pulling the Harbords' carriage.

On 1 August 1829, Henry Smith's half-yearly wage increased from £50 to £105. The cook was the next best paid and he received half of this salary. The reason for Henry Smith's wage increase is not clear but his terms of employment must have changed. He is listed here as the 'Steward', a term which is largely synonymous with 'agent'. Now we might think of an agent as a manager. He was the person responsible for collecting rent, paying wages and occasionally ensuring social cohesion and good behaviour on the estate. Agents have been described as a growing middle class within rural societies. They had authority and were paid well. Gunton agents tended to live at Elderton Lodge.

Why were agents so important? In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries there was an increase in absentee landownership. As mentioned, the Harbords had connexions to estates outside of Norfolk and they also led very active political careers. The Gunton estate was the home estate for successive Lords Suffield but they did spend time elsewhere, for example Edward Harbord, third Baron Suffield, spent a lot of time in his London residence, in Park Place.

The role of the agent was one of great responsibility so many of the Gunton agents were either related to the Harbords or were well known to them. Henry Smith was the son of Theophilus Smith, an agent on their Middleton estate. At the start of the eighteenth century, it was common for agents to have other careers. In the 1861 census, Henry Smith is listed as a land agent, bone crusher and farmer of 393 acres, employing 21 people. This supports the idea of an emerging middle class but was he alone in this class?

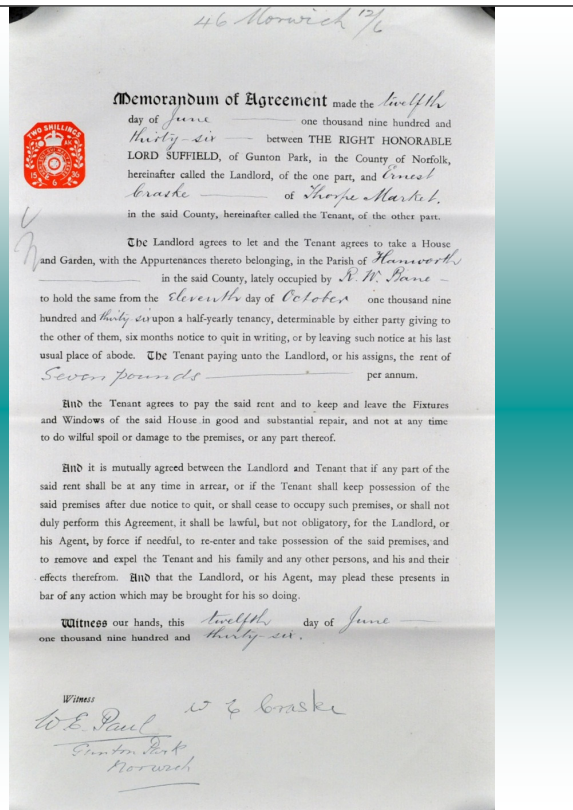
Town	Name of Tenant	Quantity from 1894	Quantity from 1895	Total	Land tax	Accommodation	Other	Cost of cottage	Cost of rent	Cost of cottage rent	Total	Date of payment
	Brought forward	28	53	803 13 7	331	18 10						
Cotby cent												
	Paul R. 2 Cottages, included in term Rent.											
	John Ward											
	W. Allen											
	John Craske											
	A. Matthews											
	William Allen											
	Samuel John (Spencer's estate)											
Felmingham												
	J. Covert George			4 10							4 10	16 Oct 1894
	C. Cullin Charles			4							4 0 0	11 Oct 1894
	A. Chamberlain R. Ls. Let with team											
	D. Daniels George			2 12							2 12 0	16 Oct 1894
	D. a. 11 1/2 6 Bond			13 11 3		15	11 0				19 5 3	20 11 3
	E. Daniels Thomas			5							5 0 0	
	F. Hall Thomas Land			7 10		5	1	4 4			7 10	23 7 10 1894
	F. Hicks George			5							5	11 Oct 1894
	G. Hicks Richard			4							4	11
	H. Stewart Thomas			3 5							3 5 0	16
	I. Hoop Christmas			4 10							4 10	9 0 0
	J. Phipps Ben Slip Cottage											
Gunton												
	G. Paul W.E. Es. A											
	J. Craske John Es. A											
	A. Matthews W. Es. A											
	K. Allan W. Es. A											
	E. Jones Es. A											
	Brought forward	35	13	377 10 10	142	12 1						
					2 17 5	1 13 5	23 12 6	190 17 1	189 10 7	32 1 1	142 12 1	

Cottage and small occupation rental, 1894-5 (Norfolk Record Office, GTN 3/2/4/6)

In this page from a cottage rental, dated 1894-5, you can see that a number of people received free accommodation in the parish of Gunton. This included John Ward, the Head Sawyer, William Allen, the Head Gardener, and W.E. Paul, the agent.

John Craske and A. Matthews were gardeners, as you will see on the next slide, so free accommodation may have been determined by function as well as status.

Memorandum of agreement for a lease of a house and gardens in Hanworth (Norfolk Record Office, GTN 3/2/9/11/1)



In the 1930s, Ernest Craske rented a cottage in Hanworth. Here is a lease, dated 1936, in which he promises to keep the property in a good condition. There is also a warning or underlying threat of removal, by force if required, should the agreement not be duly performed. The notice to quit was six months and the archive includes correspondence relating to other tenants receiving notice, so there was little danger of sudden evictions. The Craske family also included tenant farmers but today I shall focus on a different farmer.

218		219	
Mr. J. J. Huntly's Exors Southrepps		Mr. Green Edward Northrepps	
1873 Oct 11 To one years rent	48 12	1873 July 7 By cheque	20
		- Land tax	1 5 2
		- Income tax	1 3 8
		- Balance of 1872	2 2 3
		out of account	2 2 3
			£ 48 12
near William's Farming on farm 113			
Edward Green, Roughton Hill Farm, Winstones.			
1874 Oct 11 To one years rent of Roughton Hill Farm	91 7 6	1874 July 7 By cheque	150
		- Land tax Roughton	3 10 6
		- do Northrepps	7 1 1
		- do Southrepps	7 6
		- do Winstones	1 1 4
		- Income tax	7 18 8
		Jan 3 - cheque	150 7 2
			£ 337 11 3
1875 Oct 11 To one years rent	337 11 3	1875 Aug 2 By cheque	150
		- Land tax Southrepps	2 2 9
		- do Northrepps	8 1 8
		- do Southrepps	6 3
		- do Winstones	1 1 4
		- Income tax	14 6 10
		Jan 6 - cheque	150 12
			£ 337 11 3
Note - Roughton Hill Farm transferred to Mr. Green on 25/7/75			
1876 Oct 11 To one years rent of Roughton Hill Farm	212	1876 July 10 By cheque	70
		- Land tax Roughton	8 7 10
		- Income tax	7 2 2
		Jan 6 - cash	126 8 9
			£ 212
Rental transferred to Mr. Green on 25/7/75			
Cashed to folio 206			
1877 Oct 11 To one years rent of Roughton Hill Farm	150 15	1877 July 7 By cash on 7/6	80
		- Land tax Roughton	7 3 7
		- Income tax	6 5 10
		Jan 15 - cash	91 2 7
			£ 184 15
1878 Oct 11 To one years rent	184 15	1878 July 6 By cash on 7/6	80
		- Land tax Roughton	7 6 5
		- Income tax	6 5 10
		Jan 11 - cash	91 2 9
			£ 184 15
1879 Oct 11 To one years rent	184 15	1879 July 3 By cash	80
		- Land tax Roughton	8 13 4
		- Income tax	3 13 4
		Jan 12 - cash	94 5 4
			£ 184 15
1880 Oct 11 To one years rent	184 15	1880 July 3 By cash	80
		- Land tax Roughton	6 13 4
		- Income tax	3 13 4
		Jan 12 - cash	94 5 4
			£ 184 15
1881 Oct 11 To one years rent	184 15	1881 July 3 By cash	80
		- Land tax	6 13 4
		- Income tax	5 10
		Jan 8 - cash	94 11 8
			£ 184 15
1882 Oct 11 To one years rent	184 15	1882 July 3 By cash	80
		- Land tax	6 13 4
		- Income tax	6 8 4
		Jan 15 - cash	91 13 4
			£ 184 15

Rental, 1875-1904 (Norfolk Record Office, GTN 3/2/2/34)

To take just one example, here is the start of Edward Green's rental entries for Winstones Farm, in Northrepps, and Roughton Hill Farm. Details such as farm names and acreage are generally only given when a new tax tenant takes over the lease or when there are significant changes. Land tax and income tax are listed, with details of when rent was paid. When a page is completed, the agent has noted where to turn to in the volume and when the farm lease is transferred to another tenant this is also noted. This was a working document to record the payment of rent, so occasionally there are instructions to look at other sources, such as letters.

Summary of Edward Green's rent

Year	Total acreage (not counting additional cottages and parks)	Total rent
1880	232a. 2r. 5p.	£365
1885	317a. 2r. 14p.	£457
1890	989a. 2r. 20p.	£997 15s.
1895	Approx. 1592a. 1r. 12p.	£1250 18s. 6d.
1900	Approx. 1040a. 3r. 21p.	£1010 12s. 3d.
1904	Approx. 575a. 0r. 31p.	£489 15d.

This may seem daunting but if you take the time these are very rewarding records. Kathleen traced each of Edward Green's farms in this rental volume and created a detailed timeline. There is not enough time to describe her findings in detail so here is a table to show how his career progressed, counting acreage and rent every five years or so.

Edward Green's farms

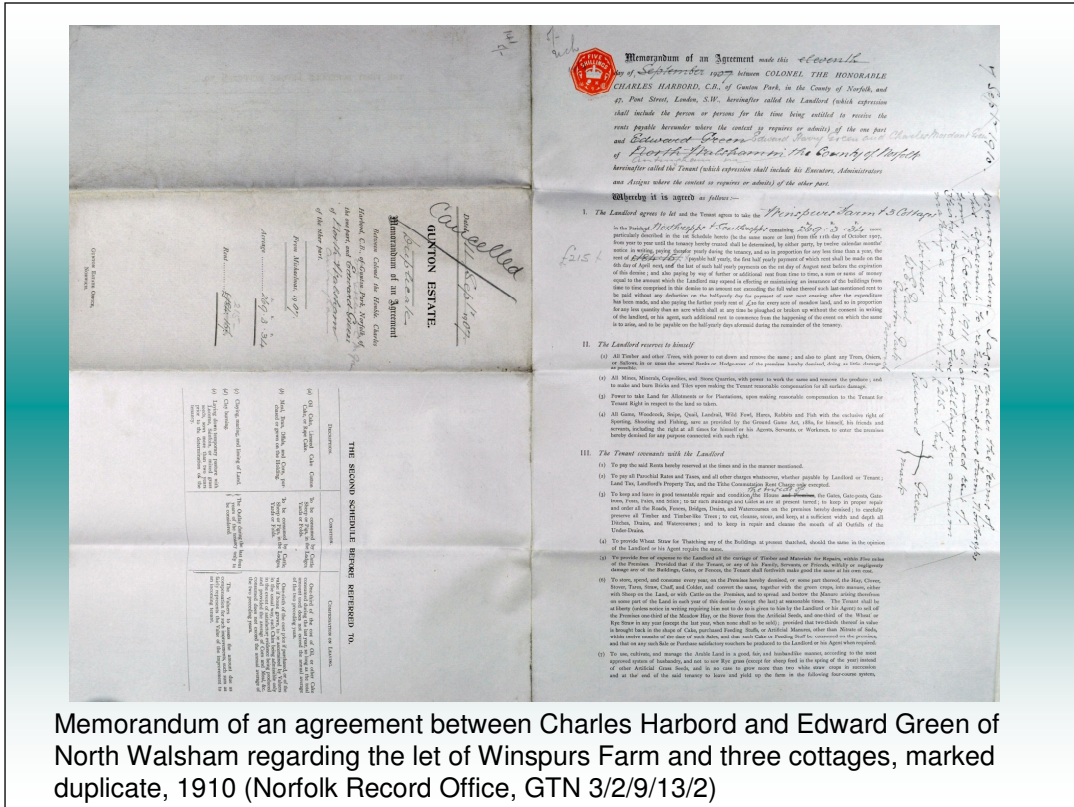
1. North Walsham
2. Primrose Hill, Roughton
3. Hick's/Glebe Farm, Hanworth
4. Helsdon's Farm, Hanworth
5. Bayfields Farm, Antingham
6. Topps Hill Farm, Thorpe Market
7. Winspurs Farm, Northrepps

Edward Green also rented cottages and parks



(Norfolk Record Office, GTN 3/5/2/47)

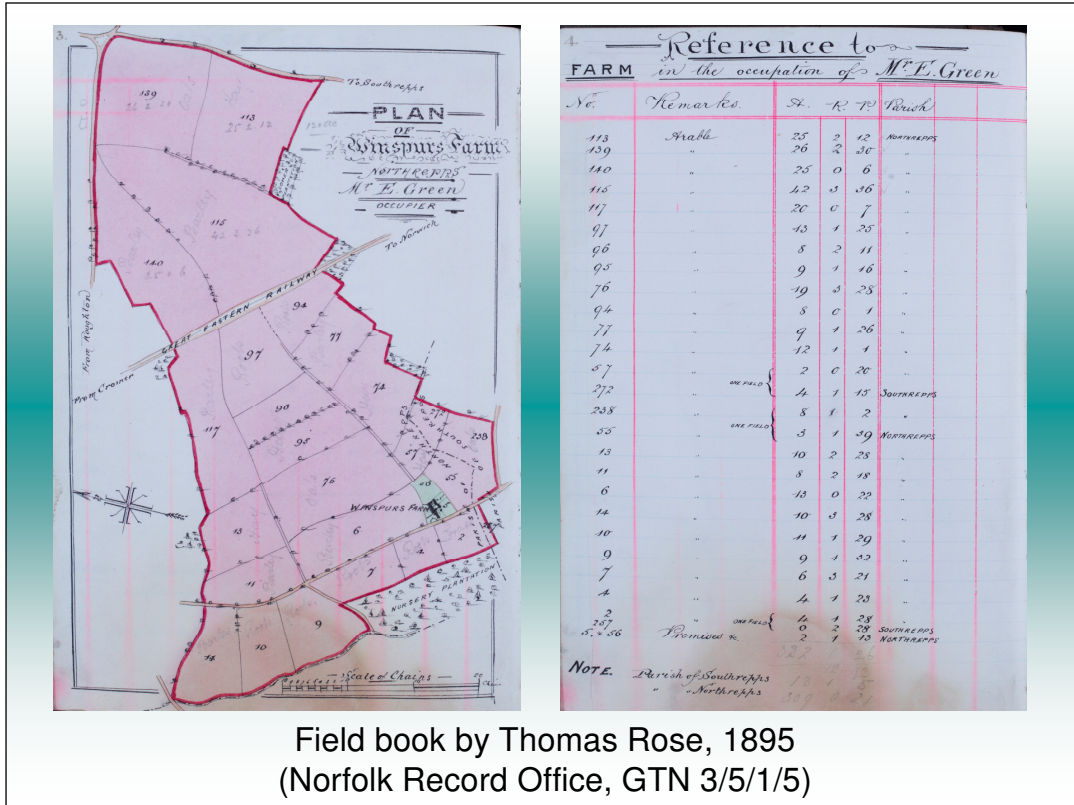
Edward Green started with a farm in North Walsham and then leased Primrose Farm, in Roughton, and Hanworth Fen. He took Hick's Farm or Glebe Farm, Hanworth, in 1886. In 1887, he took Manor House Farm, in Roughton. In 1889, he took Helsdon's Farm, in Hanworth. He started renting Bayfields Farm, Antingham, in 1890, and gave it up to his son, Edward H. Green, in 1892. He rented Topps Hill Farm, in Thorpe Market, with his son, in 1893. The following year he took Winspurs Farm, Northrepps. He gave up Hill Farm, in Roughton, in 1896. The 1890s were a difficult time for farmers, so he built up £56 2s. d. in arrears, which was written off in 1898. Eventually, he gave some farms to his son, Edward H. Green and at one point he paid his son's land tax. This suggests that the Harbords and their agents gave their tenants the chance to thrive and encouraged the passing down of farms to the sons of their successful tenant farmers.



Memorandum of an agreement between Charles Harbord and Edward Green of North Walsham regarding the let of Winspurs Farm and three cottages, marked duplicate, 1910 (Norfolk Record Office, GTN 3/2/9/13/2)

This is part of a memorandum of an agreement between Charles Harbord and Edward Green of North Walsham regarding the let of Winspurs Farm and three cottages. It was originally made out to Edward Green, in 1907, but was adjusted in 1910, when the lease was transferred to Edward Green and Charles Mordant Green, of Antingham.

Leases tended to stipulate land use and ensured that the landowner retained the right to timber, minerals and game. If tenants were caught killing game they found eating their crops, the agent would send a firm letter reprimanding them.



To put all of this into context, you may want to see a map of the farms your ancestor rented. The map books are particularly interesting and show the development of the estate. Here you can see a plan of the fields comprising Edward Green's Winspur's Farm.

Thank you.

Does anybody have any questions?

I hope that this talk has encouraged some of you to use estate papers. Some of these records are included in the exhibition, currently in the Long Gallery. These will be unavailable until the end of April but many of the items mentioned today are from large series, the rest of which are available to consult in the searchroom.

If you get the opportunity, please take a look at my guide for more detail about researching estate tenants.

Does anybody have any questions?

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