



PART FOUR

PROFILES OF THE PEOPLE



James Whitaker, aged 7



CHAPTER TWELVE

ROOM AT THE TOP

Social stratification or class, remained an important facet of village life until well into the twentieth century, and while the invisible lines separating groups of people socially, may not have been as fixed or rigid as in urban areas, they did exist. Of the upper echelon of society – the aristocracy, only the Wodehouse family with their seat at Kimberley, would have touched the margins of Welborne life. As well as being the dominant family in the Forehoe Hundred, they regularly represented the area in parliament and had the votes of those Welborne landowners who are recorded in the days of open ballots. Barons, gentlemen and esquires who made up the next levels of society were also rare.

With no member of these ‘superior’ classes living in Welborne, there was a definite vacuum at the top when we look for a leadership figure in village affairs. We would expect that one of the larger landowners would have assumed the mantle of village squire but found no evidence of this.

Consequently, when John Barham Johnson took up residence he found neither partner nor rival among the village landowners. His was the dominant hand everywhere we look, not merely in church affairs and charity work but also in the school and local government. His efforts to persuade the landowners and farmers to get more involved in village affairs, met with only limited success.

Absentee Landowners

Because of the small size and relative obscurity of this parish, it might be supposed that by the nineteenth century most of the land would be in local hands but this was far from the case.

1. The Little Brand Connection – the Frog’s Hall estate

It is clear from the Rector’s reminiscences, that he looked to the owners of this property to set standards which others in the village would follow. The first owner identified in the nineteenth century was Robert Harvey of Norwich. The Manor Court records show that a Robert Harvey in or about 1790, purchased from George Chad of Thursford ‘for a valuable consideration’ among other pieces, 23 acres of copy-hold land in Welborne of which his eldest son Robert was admitted in trust on the 26th August 1790. We would have known little

Table 1 Land Ownership (1811–1891)

Abode of Owners	Number of Owners	Quantity of Land
RESIDENT	12	Medium
ABSENTEES (1)		
Brandon Parva	3	Large
E. Tuddenham	9	Large
Mattishall	9	Small
6 Mile Radius	3	Small
Sub Total (1)	24	
ABSENTEES (2)		
Norwich	6	Large
Norfolk	10	Large
Sub Total (2)	40	
Outside Norfolk	5	Medium
Total	45	

more, had it not been for the survival in the Brandon Parva parish records, of an Abstract of Title concerning the sale of a mere 3 roods of land. From this document, we discovered that the purchaser was Robert Harvey the Elder, citizen and Alderman of Norwich. For the sum of £11,105 he had acquired: "All the Manor or lordship of Little Brand with membership in the City of Norwich . . . Also [four farmhouses and land in Little Brand] . . . Also the Farm Hse Whrin Edmd Anthony then dwelled situated and being in Welborne. Also Lands, meadows and pasture grounds . . . 124a . . . [with] Farm House in Little Brand and Welborne and all other . . . [land] of Geo Chad in Little Brand and Welborne."

Thus we see that the property which was to be consistently identified as, that of the principle land owner in Welborne, was a very small part (75 acres in 1811) of a Brandon Parva lordship of more than 600 acres. This situation did not really change that much when the Harvey's purchased, "the land and farm house where the Black cottages now stand and added it to Frog's Hall." The Tithe map (1838) showed the estate, now consisting of 147 acres of land, the farmhouse at Frog's Hall and the Black cottages, as owned by Charles Savill Onley. We assumed that a new family had entered the Welborne scene; the title

abstract showed how wrong this assumption was. The elder Harvey died in 1816 and in his will named his sons Robert, John and Charles, along with the Revd Charles Onley of Sistead Hall, Essex as executors. He left his Norfolk property however to Charles, rather than Robert. The Manor Court records of February, 1817 show further activity between these brothers, when Robert surrendered the Welborne holding he had acquired earlier, to his brother: "The said . . . lands lie intermixed with and form part of the farms and land given to Charles Harvey [and as] Robert Harvey [senior] intended to give and devise the same to Charles . . . the said Robert Harvey the son being perfectly satisfied of the intention of his father had agreed to surrender . . . in consideration of the promises and of the natural love and affection of the said Robert Harvey son for his brother." But what has this to do with the Onleys?

The question is answered by a document issued 2 December 1812, whereby, "Charles Harvey by Royal License assumed the surname Savill-Onley in lieu of the Se Harvey". So with the flick of the pen, Harveys became Onleys, not two families but one. We haven't been able to research this further but suspect that the families had intermarried and there was some financial incentive attached to the name change. When Charles died in August 1843, he left both the Essex and Norfolk estates to his son Onley Savill-Onley, charging each to pay an annuity of £520 and £300 to his wife.

Charles not only adopted the name Onley but also chose to live in Essex, so that his influence in Welborne was limited. Nevertheless, the rector was to express great regret when the family sold the estate stating: "the names of Harvey and Onley have always been associated with the largest estate in the parish . . . its remoteness from Mr Onley's residence . . . has led him to dispose of it, and Welborne has lost one who for more than a quarter of a century has been a kind benefactor to its church and school." Just to put the phrase into perspective, the total sums involved £25 to the church £62.14.0 to the school, so indeed the family could be considered to have helped shoulder some of Welborne's financial burdens.

The new owners, the Dring family, had at least two members called John. One of them lived in Brandon Parva: Welborne Electoral rolls 1881 shows a landowner John Dring with an abode Brandon Parva, owning Dring's Farm, Welborne. This is unlikely to be the same John that the Brandon roll of 1874 shows as a £50 occupier of Dairy House Farm, Brandon Parva. We suspect this was John Junior, who appears on the Welborne roll six years later as a £12 rated occupier of Dring's farm. Kelly's directory 1902 lists a John Junior as farmer of Welborne and at Wymondham; and an Arthur John Chapman Dring as owner in 1937. We have noted that one of the John Drings occasionally

brought his family to church in Welborne if not as often as the rector would have liked. It is unlikely that any of the family actually lived at Frog's Hall at any time during their ownership of the property although unlike the Harvey-Onleys they did farm the land themselves albeit through the use of farm bailiffs.

2. The Tuddenham Connection

(i) The Sendalls

Richard Sendall had been the largest land owner in Welborne in 1811. The Church farm property of his brother John passed to Richard in 1791 although he didn't farm it himself. While he did farm land in Welborne it seems to have been mainly the pieces lying near the parish boundary and thus closest to his home in East Tuddenham. After the death of Richard's wife, the land was sold and the link with Welborne became weaker. Three of his eight children had Welborne associations. The eldest, Edward had three children baptised at Welborne church between 1818–1820 and was presumably farming here at the time. He appears to have later moved to Honingham and appears on the Mattishall Electoral Register in 1871 as owning house and land near Welborne Road, while his son Richard, is farming in East Tuddenham. Edward's brother Richard appears in his father's will as a grocer of Welborne, but we found no further reference to him or his business (a third brother, Money, was also a Grocer but in Mattishall). Only the fourth brother Fisher has a long connection with Welborne.

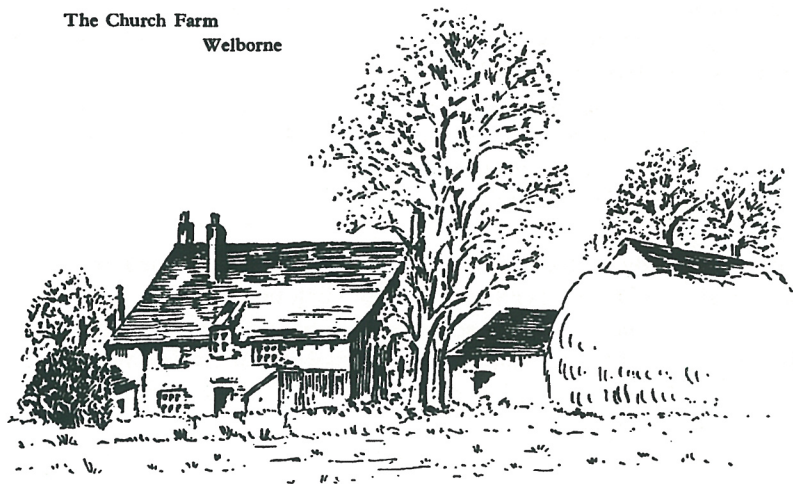
(ii) The Goochs

This family also had substantial land holdings in Welborne, John Kerr/Carr owning 53 acres near the Lowndes common area and Stephen (who later moved to Honingham) 27 acres in six fields. Neither had a house on this land and both had rented their land to non-resident tenants. The family had connections by marriage to the Bunn family who have already been mentioned.

3. The Mattishall Connection and Farther afield

Aside from the Bodham/Donne family of South Green, who owned the Welborne land adjacent to their property, there was no Mattishall connection of any substance to the village until well into the nineteenth century, when George Taylor, surgeon of Mattishall appears in our records. In 1853 he apparently joined with William Howard to purchase a farmhouse, buildings and land. In fact, the more likely scenario is that he bought the land from

**The Church Farm
Welborne**



Howard who disappears from the electoral roll around this time. Taylor also owned the adjacent land in Brandon Parva and William Stackwood was the tenant of both properties. In 1872 the Vestry selected George Taylor to be this parish's lay representative at deaconal meetings and he was still the owner of the property in 1879.

Taylor also provides the connection to the Pitt family of Saxlingham who were identified in the directories as the principal landowner in Welborne 1902 and 1912. This clerical family had extensive land holdings in the area being named as principal landowners also in North Tuddenham and Garveston. The property concerned was Church Farm, which seems to have changed hands more frequently than the other farms and usually to outsiders. Nevertheless, there seems to be a tenuous thread of intermarriage and Welborne connections loosely tying the owners together. The Revd B. Pitt, when rector of North Tuddenham had donated the glass for the east window of Welborne Church. Mrs Charlotte Heyhoe Pitt was the daughter of Charlotte Heyhoe Howlett of Yaxham who had married George Taylor.

We are familiar with the Heyhoe name as patrons and incumbents of the Yaxham and Welborne livings. There were Howlett's living in the village at the end of the eighteenth century and had married into the Bunn family of East Tuddenham. So the two Heyhoe Howlett sisters who brought the property from Mrs Hudson in 1885 would not have been unfamiliar with the area.

The Hudson's also had marital links to Church farm and Welborne. The Leeds family had bought the property from the Sendall estate and Mary Leeds had married Peter Hudson of Little Walsingham, who owned the property in the 1870s. We know very little of Stephen Leeds of Kelling shown on the Tithe map as owning Church farm. He is most likely the father of the 30-year-old Stephen shown in the 1851 census as farming 280 acres in Welborne and employing 12 men. The electoral register shows him as a £50 occupier for the whole of this decade.

There are only three other absentee landowners to be mentioned here. William Warner of Walcot, gentleman, owned High farm between 1767 and 1832 when his tenant Nicholas Sands appears to have bought it. It is possible that he had lived in Welborne during some of this time as an Ann Warner daughter of William and Elizabeth was baptised here in June 1765, but there was an occupier identified by 1802.

Samuel Lock of Shipdham married Sarah Waller in 1819 and he presumably inherited Valley farm on the death of her father in 1831. Neither they nor the widow appear to have stayed in the property. Jemima Waller was identified as living in Mattishall when she died in 1845 and Samuel's abode is shown as Barton Bendish on the electoral roll for the same year. His tenants Edward Webb and John Wilkinson also farmed his adjoining land in Brandon Parva. By 1853 the Locks had moved to London.

Finally we should mention the Cuddon family. James Cuddon appears in Pigot's Norwich directory of 1830 as a 49-year-old Conveyancer and the name appears on a high proportion of the title and mortgage deeds that we have read concerning Welborne so they apparently got a lot of legal business from the village. His two sons Francis Thomas and James the younger both served as Stewards of the Manor while the family had their law practice in Norwich. The elder Cuddon appears to have bought from William Bellairs all the land of the Hooke family but not that public house. These nine pieces were scattered in the area between the church and the Tuddenham parish boundary and rented to Nicholas Sands. In the 1850s the family enfranchised all the copy-hold tenants of the Manor of Welborne virtually severing their ties to the village. The sons subsequently inherited all their fathers' manors and real estate but moved to London.

Welborne's Own

There were, of course, resident landowners in the village to whom we can look for an individual or family if not of the gentry at least suitable to assume the position of squire. The record of the Poll for Knights of the Shire for the

County of Norfolk gives us a list of possible candidates as only landowners had the right to vote before the Reform Bill of 1832. Only two Welborne farmers were registered in 1806: John Green and James Porrett. In 1817 they were joined by, the only other Welborne farmers listed in the enclosure claim, Tim Edwards, Nicholas Sands and Fuller Waller.

The Welborne Greens

We turn now to the Greens who were the land owning farmers who lived and worked here for seven generations. Like the Johnsons this family also resorted to adding a second family name to help distinguish different family groups where so many Christian names were duplicated. This was particularly helpful in separating the Thomas Lindsey Green who belonged to this family tree, from the Thomas Green who did not. The possible significance of the Greens in Welborne was enhanced by the fact, that through intermarriage they were linked to ten other village families: Anthony, Edwards, Gent, Minns, Neave (three times), Porrett, Randall, Sands, Sendall and Tice. Finally, the fact that they owned and lived in the property now known as Old Hall Farm enhanced their candidacy for village squire even further.

In reality, they had no aspirations to this roll and the property was never given the name Hall Farm during their ownership. In all the official records of the nineteenth century that we have examined, the Greens always indicated their abode as being, 'near Mattishall'. This was an easily identifiable address in the earlier period, for a property perched between the edge of the Great Common and the Parish boundary and accessed from the village by a road designated merely to the 'Common'

The tax records show that the Greens did not own the property in 1767 but they were probably farming it much earlier. The first John Green appeared in the parish register in 1705, when his son William was baptised while the last Green living in Hall farm in the nineteenth century, was his great-great-great grandson William Kerridge Green. We find the record of at least five of John's grandchildren being married in Welborne Church, but we will concern ourselves only with Robert, who established the line which will make up most of our tale. Robert married a Welborne woman Ann Tattel and they appear to have had only two children. Their daughter Ann, like her Aunt Elizabeth and Uncle Samuel, married into the Neave family. Their son John, born 1754, looked farther afield for a wife marrying Mary Kerridge whose family were located in Suffolk.

This second John Green owned and was living at Hall Farm by 1802 and by 1841, we find the elderly couple (85 and 80) without family but with five live



Hall Farm.

in servants in the farm house. John was to die that year and his wife four years later. The rector has left us a vivid picture of the couple during his father's time: "they were hard working money saving folk. He on the land she with her dairy and poultry – keeping her stall at Norwich market. They had a family of two sons and two daughters [still living] with little or no education, being taught only to work for a living." No pretensions to grandeur here or aspirations to the status of village squire.

The frugality of the couple had obviously paid dividends. In 1811 John Green owned the farm with 80 acres of freehold land and three double cottages. He was also a major beneficiary of the enclosure; receiving nearly 22 acres of common and wasteland in 13 separate pieces. (Only R. Sendall and the Rector received more). Green now owned one seventh of the total parish acreage and unlike Sendall did not immediately dispose of his newly acquired land. The location of the new land increased the scattered nature of his farming and made the property the most dispersed of all the Welborne farms. Two compact blocks existed near the house; one ran behind the buildings along the parish boundary; the other beginning directly opposite the farm house crossing the new H.S. Road and running down to the intersection of Pound Lane and

Hill Road. But he had also acquired common/wasteland on all three neighbouring parish boundaries as well as at Gent's Green and on the Great Common. Three of the pieces were cut off from the roads by the land of other farmers and required driveways, still visible today to gain access to them. Altogether the farm now consisted of 25 pieces of land in 10 different locations.

By 1839 he had sold some of the land, as well as acquiring new fields, and the total acreage was now only 92 acres. The double cottages in Well Close had been allowed to fall into disrepair and had disappeared but he still owned the cottage and garden next to Walnut Tree farm and the field next to High farm called Bloys Orchard. This cottage was occupied by John Anthony, the son of his Aunt Patience. Two years later he was living-in at the farmhouse.

The death of John Green occurred at a troubled time in the life of his eldest son Charles (born around 1792). Despite the large size of the family property and the fact that the second son John, aged 19, had died in 1802. Charles does not appear to have been working with his father in the 1830s. His first marriage to Elizabeth Lindsey took place around 1823 and his first three children were baptised in Welborne. In 1832 he appears on the tax records as the occupier of Howard's farm (Claypit) but in that year the property was put up for sale. White's directory for 1836 shows him as occupying a farm on the heath in South Green which the Mattishall tithe apportionment later identifies as the 73 acres belonging to James Nicholson. Elizabeth died in April 1840 probably as a result of complications arising from the birth of her youngest child Samuel who died the next month. This was their fourth child who had died in infancy. Charles was left with four children under the age of ten and a teenaged son. His eldest daughter Rachel must have been relieved when he married again and freed her from the responsibility of caring for the family.

Charles hesitated about moving the family to Hall farm. The electoral roll shows him still living in Mattishall in 1849 and the three sons of his second marriage were all born in Mattishall (the last, a second Samuel in 1846). We assume however, that he took over responsibility for the farm immediately, and only moved home when his South Green tenancy expired: according to the 1851 census the 58-year-old Charles with wife Emily and seven children was now living in Welborne, while he farmed 175 acres with the aid of seven employees. Despite the size of the family there were no live in servants so that the three older children, aged 14 to 20 were presumably expected to carry a fair share of the load though the younger four were sent to school. By 1861 his acreage was reduced to 125 and his employees to three. Now however his wife has some help in the house (a 16-year-old girl) though the eldest child Rachel

is still unmarried and living at home. The four boys are described as farmer's sons and are presumed to be working with their father. A decade later he is farming 160 acres, though now 77-year-old, with the help of five men and two boys. He died three years later and 31-year-old William Kerridge, the second son of the second marriage took over the property.

But what of the older boys Richard and Thomas Lindsey; when Charles had died in 1866 the 30 year old Richard became the oldest surviving son. His marriage to Emily Porrett in 1871 raised the question of where the young couple was to live. The problem was solved by another family connection, Charles' sister Mary had married Tim Edwards of Hill Farm and her widowed daughter Elizabeth Sendall had been carrying on the farm since her husband's death. In an arrangement apparently acceptable to both parties, Elizabeth and family left the village and Richard moved in as tenant. The couple's five children all survived infancy and he apparently managed to maintain a sufficient level of income on 57 acres of land to enable him to employ two men. By 1881 with his children still at school he is reduced to farming 24 acres with the help of one lad and a decade later finds the oldest boy Charles working as a butcher's assistant and seventeen-year-old Florence a pupil teacher.

We are left to wonder why Richard, as the oldest son, didn't take over Hall farm on his father's death. One possibility, which came to mind, was the fact that he was the son of the first marriage and perhaps less welcome to his stepmother. A view which might be strengthened if Emily had brought money into the marriage. Can the same be said for the next boy, Thomas? We have not been able to locate his baptism but assume that as he was 10 in 1851, that he is the first child of the second marriage; yet he was called Thomas Lindsey, the maiden name of the first wife. He had married in October 1870 and he too needed a place to live.

The Valley Farm small holding of Fuller Waller (38 acres at the time of the enclosure) left to his son-in-law Samuel Lock had been rented to tenant farmers. We assume that when Wilkinson left the village in 1860 it is possible that the property was then owned for a short time by a John Dack shown as farmer owner in an 1868 directory. However, the census for 1871 shows Thomas living in the Claypit Green area and the 1872 electoral roll identifies Thomas as a £12 rated occupier of the "low farm". The rector's village plan of 1879 confirms that this was Valley Farm although Thomas himself doesn't use the name before the 1891 census. Sometime before 1881 he appears to have bought the property or at least 22 acres of it and is employing one boy. The last record of him that we have is in 1891 still at Valley Farm.



Valley Farm.

But what of William? He continued to live at the Hall farming in 1881 – 136 acres with the help of two men and a boy. He had married in 1872 but had only two children Urban born the next year and Agnes two years later. Only Agnes was living at home in 1891 but they had a 17-year-old farm labourer possibly related to his wife, living in. He had earlier offered hospitality to his grandmother's family; his Uncle Richard Kerridge and Cousin Edgar, staying at the farmhouse (1881) and it is to this branch of the family that Hall farm passed: Kelly's directories showing a Thomas William Kerridge as farmer there in 1925 and 1937. (The authors also met Mattishall resident Ernie Blyth when they first arrived in the village who told them that he himself was born at the Horse Shoes while his cousins the Kerridges lived at Hall Farm.) William himself died tragically in the Thorpe Asylum in 1903 aged 66.

None of the Greens identified seemed to have considered themselves anything more than working farmers and their home nothing more than a farmhouse. Longevity alone, however, has given the premise the status of a building of special architectural or historical interest, as a Grade II listed building. The accompanying description identifies it as a "Lobby-entrance type seventeenth century farmhouse, replaced in the nineteenth century. Timber frame; apparently with brick in-fill on east gable end; façade refaced with



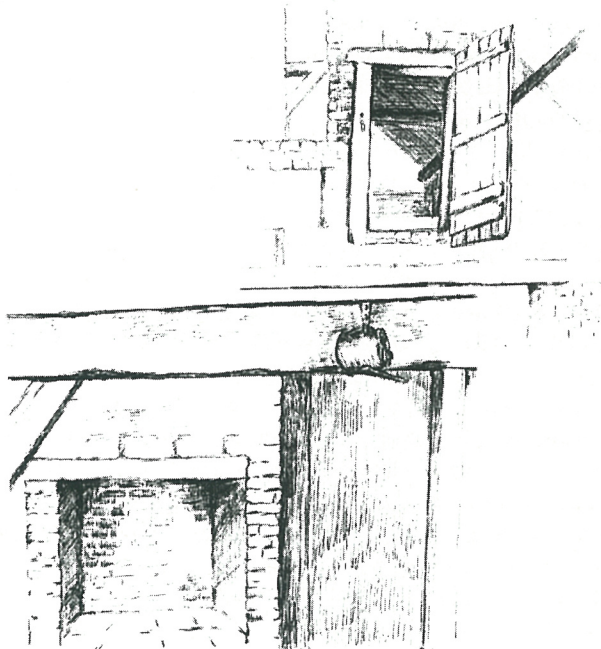
High House Farm (original cottage).

brick Pantile roof. Two storeys and four bays of nineteenth century. Three light casements with horizontal glazing bars and hood and moulds over ground floor windows. Front door with gabled porch opposite off-centre axial stack. Stack with four chamber shafts in line. Brick plinth, wall plates, studding and four tension braces visible in east gable end.”

Reaching 'High' Ground

High or High House Farm was the other Welborne property that came to be associated with resident landowners although in both cases the owner had previously been a tenant farmer in the village. In 1811 Warner had described the property as consisting of a farmhouse with a barn, stables and outhouses and 67 acres or thereabout of arable land. The Great Common at this time ran right up to the yards of the farmhouse and Warner seems to have been granted about 15 acres of former common and waste land only 6 acres of it from the Great Common itself. (Later bought by John Colls). It appeared that the farmhouse itself was very modest and that the previous tenants Mr Golding/Golden and Gregory Harrison had done little to keep it up. The rector describing it as it was in his father's time as “tenanted by two cottagers Garad and Pease and much dilapidated.”

This statement led us to inquire further and we discovered that the present house at High Farm was not the first nor original dwelling on this site. Due to the kindness of the present owners we were able to visit the barn-like building to the west of the house and see the evidence of the original cottage, built end on to the road. On its western side outlines of a door and windows are clearly visible in the brickwork. Inside, huge low beams run from east to west across the whole width and support the entire structure. Two large fireplaces, one at either end suggests that it was used as a double cottage. A small door in the north wall and some feet above the north fireplace revealed a second storey, presumably sleeping accommodation, which could only be reached by a ladder. This loft bedroom would have been warmed by heat from the chimneybreast, a great boon for the occupants. Such accommodation while suitable for farm workers, would require drastic improvements once an owner moved in.



High House Farm (original interior).

Nicholas Sands the first nineteenth century resident owner was born in Swaffham around 1781 and moved to Welborne sometime before 1815 (one of

his sons, aged three was buried here in that year). He appears to have had a varied and colourful early life in the village according to the rector's reminiscences: "Keeper of the Horse Shoes Public House, farming the manor land belonging to James Cuddon". He also "farmed the principal part of the glebe [and] . . . has formerly been a carpenter by trade." By 1817 he was also farming High Farm. He was described by the rector as "among the few communicants" in John Johnson's time when "my father used to drive over in a pony gig which he put up at Sand's farm." He further described Mrs Sands as "a busy little woman always a perfection of neatness and civility."

By 1838 Sands owned High Farm but may not have lived there. It was now only 42 acres but he was also farming 37 acres of Glebe and 24 acres belonging to Bellairs. This 103 acres made him one of the busiest farmers in Welborne but he appears consistently in the list of parish officers and was a regular attender of Vestry meetings. Farming his various holdings would have demanded good organization and quite a bit of running around. While the bulk of the High Farm land was adjacent to the house along Church and Hill Rds, the glebe land stretched away north-east of the church and the Bellair land had odd pieces behind Valley and Clay Pit Farm and down on Lowndes Common. Sands was no longer a young man but employed only one live-in farm hand in 1841. In 1851 the 68 year old widower still had one live-in male servant but also employed three labourers on his 72 acres. He does not appear in the 1861 census but was buried in Welborne churchyard six years later aged 86.

The second owner/occupier of this property gives a stronger impression of belonging to or aspiring to the gentry. Charles Gardiner Cobon was born in Letheringsett in 1803. He obviously spent some time out of Norfolk as his son and daughter were born in Suffolk (1854 and 5) while his wife was Cambridgeshire born. He first appears in Welborne records in December 1856 when a second daughter Maria was baptised. But he was not a landowner at this time but rather a £50 occupier of land which was identified as near the Horse Shoes. In 1861 he was farming 287 acres. From this we assume that he was leasing the Frog's Hall estate and probably living in the farmhouse there in a modest but genteel style. As well as a housemaid he employed a governess for his children Martha (7) and George (6). The two children were still living at home in 1871 having, as one might expect no paid occupation and designated merely as farmer's son and daughter. This would mean that Martha had been taught how to manage a house and staff by her mother, and George some introduction to farm management.

As for his wife Maria, it is possible that, freed from the heavy demands of a farmer's wife she spent some of her time in the activities which the Decanal

meeting of 1865 had deemed appropriate, for a Christian woman to “fulfil beyond their own homes: being a good mother and seeking out un-baptised children . . . preparing candidates for confirmation, training girls in service or teaching domestic economy.” No doubt there were a number of women in the village who could have done with her help in “nursing and visiting the sick and attending deathbeds and laying out the dead” although such tasks may have been more than she could face.

There is a note in the Vestry minutes to the effect that “Mr C.G. Cobon, churchwarden left the parish Michaelmas 1875,” but he is shown as the owner of High farm on the Rector’s plan of 1879 and very likely farm the land along with Frog’s Hall land and other pieces that he had bought in Brandon Parva by 1874. Given the size of his enterprise he was a major employer of local labour preferring an economically mixed work force rather than just men: five boys, six women and nine men in 1861 and four boys, three women and seven men a decade later. He also employed a dairymaid at this time so his stock would have included a dairy herd.

When the Dring’s acquired Frog’s Hall and put in their farm steward, Cobon was faced with new circumstances. It is not clear whether he continued to stay in the village or to live at High farm. The electoral rolls show that he retained ownership of the property but gave his abode as Witon near North Walsham in the 1880s. In this period, George Milk of Hockering had the tenancy. Aged only 32, he and his wife Elizabeth had eight children during their years in Welborne but four of them died before their third birthday.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PROFILES OF WELBORNE WOMEN

Being a Woman in Welborne

The importance of women throughout history has always been underestimated. Historians were usually men and concerned themselves with what they considered important, the exploits of other men. Over the centuries one or two women made historical headlines; Queens such as Boadicia (Boudicca) and Elizabeth who reigned in their own right. It was more often the case however, that women were remembered because of their association with men, e.g. Nell Gwyn, Mistress of Charles I. When alive, women were often identified as Harry Smith's wife or daughter and as they got along in years, as old Mother Smith or Granny Smith. Once the significant male died, she became Widow Smith or more interestingly Harry Smith's 'relic', the word being derived from "surviving trace or memorial, a memento or souvenir." A woman who had no male of her own counted for very little. To remain unmarried was an unenviable state simply because few women could achieve or sustain financial independence.

It is interesting to note that women had declined to this lack of status rather than having always endured it. In Medieval times women could inherit property and dispose of it as they would but by the nineteenth century this was rare. The most the average woman of substance could expect was a lifetime annuity. Whole families of women could lose their home simply because it was entailed upon a male relative, however obscure the connection. Historians also ignored women's work especially the running of a household and all that this involved. We wish to remedy this trend a little by giving the women of Welborne a section of their own. But in order to understand what sort of lives ordinary women led, we must first take a look at the conditions that prevailed.

Prior to the twentieth century when manufactured goods became readily available and affordable, households lacked not only modern amenities such as lighting, sanitation and water, but also the everyday commodities used in the home. The designation 'housewife' clearly indicates just what was expected of a woman once she entered the household on a permanent basis. For centuries all the food and drink, candles, soap and other cleaning products even

medicines used, would have been made in the home. Some necessities such as needles and luxuries like lace or ribbon might be purchased from a pedlar, boots from the shoemaker and very occasionally a suit from the tailor, but all other clothing and household linen was made at home by the women. Things got better for some women by the middle of nineteenth century when many of these goods could be purchased by those who could afford them. For the majority of women however, the choice remained, 'make it yourself' or 'do without'.

It is therefore not surprising that the women of Welborne were rarely if ever idle. If we consider an average day in the life of any household, it is difficult to appreciate not only the amount of physical labour involved in running even the smallest home, but also the variety of skills that had to be passed from one generation to another. How fortunate were the handful of women who could afford to employ others to do most or all of this work, even if they still had the responsibility for supervision and direction.

The Roles of Women

Shakespeare wrote of 'the seven ages of man' but what of women. To reflect the difficulty that women had establishing themselves as individuals, we have identified a number of roles to be explored in general terms within the context of nineteenth century Welborne.

(i) Dutiful daughters.

We can use Barham Johnson's comments on the Palmer girls to identify the characteristics of a 'good' daughter: "well disposed women who busied themselves with domestic matters and waited upon their father with old fashioned respectfulness." Two of them also "offered to help in the Sunday school" which the rector found "very cheering". We have included here women between the ages of 15 (no longer children) and 20 (not yet on the shelf) who were not in paid employment. Consequently it constitutes a very small category composed mainly of farmer's daughters. In 1841 we find three twenty-year-olds living at home, Charlotte Porrett, Mary Colls and Maria Palmer. With all three sets of parents still alive and an adequate income, life for these daughters would have been comparatively comfortable. Seventeen-year-old, Hannah Stackwood described herself as, 'employed at home' in 1851, suggesting that on this farm at least; being a dutiful daughter was more demanding. By 1861 the designation, 'farmer's daughter' appears to have come into fashion as a way of conveying a status between scholar and wife that distinguished Lucy and Anna Porrett (17 & 19) and Mary Sendall (16)

from other young women in the village. It was used for the last time by Martha Cobon (17) in 1871. The number of women in this category had dwindled and during the last decades, only William K. Green's daughter Agnes, makes the list. We do not mean to suggest in this selection that only farmers' daughters were dutiful. It was the way in which these women were treated and what was and was not required of them that is different i.e. they were not expected to seek paid employment. The fact that they had not had to work could have created a problem for these women once their fathers died. Fortunately for most of them their needs were expressly addressed in their fathers' wills.

John Palmer's will made both short and long term provisions for his daughters' financial needs and gave special attention to provision for his youngest child: "all such of my children as are unmarried . . . shall be allowed to reside in the dwelling house belonging to the sd farm . . . [and] allowed a sufficient sum for . . . maintenance and clothing." As the amount was not specified, it would be the three male executors who would decide what constituted sufficient. The daughters were then to receive, when the lease of Frog's Hall ended, an equal share of their father's real and personal estate, "except that the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds is to be deducted from the share of Maria and added to the common stock." We assume that Maria had been given this amount at an earlier date. If a daughter married before this time she would receive her estimated share "on the Michaelmas day next following the day of marriage".

Special provisions were made for the daughter of his second marriage, Martha Elizabeth, who was still a child when he died. She was to receive her equal share but, the executors were directed to "lay out and invest the same at interest on good and sufficient security . . . and paid the interest and dividends to arise there from . . . unto my sd wife for the maintenance and bringing up of Martha Elizabeth during her minority [and if his wife died] . . . to such persons having the care of my sd daughter as they shall think fit." She would gain control of the principal "to and for her sole use and benefit" at twenty-one or on her wedding day.

(ii) A subordinate spouse.

Getting her daughters married off was the main concern of every mother just as finding a husband was every girl's dream. Just because Welborne was an obscure-farming village without the drama of a London season or a court presentation, it did not mean that the pre-marriage rituals were not played out. While marriage might not always result in financial security, it did bring a woman social status and a recognized position in the community. We might

expect that under these circumstances women would marry very young. Certainly in the Regency period, girls who hadn't managed to catch a husband in their teens were considered 'a sad case' and often doomed to spinsterhood.

Life was harder and expectations more realistic in a farming village where few young men had an inherited income and most were poorly paid. We were not surprised therefore when we analyzed the ages of the couples who married in Welborne Church between 1852 and 1870, to find that only one of them involved a woman under twenty-one. Sophie Wilkinson, being only nineteen when she married Surrey farmer, George Butcher in 1839. At the other end of the range we find thirty-seven-year-old Ann Cotton, a domestic servant at the Rectory, marrying blacksmith Henry Doy in 1863. She was one of the six brides in their thirties in this period, with the average age at which women married being twenty six.

The impression from historical novels and television costume dramas that many women were pressured to marry older men for security made us analyse the age differences between the couples and we found that this wasn't the case in Welborne. The eleven years between Sophie Wilkinson and her husband, being the only case of a difference of more than a decade and the average age difference was only six years. If we widen the net to include the census statistics, we find a handful of other examples. The widest gap the 23–25 years between Fisher and Elizabeth Sendall, 13–16 years between Charles and Emily Green, 17 years between Francis and Bertha Smith, 15 between Edward and Tabitha Webb and 12 between Charles and Maria Cobon. It is not surprising that all these men were farmers. The only non-farmer couples were smallholder/agricultural labourer Edward and Leah Randall (9–15 years) and John and Emma Walpole King (12 years). There is only one example of the reverse situation, Mary Olley being either seven or 13 years older than her husband. Other points worth noting was an astonishing 23 couples giving the same ages in 1841, compared to an average of three in a subsequent census. None of the women was older than her husband in this year, compared to 10 women a decade later.

Where did a young Welborne woman look for a husband? Of the 81 marriages between 1824–1901, 36 of the couples were residents of this parish. If we widen this to individuals, giving their place of abode in parishes within a six-mile radius, the number increases to 65 couples. Approached from the other direction only four of the grooms were from outside Norfolk and only two of those from outside East Anglia. Three of these brides were farmer's daughters (Ann and Lucy Porrett, and Sophie Wilkinson) the fourth, one of the rectory servants, Anne Clarke, people who we would expect to have outside links.

We have mentioned the fact that few women had control of their own finances, but this doesn't mean that women did not have money. The dowry or marriage settlement was still present in the middle and upper classes. We saw this process at work in the marriage of John Barham Johnson and can assume that the daughters of the wealthier Welborne landowners also brought 'money in trust' to their marriages and were entitled to inherit this sum on their husband's death. Marriage could also be a way in which a woman could improve her social status. An overview of Welborne cases shows only three daughters of farm workers, who married men who were not: both Susanna Howell and Susan Ball married railway employees and Maria Gapp married a shoemaker's son. A wedding between couples with similar occupational backgrounds was the norm e.g. builder's daughter Ann Small marrying the son of bricklayer William Neave. The reverse situation – women marrying down – was equally rare e.g. thatcher's daughter Rachel Middleton and labourer Charles Dale.

Once married, the subordinate wife was expected to run the home and bear children but not to make any direct contribution to the family resources. We found only five exceptions to this statement in Welborne statistics. Fifty seven year old Sarah Howard identified herself as a domestic servant in 1861, despite both her husband William and 13 year-old son being in work. Sarah Smalls (56) was running the shop in 1871 and both Ann Neve (36) and Mabella Pitcher (25) worked as dressmakers. All three would have been able to work at home which was fortunate for Mabella as she had a four-month-old baby at the time.

(iii) Child birth and Childrearing

While we are all aware that women in previous centuries gave birth to a large number of children, we do not always appreciate what this entailed in everyday life. A look at the experiences of three of the women who lived in the village in the nineteenth century, might help us develop better insight into the burden and struggle that was the married woman's lot.

Rose Neave had been born in the parish in 1790 and had married William Balls, in 1817. In the next fourteen years she gave birth to eleven children. Despite the father being frequently out of work and the family living in abject poverty, only one of the children died young, Susan aged two in April 1823. Allowing nine months for each pregnancy and assuming that a child was breast fed for at least the same amount of time, we calculated that Rose had only 14 months during the 14 years when she was free from both demands. With her husband in low paid and irregular employment, her home could have had little

beyond the minimum of furnishings and utensils, so that every daily task would have been laborious and time consuming. Just imagine hand washing and getting dry all those nappies for a start. We don't know for sure how early her eldest daughter would have been called upon to help but we suspect it could have been as early as 1824 when she was six. In this year Rose gave birth to her daughter Sarah but despite the sorrow of losing Susan, the previous year, she still had two other toddlers who needed care and attention. Obviously Rose came from sturdy stock outliving her husband by ten years. She died in 1870 aged eighty. Her children lived on in the parish for many years.

Rachel Lewis, born in Letheringsett in 1839, was to have an even more demanding experience of births and child rearing after she married John Vincent, the fifth son of Welborne farm worker William. John had been born here during his family's first spell in the village and returned with his widowed mother, Jemima by 1861, working beside her in the fields. Their eldest son James was born a month after the wedding so Rachel had little time to settle into her new home before she experienced the joys and burdens of motherhood. As her ten pregnancies were spread over seventeen years, she managed a whole thirty six months in which she was neither pregnant nor breast feeding, including eleven consecutive months. Looked at as a whole however, her experience was even more demanding because the first three children were boys, followed by twins. It is not uncommon for a woman, even today to have three or four children under five to cope with, once in their married life, but for Rachel, this was an experience which was repeated for over a decade. If we look at 1875, she was feeding Mary for at least two months, pregnant with Mark and had Lewis (4) and the 2-year-old twins underfoot. This would have been a demanding task for a young woman but Rachel was now 36 with no end to this in sight. She must have been very thankful that the two older boys were at school for much of the day and that her husband was in regular work.

While these two examples were both women married to farm workers, we do not want to create the impression that other women in the village were not similarly burdened. Harriet Lindsey Green, a farmer's wife, completes this brief overview. Born Harriet Munday in East Dereham in 1841, she had married Thomas Lindsey Green in 1870 and moved into Valley Farm. In the next thirteen years she was to bear him eleven children including twin girls. In the eight years between 1871 and 1880 there was not a single month in which she was neither pregnant nor breast-feeding. 1880, in fact, constituted a slight pause in her child bearing which given the death of three year old Len in that year, was probably a boon to her. Because the twins came late in the birthing

order and Sabina died in her third year, Harriet never experienced a year with more than four children under five but she did have seven years with this number. Looking on the bright side, her oldest child was a girl who would have been helping care for siblings and she had her mother-in-law and two sisters-in-law living in the village. Nevertheless, because she married late, she was 43 when she had her last child and in 1891 when she was 50, still had seven children living at home, five of them under fourteen.

Incidentally we were surprised by the comparatively small number of women who died in childbirth and by the number of twins born in the parish. Between 1801 and 1882 there were thirteen sets of twins, five of girls, four of boys and four mixed. While multiple births tend to run in families, in this case they were born to twelve different couples, the Rice family having two sets! While the large size of families may have had something to do with it, we feel it is worthy of comment.

(iv) Without Benefit of Clergy.

Barham Johnson, when reflecting on the conditions in the parish at the beginning of the nineteenth century, observed that 'morals were very bad'. To see if there was a factual basis for this opinion we analysed the figures for the number of children born out of wedlock or more accurately the numbers of such children baptised in Welborne Church. These individuals were marked in the register with the identification, 'base born' or 'bastard child' or 'illegitimate' and given an *. The mother's marital state was also recorded as, 'single woman' or 'spinster' or 'widow' although there is one case marked "a married woman having a supposed illegitimate son." Fathers, of course, were given anonymity in most cases, though the presence of Christian names such as Sendall, Burrough, Doy and Baxter, provides a clue to family if not to individual. Given the crowded conditions and the heavy presence of people in the parish, it is likely that the name of the father was 'an open secret' at the time.

If we compare the hundred years before and after 1800, we find only 11 cases in the former compared with 40 in the latter. On numbers alone therefore, we could argue that the situation was three times worse when the Johnsons had the living than before, but such a conclusion would be premature. Firstly, we must take into account the very strong pressure on a man to marry the mother of his child for financial more than moral reasons. While the parish was individually responsible for care, through the rates, for all the Welborne inhabitants who could not care for themselves, there was a strong interest in forcing marriage. In the later period with the formation of the

Union, this pressure was less evident, although there were still a number of cases where such marriages took place after the child had been born. Equally important, was the assiduousness of the Johnsons in seeing that most of the children born in the parish, were christened. In the earlier century when pastoral care was comparatively neglected, this would not have been the case.

We can also notice further differences between the two periods; all the pre 1800 cases recorded, were instances of one 'recording' only, for each woman. In the post 1800 cases, we have three women with two illegitimate children each, two who had three and one with four. Also sixteen of the children belonged to six families, two each for women in the Brand & Denny families, and three each for the Dacks, Dales, Smalls and Tilneys.

Hannah Dack had given birth to an illegitimate daughter she named Harriet, in September of 1802 and three years later she married. She left the parish sometime after 1808. A second Harriet Dack born in Mattishall in 1814 returned to Welborne and is shown sharing a house with Leonard Norton in 1841. Although they continued to live in the same house for the next 44 years, they never married. She identified herself in 1851 as a lodger but in subsequent years, she appeared as a housekeeper. It is possible that Norton was already married, as he had two daughters, one born in Hockering in 1835 and a second born in 1838, whose birthplace is given as Welborne although she wasn't baptised here. Harriet subsequently gave birth to three children, Leonard (1844), George (1845), both of whom died as infants and Susan (1845). When Susan married in 1870 Norton appeared in the register as her father.

The case of the Tilney sisters reflects as much on the struggle to escape poverty as on morality. Their father William, a farm worker, appeared regularly in the overseers report as early as 1827 and received outdoor relief of 3/- a week, which took into account the fact that he had four children. On the first of May 1830, aged 30, he was admitted to the Wicklewood House of Industry, along with his wife and children. For eleven year old Susan and seven year old Hannah, this must have been a frightening experience. The family do not appear to have ever got back on their feet after this experience, for the parents appeared regularly in the parish alms book.

The two girls also struggled to maintain themselves once they left home, though you could argue that they contributed to the problem. Susan was readmitted to Wicklewood in 1837 being "single, able bodied and not able to support herself and child William, her natural child bastard". As well as being separated from her son, Susan was possibly also separated from the other women, for 'unchaste' women were usually isolated from the rest and often

excluded from any small privileges. The authorities were of the opinion that their poverty was directly a consequence of their moral failure. On the other hand, illegitimate children were not uncommon and in rural areas, it is possible that only women, who showed more blatant, lewd and dissolute behaviour, were singled out. Susan was subsequently discharged at her own request.

When her son William Robert was baptised in April 1839, the father was identified as Dan Leeds but this relationship doesn't seem to have lasted, as 1841 finds her living with 20 year old farm worker William Filby who, we assume was the father of her daughter Amelia born in 1843. Obviously she had learned something in her time at Wicklewood for she was able to maintain herself by working as a dressmaker in the 1850s. Hannah also remained unmarried throughout her stay in Welborne. In March 1847, she entered the workhouse, where her daughter Elizabeth was born a month later. They were both discharged in May. By 1851 she was sharing a house with Susan and also tried to get work as a dressmaker. With both sisters getting some income and Susan's son William also working, life was probably as prosperous for them as it had ever been. But life after this time was a downward spiral to which the birth of three more illegitimate children between 1841 and 1854, could only have contributed. (Susan also had a third child in 1854). By 1861 Hannah had abandoned dressmaking for work as a washerwoman and by 1871 she was surviving by farm work. By this date two of the children had died but the youngest boy, George, was working as an agricultural labourer. The third sister, Elizabeth, followed a similar path, giving birth to an illegitimate boy in 1868 who died two months later, and a daughter in 1871. The only other sister, Sarah, had died when only six. What the Tilneys had against marriage, we don't know. They could clearly attract men even if they didn't find husbands. But perhaps given the picture we have drawn of marriage and childrearing above, life 'without benefit of clergy' was marginally better than the alternative in some respects.

(v) On the shelf.

Economic circumstances and social pressures made spinsterhood one of the least attractive phases of many women's lives. As all the daughters of the village and all 'the live-in' servants were at some stage of their lives unmarried, we are limiting this section only to those beyond the average age of marriage, (26). If we exclude the teachers at the Welborne School, we find 15 resident and three visiting unmarried women in the village. If we lower the age to over 21, the total increases to 24 with one being a visitor at the time the census was taken.

For the majority of these women, being unmarried meant continuing to live at home and assuming a larger share of household and child care duties with little chance of ever accumulating enough money to have any form of independence. Life might have been more comfortable for Susan Sands (living at the farm with her elderly parents), with 'live in' servant and only one young sister at home, than for Maria Seville (responsible for running the house for her widowed, shoemaker, father) but it wasn't very different.

For a smaller group of women caring for a brother was 'their lot'. In 1881, we find Annie Dann (25) keeping house for her brother Stephen at Claypit farm, with the help of a 14 year-old girl and Mary Shea (29), keeping house for her brother the curate. Mary Winter (33) was luckier in 1891 for she had a home with her brother, the rector and with plenty of servants, unlikely to have had too burdensome a life. Our four visitors also illustrate the 'lot of the spinster', moving from the house of one relative to another where there was a spare room and help needed. Only 45 year-old Elizabeth Kerrison had saved enough from her years as a servant to identify herself as, 'of independent' means but she was staying in a farm worker's cottage, this probably was not a great deal of money.

We can briefly note two final cases, Mary Dale who had lived for some years away from Welborne, possibly working as a servant, returned to the village in 1861 at the age of 52 to keep house for her father, her 14 year-old nephew and two male lodgers. But a decade later had been able to turn the same occupation to an economic one, operating the cottage as a lodging house for three single men. One other case is the only 'identified example' of a mentally challenged woman in the village, cruelly labelled 'imbecile', in the census. When her parents could no longer care for her, she was fortunate enough to be able to live with her brother in the village for another decade but ended her life in the Thorpe Asylum.

(vi) The Not Always so Merry Widows.

The modern image of well healed widows living it up on a cruise ship or holiday villa, bears little resemblance to the plight of Welborne women whose husbands had died. Having survived the rigours of frequent childbirth, the cold, damp and overcrowded conditions, the meagre diet and the constant drudgery, to what could these husbandless women look forward? Five shillings from the alms to help with funeral costs and parish relief was the lot of those without family. Hingham born, Hannah Dobbs (48) had moved to the village from Brandon, when her husband found farm work here. She stayed on after his death, struggling to bring up her three children (6-13). As she was

designated 'a pauper', she would have been receiving some outdoor relief and she received additional money, albeit at the cost of loss of privacy and overcrowding by taking 28 year-old bricklayer William Pitt as a lodger.

For forty-percent of Welborne widows, their new life involved wage earning as well as caring for their family, usually in a job at the lower end of the pay scale – farm work, washerwoman and charwoman. Elizabeth Hilling was more fortunate in being able to open her shop and Sarah Smalls attempted to carry on all her husband's businesses. A further twenty-percent returned to their place of origin and/or their family. You can decide for yourself whether you consider spending your 'golden years' in a cramped cottage with your son or daughter and their family a more desirable option, than earning your own living however meagre.

Only one group of widows comes even marginally close to the present day situation, the sixteen-percent living on unearned income, an annuity or other independent means. All of them were over sixty and had inherited their comparative freedom. Martha Palmer's income was "in trust of her son Thomas and son in law William Bells" and she was "allowed to reside in the dwelling house belonging [to Frog's Hall Farm with] . . . a sufficient sum for her . . . maintenance and clothing". She had to continue to care for her unmarried child and step daughters who would receive the residue of the trust on her death.

A more specific provision was made by James Porrett for his widow when he left the estate to his son:

"In order that my sd wife may be comfortable after my decease during her lifetime it is my wish that she should remain with and be maintained by . . . [my son] Richard. But in case she should at any time object to the same and give one weeks notice thereof in writing to him then I subject and charge all and singularly my said real estate to and with the payment to my said wife of five shillings weekly and every week during her life to be taken by her in lieu of any dower or thirds she might be entitled to out of my real or personal estate. Also, I give and bequeath to my said wife . . . the furniture now in my parlour and best bedroom to and for her sole use and disposal."

A century earlier, John Edwards had appointed his wife sole executrix and left her "all my bills and bonds and ready money and personal estate whatsoever to see my Body decently buried and debts paid and keeping the estates in tenable repair."

Paid Employment

Because it was not 'normal' for women to work outside the home or family, the number and type of jobs available for those women in Welborne who had

to work was very limited. We have no information of how women who left Welborne for work earned their money, but we can analyse the occupations listed by women and girls in the census (excluding 'live in' servants and school teachers).

Table 1 Occupations for Women

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	TOTAL
Farm Work		3	1			4
Dary Maid		1	1			2
Dress Maker	5	2	2	1		10
Grocer/shopkeeper			1	2	2	5
Servant		3	2	2		7
Laundress	1	2		1		4
Attendant				1		1
Charwoman					1	1
TOTAL	6	11	7	7	3	34

With one exception, all these occupations were merely an extension of the tasks undertaken by every housewife. The real difference was that when employed, a woman could concentrate on doing just one of them while the housewife had to do all of them during her 'non-working' life. Every young girl learned the practical skills of mending at home and fancier needlework at school. As she got older, she would have been called on to help her mother make the family's clothes. If she WAS unfortunate enough to go into the workhouse, being allowed to sew would have been one of the preferred jobs. What would be more natural when forced to think about earning money than using this skill. It is not clear just how much demand there would be for these skills in such a small village and the rapid decline in numbers suggests that it was exceeded by the supply. Nor can we explain the sudden jump from no one in 1841 to five dressmakers' ten years later. (In fact, no women were shown as employed in this census so the explanation may lie here.)

Table one creates a slightly false impression because of duplications. In the fifty years covered, there were only 25 different women listed from 20 different families. The exception to the household skills assertion is the shopkeepers. To run a grocery shop a woman would need to be able to order stock, price her goods and keep accounts as well as handle money. It is possible that Elizabeth Hilling had some experience in the latter if she had helped her husband run the pub. Sarah Smalls took over the shop from her husband and probably only

served behind the counter until after he died. As a widow she ran all three of his businesses however, with the help of her daughter.

Are you being served?

It is not shop keeping but domestic service that we will consider in this section. In a period when ideas of labour saving and housework had never been linked, employing a servant was one way in which women's lives could be changed. Both the woman giving the job and the woman getting the job felt the improvement, especially where the servant lived in the house. For the employer it meant people on call at all hours and a lower wage because board and lodgings were included. For the employee, it meant new clothes, and living conditions much better than at home, however spartan, and prospects.

(i) *Keeping up appearances.*

'Candlelight suppers' would not have been unusual in the nineteenth century and no real hardship for the 'lady of the house' who could afford to employ servants and had a large dining room in which to entertain guests. The only woman in Welborne to fit this description was the rector's wife and it is at the parsonage that we find the widest range of servants employed.

Table 2 Servants at the Parsonage

	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	TOTAL
Nursemaid	1	1				2
Under Nurse maid	1	1				2
Housemaid	1	1	1		1	4
Under Housemaid			1			1
Ladies maid			1			1
Serving maid				1		1
Parlour maid				1	1	2
Cook		1	1	1	1	4
Governess		1		1		1
Groom	1	1				2
Gardener			1	1	1	3
Coachman			1	1		2
TOTAL	4 (3)	5 (4)	6 (4)	6 (4)	4 (3)	25 (18)

We can see reflected here the changing nature of the family, as help in the nursery is replaced by help for the house generally. We know that in 1861 when no housemaid is shown, that the cook also acted as a general servant and

presume that in 1851 the housemaid was also called on to cook. We have included the male servants to provide the complete picture although these men did not live in the house. The nineteenth century was also a period in which servants were cheap so that tradesmen, larger farmers and even the lowly curate would also employ them. However, they were more likely to be identified merely as domestic and general servants and possibly also expected to undertake work of a wider nature.

Table 3 Other Live-in Servants in Welborne

	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	TOTAL
Housekeeper		1					1
Cook		1		1			2
Housemaid		1	1	2			4
Dairy maid			1	1			2
General Servant	7	4	2	1	4	2	20
TOTAL	7	7	4	5	4	2	29

As we expected, the large majority of the people employing these women were farmers. The more substantial establishments were kept by the Palmers, the Stephen Leeds, the Cobons and Widower Nicholas Sands. In these households there were at least two servants with one having a status higher than general servant. Sands, living alone, had both a mature woman (60) as housekeeper and a younger woman (25) to do the housework and it can be argued that his servants were a necessity for a busy farmer employing a dozen men. Elizabeth Leeds, on the other hand had a cook and a housemaid, despite being only twenty-eight and childless. The curate's wife, Eliza Joyce (41) in similar circumstances, also employed a cook/domestic and a young girl to work in the house.

For Maria Cobon, having a servant was probably a case of necessity and status. There were still two daughters at home but there were a number of dirty and unpleasant tasks that a woman of her financial status would not expect to have to do. We assume that a similar reason would explain Richard Porrett continuing to employ a general servant after he remarried and his mother and sister moved out.

For John and Mary Green, both in their eighties, home help was a necessity but Sabina K. Green was only 35 when she employed a general servant. However, both she and her mother-in-law Emily had children and/or frequent visitors at Hall Farm. At least one inhabitant at each of the main farms had a

female servant living in during the nineteenth century, although in no case was the individual over 21. Only three women outside this group of farmers and clergy had household help; Sarah Porrett at the Horse Shoes Public House and in 1891, Emma King wife of the dealer at Plumtree cottage.

(ii) Going into service.

Who were these young women who went into service and where did they come from? Counting the seven girls living at home, only 17 women born in Welborne were working as servants when the census were taken. Another 13 were born or living in nearby villages, the rest coming from elsewhere in Norfolk. It was the clergy who provided the greatest number of jobs for women from outside the local area. The clergy's servants also tended to be older because one didn't start one's working life in the upper levels of the servant ranks, in jobs such as ladies maid or cook.

The majority of Welborne girls going into service came from the families of farm workers and began their working life as a general domestic. Unlike town servants or servants in larger country houses, they didn't have the opportunity to progress much beyond a parlour maid. But an under nurse might gain a recommendation to another family if she did a good job and a hardworking girl might hear of a better position through the other servants or even from visitors. She might also move with her employer if he left Welborne for a farm somewhere else. She might also hope to catch a 'better' husband than might have been the case if she'd stayed at home, but again this was likely, only if she moved from the village. The fact that four of the girls identified as general servants, were unemployed (ue) at the time of the census, shows the other side of the coin. The need to keep a job when you found one meant that women often accepted less than ideal conditions. Hopefully the Welborne employers were a considerate lot.

Life and Times

To give our overview of the women in more depth we have selected three of them to present in more detail. While the rector's wife was an obvious choice, given her distinctive position in the parish, the other two women were chosen as representative of the ordinary women of Welborne.

The Rector's Wife

When we examine the life of women in more detail, one obvious example stands out amongst the others; the first lady (one might say the only lady) of Welborne, the rector's wife, Anna Barham Johnson. Her life attracts our

attention because it was distinctly different from the lives of the other women in the village. The Johnsons were not wealthy in the generally accepted sense of the word in the nineteenth century; the older Mrs. John Johnson's father had made his money in India but her share of it was only around £5000. Her son John Barham had no money of his own, being dependent upon his mother and on 'the living'. Anna would have brought some form of dowry to the marriage but it was not large enough to warrant comments in the family papers. She appears to have come from solid, middle class, Norfolk stock and presumably had the type of genteel upbringing that one would expect of women of that class. We do not know if or how many young men had aspired to 'her hand in marriage' before she met the young curate, John Barham, but she was already 27 when, in the company of her family, she met him during his stay at Cringleford. He was well acquainted with her cousins, the Pattersons, so they did not meet as complete strangers. The courtship was not prolonged and they married just ten months later (January 1845).

It is surprising that John Barham had any time for courtship at all as he had just left his curacy at Nailsea in Somerset, and moved to take up his duties at Welborne. He was not merely involved in all that this entailed but also in the complex arrangements in acquiring a site and building a house in his parish. Anna's introduction to life in Welborne was not therefore without its tensions, but this did not begin in the village but at South Green Farm, Mattishall, where John Barham had been lodging. The fact that the farm belonged to his relatives, the Donnes, who themselves were living at South Green House (now Mattishall Hall), perhaps may have helped with the transition. She would have felt the need for the comfort of family and friends as before the year was over she had a fall and miscarried her first child. (Nov. 1845) Once the Rector and his wife had moved into the spacious Parsonage, she had to face the task of running the household while helping her husband with his parish duties and of course there were the inevitable pregnancies and childbirth. The fact that Anna's life was so much easier than that of the other women in Welborne at this time, should not mislead us into thinking that it was an easy life by present standards. The parsonage, just as every other household in the village, would have had to be self sufficient in the basic necessities of life. It is true that Anna would not have to do the heaviest and most tedious or unpleasant jobs personally but she would have had to organize and supervise the work; the family did not employ a housekeeper. We should note here that one did not have to be very rich in the nineteenth century to afford to employ servants. People in even moderate circumstances would employ at least a teenage girl to help out in the house. It is likely that a married couple of the Johnson's class,

just setting up house in a building of that size, would have had at least a housemaid and a cook/domestic (both female) living in and a male outdoor servant.

The position of a clergyman's wife in a small village, was one that often produced a degree of isolation in the class-conscious days of the nineteenth century. To the labouring classes of the village, she would have appeared as a remote and distant figure; the dispenser of good advice and Christian charity. Nor would she have had much in common with the busy wives of the tenant farmers who made up the bulk of the middle class population of Welborne. Non resident owners of the larger estates were seldom in the village although they might have been expected to call or take tea or even dine at the parsonage on their rare visits to the Sunday service. Anna would have expected to and did, find her own social life amongst the family and the other clergy in the area. Within the Johnson circle, life revolved around a series of visits amongst the Cowper Johnsons in Yaxham, the Donnes at South Green and the Barham Johnsons in Welborne. To this was added visits to and from the widowed Mrs. John Johnson wherever she happened to be lodging (she had no fixed residence for the last 30 years of her life) and also visits to and from her own family. Along with this, other clerical friends (made by John Barham during his studies and his curacy) and the incumbents of near by parishes, often visited.

These visits, while an enjoyable break from the isolation of the parsonage, were not without their difficulties. While trips to Yaxham and South Green were possible in a day, those taken farther afield, even to Norwich usually involved an overnight stay. The journey was an adventure in itself; for example a trip in 1845 to visit her mother-in-law in Bedford and described by Anna as "luxury when compared with earlier times [she was probably pregnant at the time]: By 'fly' (a one horse carriage) and luggage cart to Norwich station, by train to St. Neots, then coach to Bedford." As well as taking luggage for the visit, she would also have had to take her own 'conveniences' in the form of a small chamber pot to be used on the journey, whether on the coach or the train and discreetly hidden under the voluminous skirts of that period. As public toilets did not exist at this time and trains and coaches did not break their journey, except in the case of the latter, to change horses, this routine had to be followed by all the passengers, however distasteful it may have been to one's fellow travellers.

Just as Anna had to stay overnight when visiting, so she in turn would be expected to provide hospitality when others came to stay at the parsonage, a fairly regular occurrence; her mother-in-law came for a four month visit. However, one should not assume that her life was just a social whirl, her early married years paralleled that of most women, dominated by childbirth. But

she did not have to cope single-handed with her childrearing, so it would have been less demanding on her in some respects. A nurse was brought to live in prior to the birth of her son, Henry (April 1848) and remained with her when her son, Hamilton and daughter Emily were born in subsequent years. By then an under nurse was also employed so that Anna would have been able to enjoy her babies when they were clean, fed and well cared for, little disturbed by their teething and other problems. To get a better picture of Anna's life, we can look at the 1860s in more detail. The decade opened with a full house at the parsonage; the Johnsons were now in their 40s and had been married for 15 years. Like most couples of their class, they probably had separate rooms, the two master bedrooms with dressing rooms adjoining and housed in the south wing of the house. They were separated from the other bedrooms and more importantly the nursery by the landing to the staircase. We presume that Barham, (as he was now called to distinguish him from Anna's cousin John Patterson) would no doubt have had the front room with a southwest aspect. There were now five children, two more girls, Alice and Margaret being born in the 1850s. We can assume that the three girls aged two to eight would have shared a room and the two boys 10 and 11 another room. The live in staff had increased, there was still a nurse and under-nurse in 1861 although it seems likely that both of them would have been expected to help with the household chores. Emily and Alice, now too old for the nursery, were in the care of the governess, Emma White of Norwich. Governesses had a very awkward status in the nineteenth century, too genteel to be banished to the attic rooms with the servants but not genteel enough to be considered suitable for the family floor. They also faced difficulties finding a social life in the village for the same reason. The turnover therefore, was quite high where the lady in question was not a poor relation. Emma left the household in 1863 being replaced by Miss Forward, who in turn was replaced by Miss Mackenzie in 1868. She lasted only two years leaving in December 1869 after an illness in October. By then Margaret, eleven was really the only child left in need of this form of companionship. For all their indeterminate status and poor wages, governesses were given major responsibilities with regard to the girls, not merely their schooling but being left in 'loco parentis' when the Johnsons went away from home and also when the girls went to visit relations.

One would perhaps assume that a house with five bedrooms (six if the third dressing room was called into use), would seem very empty, but not so the parsonage. The 1861 census shows that as well as the parents and five children plus the governess, two other people were living there. A female, unidentified, aged 23, presumably a relative and also Sophia Stibbard, the schoolmistress

who was a boarder. It would seem unlikely that she would be lodged in the attic along with the servants even though the village schoolmistress had little social status at the time. At age 37, Sophia might have provided some companionship for the 31-year-old governess although even here a question of comparable status would be doubtful.

Family life at the parsonage had its ups and downs during this decade. The boys were away at school (Henry at Repton and Hamilton at Marlborough for the early years, with Henry finally going to Cambridge) while the girls remained at home. Illness was a common occurrence. Henry developed scarlatina in 1863 while at Cromer; but it was his father, rather than mother who went to be with him. The following year Emily had rheumatic fever and was confined to bed for two months, while Hamilton suffered the indignity of having measles at the age of 17. However, all this paled into insignificance, when in 1867, serious concern was expressed about Alice's health and she was sent off to Bournemouth with her sister Emily and the governess to benefit from the sea air. All this was to no avail; by May, Alice's illness was diagnosed as 'consumption' and the family was told that she was not likely to recover. The contagiousness of the disease meant that sleeping arrangements had to be changed as the doctor told them that "she shouldn't share a room with Margaret, but must have a maid near her." Alice died in March 1869 aged 15.

While other women in the village would no doubt have considered the rectory to be a palatial house, the Johnson family thought otherwise, "we were terribly cramped for room," Emily had written to a cousin. The parents obviously shared this view as plans for an extension were put in hand in 1864. We all know what 'joy' having the builders in can be at any time, involving as it does disturbance of living patterns, dust, noise and strangers underfoot. Things were no different centuries ago; there may have been less noisy machinery but at a cost of more workmen. Of course they would have to use the back (servants) staircase but they could hardly be ignored as the work involved additions upstairs at the northern end of the house and downstairs to the south. Adding a bedroom involved moving the girls and they were dispatched with the governess to stay in Lowestoft while the work was done. No such relief for Anna, while the extensions were made to the two rooms, (drawing and dining), which were beneath the master bedrooms. If we note that 17 people sat down to dinner in September 1968, we can see why the extra space was considered necessary. Anna's relief when the building work was finally finished was immense and with a light heart, she organized a dinner for the workmen, which was held in the meadow in a tent.

By the second half of the decade, the amount of entertaining increased as the boys reached late adolescence and families paraded their daughters at social functions to enhance their chances in the marriage market; a croquet party was organized and also a charade party. There was the usual round of duties, "Mama has gone into the dining room to help Papa with night school", "The bishop came to stay Saturday 'til Tuesday," (August 1869).

"Archaeological Society Excursion to Welborne Church, gave them a buffet lunch in the school room (June 1869). "Mrs Henry Vaughan Johnson came to South Green House for the summer so Blanche Donne came to stay at the rectory to make more room. (1868). "The Grigsons came over. (1868)."

On a lighter note we might wonder about Anna's reaction when her husband bought a cow. Emily may have been delighted by the thought of having 'nice fresh butter' but her mother and the servant who had to make it, may have been less enthusiastic. Margaret set up 'a rabbit house' the next year, so the animal population increased at the parsonage. On the down side, Emily recorded a conversation with her father (February 1869) about having to sell the pony and waggonette and possibly the donkey cart because he could no longer afford them. The deed must have occurred, as the following year she wrote, "our means of getting about is limited to the donkey." So perhaps father had managed to keep a basket cart as he had hoped. This is all a gentle reminder of the difference in price between people and goods, in the nineteenth century, a servant was cheap and a pony and cart expensive. The Johnsons could obviously afford to employ John Jeffries and later Henry Green, as groom and coachman but could not afford the horse to care for, or the vehicle to drive.

Life in the 1870s should have been easier for Anna, the house was refurbished (the building of the new church chancel had no real impact beyond the difficulties it created for her husband.) Her children had by now grown up and the nurse could be replaced with a ladies maid to care for Anna's clothes and help her to dress (a task that previously had been done by a domestic servant). The Schoolmistress was now living in one of the staff cottages and no longer under foot although Margaret still had a governess. The decade did indeed have a number of highlights; Henry finished his studies and obtained a curacy (1873) and Emily's marriage to her cousin, William Cowper Johnson, took place (1876). But it also had its sorrows, Barham's health continued to be poor and their second son, Hamilton died in May 1873, 23-years-old (the cause is not known). The Johnsons years at Welborne were finally drawing to a close; by 1881 Barham was planning to retire and to pass the living onto his son Henry; Margaret was now married to Arthur Upcher, the rector of Barnham

Broom; and Barham and his wife moved to their retirement home in Yaxham. In 1887 and 1894, respectively, Anna and Barham returned to Welborne to join their previously deceased children in the churchyard of All Saints.

A farmer's wife

In many respects Elizabeth Sendall's life was not typical of that experienced by the wife of a tenant farmer on a 24-acre property. She was born in 1805, the second child of Tim Edwards and was brought up on the Welborne farm that her father owned; with her mother being one of the Hall Farm Greens, she would have had a comfortable place in parish life. She would also have learned the duties of a farmer's wife by observing and helping her mother and grandmother. As the family had a servant girl living in, she would have been spared the heavy household jobs, but was likely to have to help out with the care of the younger children. It is unlikely that she had any formal education but possibly learned to read and write.

In 1825 her life changed significantly when she married the 44 year-old Fisher Sendall. While Elizabeth may not have shared the rector's opinion of her future husband, (a drunken, godless infidel), he was probably not the stuff of which young girls dreams are made. Nevertheless, the marriage did offer the prospect of a continuation of her comfortable life. While the Sendalls were no longer the big property owners in Welborne that they had been, Fisher had inherited an eighth share of his father's estate even if he would not receive it until after his mother's death. Elizabeth presumably also brought some of her father's money to the marriage.

It is not clear where they lived during the early years of their marriage. Her mother-in-law owned Church farm and Fisher is shown as the occupier in 1830–2, but there is no record of where they lived after Sarah Sendall's death. John Edwards was tenant of Tim Edward's farm until 1839 but the new couple are shown living at Hill farm in the 1841 census.

The move back to her childhood home may have evoked mixed feelings. Being a tenant farmer's wife could have been a less comfortable existence than being a farm owner's daughter; looking after her own five children a more demanding task than helping care for her siblings. Her grandmother was now 80 and unlikely to be of any practical help and the rest of her family had moved away. There were still Sendalls in Tuddenham but the fact that she was so much younger than her husband, could have meant that she had little in common with her sisters-in-law, all likely to be busy women themselves.

Compared to most other women in Welborne, her child birth pattern was not arduous. Her daughter, Elizabeth had been born the year after her marriage but

there was a two year respite before her second daughter Charlette was born. The years 1834–36 were quite traumatic, with the death of her first-born son John, sandwiched between the births of sons Fisher Jr and Charles. She may not have welcomed the birth of another son in 1840, and have been dismayed by another pregnancy four years later, but seven children in twenty years made childrearing an easier, if more enduring, task. As the decade continued, she would also have been faced with caring for her ageing husband.

When Fisher died in 1852 (72), she had to assume the responsibilities of head of the household and probably to direct the work of their hired man, as Fisher Jr. was still only 18. Surprisingly perhaps, they seem to have dispensed with the live in servant but probably had someone from the village coming in daily, to do the heavy work. By the mid 1850s, she would have abandoned responsibility for the farm to the three boys and with Charlette (30) and Mary (16) still at home, probably had less to do in the house, for her own health was deteriorating. She and the girls were “constantly at church” and presumably involved in other activities organized by the rector’s wife.

It is not clear when Elizabeth left Welborne. Her father disappeared from the Welborne voters list in 1861 and may have sold the property at this time. Writing towards the end of this decade, Barham Johnson observed, Fisher Sendall’s “widow, two sons and three daughters are now living at Tivetshall she having been an invalid for many years confined to a sofa, one son in America and a daughter, wife to Sam Porrett, late of Welborne, wheelwright now at Wood Norton.” It is not clear whether the boy who went to America, was young Fisher or John Green Sendall; it was the oldest daughter Elizabeth who married Sam Porrett. Despite being an invalid, Elizabeth lived until 1896 and after her death was brought back to Welborne to be buried.

A craftsman’s wife

The story of Sarah Rice gives a much more sombre picture of life in Welborne than the stories already told. She was born in the parish in 1806, the third daughter of James Dale and his wife Mary (formerly Smith). At a very young age Sarah was acquainted with the rhythm of birth and death, hardship and overcrowding, which was to be her lot in life. Her mother had eight more children, two of whom died as infants and her older brother Charles, aged eight. She would also have known of the death of several of her cousins around the same time. In the crowded conditions of a nineteenth century cottage, young children were much more aware of mortality than they are today so none of this would have appeared unusual. A second girl was not born into the family until 1822, so Sarah would have spent most of her childhood

helping with the care of the toddlers and would have been responsible for most of the housework. Without education, it is likely that if she did escape from these duties by going out to work, it would only have been to do the heavier work for a low wage, in someone else's house.

Where or how she met her husband William, we do not know. It is possible that he had already moved to Welborne and set up his business before they married in 1827. The fact that he was a tailor meant that she had taken a step up in the social scale but there may not have been a great financial improvement in such a small village. Within a year she was set on a path which was to duplicate her mother's life but with even more strain and trauma. In twenty years she bore at least fourteen children including the two sets of twins.

In 1841, Sarah was living in a cottage with her husband, seven children (aged two to 12) and her brother-in-law John. We have no reason to suppose that this dwelling was anything more than one large room down stairs and perhaps two rooms (one very small) upstairs. Maybe they had the luxury of a lean-to at the back, where the brothers could ply their trades although it would have been more suited to shoemaking than to tailoring. We leave it to your imagination to work out where they all slept and how they managed on the many wet days, which would have kept the younger children indoors. While no occupation is listed for 12 year-old Robert, or 10 year-old Alfred, it is probable that they were out trying to make money in casual farm work for much of the time.

Whatever we might think of the hardship of having three adults and seven children living and working in such a cramped space, it would not have felt strange to Sarah. To her, life would have appeared relatively benign with only one of her children dying in infancy. But catastrophe struck in 1842, when within 30 days five of the children died. Twelve year old Frederic was the first to succumb on March 13th followed by the four year old Emily seven days later. A brief lull of 10 days followed but it is doubtful that Sarah had time to grieve as she still had three sick children to nurse. On the 2nd of April, twelve year old John and the male twin Charles died, his sister Susannah struggled on for another 10 days before she too died. As Sarah had only given birth to the twins the previous December, she could not have been strong herself and it is likely that eight year old Emilia would have had to give her a lot of help if she managed to escape the illness. Even with neighbours and family rallying round, it must have been a harrowing time for all concerned. If it was difficult to imagine where they all lived, worked and slept when all was well, it is even harder to recreate this scene.

It seems likely that we are seeing here the effects of one of the many serious infectious diseases prevalent at this time, for the Rice family were not the only ones so bereaved during 1842. Their near neighbours the Jarvis and Vincents also lost a child each and the Howard family, farther afield, buried three of their four children. We presume that they were all suffering from the same infection.

Death had not finished with poor Sarah; a second set of twins, born in 1848, lived only eleven weeks and in the next decade she lost her oldest son Robert (22) and William (19). It was a very reduced family that featured in the 1851 census and with her brother-in-law now living elsewhere, the cottage must have felt very empty. We should emphasize that while this was an extreme case, most women would have had to cope with illness and death in the home, as part of everyday life. Perhaps the only surprising feature is that the Rices had not been driven into poverty by their experiences and did not feature regularly in the overseer's lists or the parish alms book.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RANDOM HARVEST

Growing up in Welborne

It takes no more than a glance at the tombstones in Welborne Church to know that growing up was something of a challenge in this parish, as it was everywhere in earlier times. While conditions here were probably much better than in the mining and industrial towns, they were not good. The parish registers analyzed in more detail, produce a picture of infant mortality and precarious childhood that is overwhelming.

Table 1 Child Mortality (1813–1904)

AGE AT BURIAL	INFANTS	DAYS	WEEKS	MONTHS	DEAD BEFORE 1st BIRTHDAY	1–4	5–8	9–12	DEAD BEFORE TEENS
NUMBER	27	6	13	25		27	8	13	
PERCENTAGE	8.5	2	4	8	22.5	8.5	2.5	4	37.5

If we were to extend our table to include the 16 who died between the ages of 13 and 19, the percentage of young inhabitants who died before the age of twenty one, was a staggering 42.5 percent. We have little information about the specific illness which created this situation but we do know that general standards of hygiene were low, even among the educated, while medical knowledge continued to be rudimentary well into the nineteenth century. The frequency of pregnancies in women who were themselves overworked and malnourished, contributed to the frailty of the offspring as well as to the ill health and early death of many mothers.

Those children, who did survive the dangers of infancy, faced a childhood very much shorter and significantly different from that of children today. In fact the use of the word 'childhood' to describe conditions in previous centuries, is inaccurate: childhood is a very modern concept. Medieval England recognized only two ages of man – infancy from birth to six, when

the individual was totally dependent on mother or nurse and ignored by the world in general; and adulthood, when a child was recognized as a person and was expected to work, assume responsibilities and was allocated a place in the highly structured society of the times. This can be seen in the paintings which have survived from this period, which show children dressed in adult style clothes even carrying weapons such as swords and daggers. In other words, children were considered merely small adults and could be betrothed very young and married soon after they reached puberty.

During the centuries that followed, an awareness of childhood began to develop with a stage following infancy, during which the child could be gradually introduced to the skills and responsibilities of adulthood with a period of initiation through which the child passed from boy – or girlhood to man – or womanhood. In this era, childhood was a type of apprenticeship in which the young learned the ways and manners of their particular place in society. Over time this came to involve more formal training, at least amongst the upper classes, and gradually became equated with education, which was to be “the normal instrument of social initiation from childhood to adulthood.”

The life of children in Welborne did not change much before the building of the schoolroom in the 1840s. Life centred around the home with little or no social interaction beyond the family and the immediate neighbours. Any contact beyond the boundaries of the parish was unusual and generally limited to visits to members of the family who lived in other parishes, at not very frequent intervals. However, being at home all day did not mean a life of leisure or freedom for children. A child's life was usually full and in most cases hard, even for those whose parents were not considered poor. As families were normally large, parents depended upon their children for help in the daily routines of running the household.

For girls their days would be spent not only learning to perform domestic chores, with the help of their mother and older sisters, but also in caring for the younger family members. Consequently by the age of twelve, a girl was able to handle most household tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing, sewing and mending. Where the family had room to keep a few chickens or perhaps even a pig they would help to feed them, to collect eggs, or to stuff the feathers into a pillow or cushion when a bird went into the pot. Fires had to be kept burning for cooking and heating and kindling had to be found. Even heavy tasks such as drawing water from the well for daily use probably fell to the older girls. In a house without the most elementary labour saving devices, such tasks provided an endless round of chores for even the smallest hands.

While boys would be called on to perform different tasks, they were expected to do these chores from the same early age. As this was a farming area, most of their jobs involved helping with animals and participating in activities such as making and repairing tools, clearing stones, scaring birds and fetching and carrying at haymaking and harvest time. As sons generally followed in their father's footsteps when it came to selecting an occupation, these chores could form part of an informal preparatory apprenticeship: e.g. a blacksmith's son tending the furnace, handling tools, clearing up the floor and sorting materials, had an easy introduction to the trade before he was old enough to be taught the specific skills. Idleness amongst the young was neither tolerated nor encouraged, even where economic necessity was not a factor. The children of the larger farms also had chores to do, although perhaps they were not as arduous. For the rest however, the overwhelming motivating factors was economic circumstances, "if you didn't work you didn't eat." Children like the adults, rose early and worked until there was nothing left to do or perhaps more accurately, until there were only jobs that could be left until another day.

In such a life there was little time for play. Toys were few and simply made and children showed surprising initiative in inventing games and ways to entertain themselves in the very little free time that was available to them. Simple games such as hop scotch or conkers did not require expensive equipment or special playgrounds and this simplicity combined with



complicated local rules and chants is a defining characteristic of children's activities in ages past.

The advent of local schools and an increased national interest in education would initially have had little impact on Welborne. It was left for parents to decide if they wanted their children to attend school and if school attendance should take precedence over helping out at home. As we will see in the following chapter on education, it was a haphazard scene. Some children went to school just for a couple of years or one or two members of a family went to school while the others stayed at home. For the child, going to school did not mean less work but more, as the chores still had to be done before or after their stint in the classroom.

All the activity described so far, was of course work but not employment. The children did not earn pocket money for helping at home. Their labour was an essential contribution to survival of the family as a unit. Economic circumstances dictated when the money they could bring in became more important than the chores they handled.

Table 2 Employment of Children (Age profile)

AGE	1841		1851		1861		1871		1881		1891		Total	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
9			1											1
10														
11			1		1		1							3
12			1		2		1							4
13	2		1		1				1	1	2			7 1
14	1		2		2		1	1	1	4	1			6 7
15	6	4	2		3	1	3		1		1	1		15 7
Total (1)	9	4	6	2	9	1	6	1	2	6	4	1		36 15
(2)	13		8		10		7		8		5		51	

This table shows the ages of children who were working at census time. Because these are merely ten year snap shots they are only a very rough guide to the situation but do suggest certain trends. We notice immediately the smaller number of girls (29%) than boys. Two explanations spring to mind: that there were fewer job opportunities in the local area for girls and that their help was more important to their over burdened mothers. Of course, there were Welborne girls who left the village to find employment but there is no easy way of identifying them. If we exclude the blip in 1861, caused by one poor widow having to send her sons out to work, there is an obvious downward

trend in the use of child labour. Welborne parents were obviously reluctant to put their children to work before the age of twelve only eight percent of the boys employed being below that age.

Going out to work could have been something that children looked forward to. It would make them feel grown up and they might even have been allowed to retain the odd halfpenny or two from their wages to spend on themselves. Actually leaving home to go to work could engender equal parts of fear and excitement. Moving away from the family and the familiar location of home and village meant a journey into the unknown, unless the employer was in the village itself. But it also meant a move out of an overcrowded cottage, even if only to a tiny room in a farmhouse or the attics of the rectory. The end result, happiness or misery, would depend very much on the nature of the employer and the hardship and severity of life at home. The statistics show only 37 percent of employed children in Welborne, were living in, but 86 percent of this number were girls. Table 3 classified the children who were employed by birthplace, with those who were living-in shown in brackets. Only two girls were placed so far from their family that they would not be able to go home for a visit on their day off.

Table 3 Employment of Children (Living status and birthplace)

AGE	1841		1851		1861		1871		1881		1891		Total	
	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G	B	G
AT HOME	4		6		9		5		2	2	4		30	2
LIVE-IN	5	4		2		1	1	1		4		1	6	13
WELBORNE			2		6		1	(1)	1	(1)	1		11	2
6 m RADIUS			4	(2)	2		5	(1)	1	4(2)	3	(1)	15	7
OTHER					1	(1)				(1)			1	2

The greater emphasis being placed on education in general and on regular school attendance should have ensured that no young children went out to work, but Welborne, like most farming villages, accepted the idea that the demands of agriculture called forth special circumstances. It maybe useful to introduce here two extracts from the Hingham Deanery Meetings which directly addressed the question of child labour and schooling in this part of Norfolk. In 1866 the clergy discussed the issue of children doing field work asking: "In what way and to what extent is it practical to regulate the early and associated employment of children in agricultural labour [and] how may schools be adapted to meet difficulties arising from . . . [it]? Their answer showed that they were more concerned with moral issues such as boys and

girls working together and children becoming more undisciplined and disrespectful of authority, than in child labour itself. Acceptance of the farmers' argument that they needed to employ children, seems to underline the conclusion that "compulsory attendance at elementary school [was] inapplicable to rural districts". Instead, they favoured more regulation of such employment with "no child to be employed under ten years of age." After further discussion they amended the statement to read "no child under twelve should be employed until he receives a certificate from the manager of the school that he can pass standard III."

The passing of the Elementary Education Act of 1876 brought the issue of work or school back into their agenda in March 1877. The meeting concluded that the Rector should be active in "letting parents know how the law stands and encouraging them to send their children to school early in life and regularly". He was also to remind the farmers that they should be "careful not to employ children without a certificate". Table 1 suggests that our Rector was successful in this matter.

Growing old in Welborne

It is surprising when we consider the poor living conditions and the long working hours that characterize life in nineteenth century Welborne, that so many people lived long enough to grow old. The census statistics show that people over the age of 60 made up between 7.5 percent (1851) and 14 percent (1871) of the village population. Not a high number by modern day standards but nevertheless impressive for a time before modern medicine and hygiene had changed the odds. On the other hand, in a century in which compulsory retirement and pensions were unheard of, you may question why we have a section on the elderly at all. Life after 60/65 was really no different from that of the middle years, at least as far as work was concerned. But things do change as we move through the decades, so it may be of some interest to look briefly at the "not so golden years" of previous Welborne inhabitants. It is not necessary to distinguish here between the lives of men and women; with their childbearing days over, the lives of older women took on many of the features that characterized the lives of their male counterparts.

Very few old people had the luxury of spending their 'twilight years' in the comparative spaciousness of their own house or cottage. Of the individuals we can identify only 7; of the three women, we find 65 year-old Judith Wright, (the widow of Robert), living on independent means here in 1841. The first Elizabeth Howe daughter of Henry Edwards and widow of Rueben aged 62 in 1851, was living alone on the rent of property she had inherited, but 10 years

later her son Henry 52, B' Smith returned to Welborne and lived with her until she died in 1867. The second Elizabeth Howe (the widow of Edward Howe) had come to Welborne from Elmham when she married in 1827. She had borne seven children; two had died in childhood and a third at the age of 30. Being a blacksmith obviously provided enough resources to accumulate savings as she had an annuity on which to live and chose to live alone in a cottage until her 80s. With the exception of Sam Jeffries (whose story is told elsewhere), the men who chose to live alone all fall into the last decades of the century. Eighty five year old William Pitcher and 62 year old Matthew Leeds, were both working as farm labourers, while Wace Mendham 66, was a shoemaker.

The number of couples who had a cottage to themselves is also quite small: Tom and Sarah Doy both in their 70s, agricultural labourers James Brand 75 and Matthew Olley 68, and their wives, and smallholder John Polls and his wife both in their eighties.

If these were the exceptions, what was the rule? One of two options, living with the family or lodging with someone else's family. The James Dales illustrate both. In his 60/70's James continued to work as an agricultural labourer. He had four lodgers in 1851, two elderly widows (Sarah Mapes 76, Mary Edwards 88, and two men, a bricklayer 47 and a shoemaker. By 1861, James aged 89 had given up work and on the death of his wife, his daughter Mary 52 and grandson 14, moved in to care for him and their two male lodgers. She stayed in the cottages after his death and had elevated her status to lodging housekeeper in 1871, with three men living in the adjacent cottages. And we find a second Mary Dale aged 66 living with her daughter and son-in-law in 1871.

There was also the situation where an elderly couple presided over a house of three generations. 1841 found Henry Edwards (70), his daughter Elizabeth 50, and grandson Henry (30) and wife, all living in the one cottage. This may not seem a lot given the crowded conditions described elsewhere, but the mix of gender and age created a different type of problem than having five or six children in one bed or room. Assuming the young husband and wife were sharing a room, where did the father and daughter sleep? A similar problem arises with 65 year-old John Tice, living with John and Ann Blazey, but presumably the eight-year-old Elizabeth shared her parent's room. Life would have been much more comfortable in Widow Sarah Green sharing only with her 11 year-old granddaughter, although at 68 she may have felt she'd done her share of childrearing. Ten years later, she was living with her son John and his wife. Again better financial resources probably ensured that 73 year-old Sarah Smalls living with daughter Alice (33) and granddaughter Blanche Greenwood,

5 in 1891, had a less crowded old age than when rearing her twelve children. But she was not idle, continuing to run her late husband's brick works and smallholding and with Alice's helping in the grocery shop at Welborne House.

For the land owning farmers, old age made little difference to their existence; 85 year-old John Green and his wife Mary (80) continued to live at there farm; as did the 77 year-old Charles Green, 68 year-old, Charles Cobon and their wives. Even the death of a wife did not lessen the comfort of 68 year-old widower Nicholas Sands. In 1851 he had a housekeeper and two servants living in to see to his creature comforts and employed three men for the farm-work.

Only for a few however did ageing bring a change of occupation. Not surprisingly, it was often the men who had had a specific skill or trade who had to turn to something else. Sam Jeffries and Henry Edwards both spent their declining years labouring on someone else's farm and Thomas Doy was reduced to grinder and tinker. The more common situation was continuing in the same job though not necessarily for the same employers, with the tasks around the farm becoming less skilled and more menial and probably more seasonal and part time employment with a consequent lowering of income.

For the unlucky few there were no jobs at all and as paupers they became completely dependent on the parish rate and finally facing death in the workhouse. This was the fate of 78 year-old Rose Meyers in 1885 and Mary Leeds in December 1904. Mary's case is particularly poignant, as she and her husband had managed alone until his death when aged 84 she was forced to enter Wicklewood to spend her remaining five months. To Samuel Mann falls the honour of being the longest living Welborne resident that we could find reaching 102 before dying in March 1886. While we have noted the absence of general old age pensions three individuals are recorded as being pensioners in the Welborne census – all of them former service men in receipt of a pension from the army. – William Brand's experiences are described in more detail below. Finally we look briefly at the lives of two couples who lived out their declining years in Welborne.

BENJAMIN and ELIZABETH TOOLEY

This couple select themselves by virtue of the fact that they were among the oldest Welborne inhabitants for whom we have any information. The name Tooley has long associations with farming in this area in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, not merely in Welborne but also in Brandon Parva, East Tuddenham, Mattishall and Mattishall Burgh. Philip Tooley was farming 4 acres of land in Welborne in 1811, a field near the turnpike, which he

subsequently bought and farmed. But although three of his children were baptised in Welborne Church, (the latest in 1840) he was not living in the village when the 1841 census was taken. Nor can we assume that all these individuals, who shared this surname, were close relatives and we know they were not directly related to the current residents of this name.

Ben was born in Crowthorpe around 1770 and his wife in the nearby parish of Deopham about the same time. These two parishes lie in that area of the Hundred where the Forehoe House of Industry had been built and it must have been a great relief to them that they did not end their days in that grim environment. We assume that he was employed in farm-work throughout his working life and that in 1814, when his daughter Mary was born, this was at a farm in Brandon Parva as she was baptised there. There was at least one other daughter Hannah who was married in Welborne Church in 1825, so we can place his move to this parish as somewhere between these dates. At the 1841 census both aged 70, they had the luxury of a cottage to themselves in Welborne while he continued to work on a farm. But this situation did not last long. Mary had married William Balls of the Welborne family of agricultural labourers in 1844. The following year saw both the birth of her son John and the death of her husband when only twenty-five. Returning home to live with her parents was her only option. It could not have been much fun for the 74 year-old parents to have the added financial burden, nor the disturbance of a young baby in the house. But the other side of the coin was the expectation that the situation would eventually be reversed. By 1851, although the 82 year-old Ben was still working, Mary was now able to add to their joint income by doing laundry. As Elizabeth was now blind, she would have been less well equipped to care for the young John, but it was probably her lot, while Mary had to cope with all the housework as well as her own job. In his 90s, Ben could finally stop work as John was now old enough to get work on a farm himself, and Mary continued to work. A glance at the parish Alms book shows us that although between them they made enough to avoid 'going on the rates', they did need help towards paying the rent and just to make ends meet. The odd 3d a week might appear to us as rather meagre but it could have been a godsend to them and almost luxury in the few weeks that they received 1/- to tide them over.

Ben died in 1868 and his wife two years later and by 1871 Mary and John had also left the village. Barham Johnson recorded Ben's passing in his report to the parishioners in 1869 in terms that were intended to be laudatory: "we lost by death – one in extreme old age, verging upon 100, Benjamin Tooley whose contentment with his humble lot and merry laugh remained by him to the last."

EDWARD and LEAH RANDALL

Edward was born in Brandon Parva in 1811 and established closer links with the village when he married Leah Holman. She was the daughter of William and Susannah Holman baptised in November 1819. William was an agricultural labourer so it was a slight step up in the social scale for Leah, as Edward was a landowner, if only on a small scale. By the time he was twenty-seven he had bought 5 acres part of the western end of the Great Common awarded to Richard Sendall, which he farmed along with the 10 acres of land across the road (Upper Flood Lane) in Brandon Parva. The couple lived initially on this latter property but by 1848, when their third daughter Louisa was born, they had moved to Welborne. It's possible that they were occupying one of the cottages on the Solomon's Temple site.

With a growing family four girls and a boy (though he died young) Edward had difficulty earning enough to keep his smallholding and by 1861 had been forced to work for someone else, even though his oldest daughter was working as a domestic servant. This continued to be his lot until, in the late 1870s an infirmity forced him to stop work (when he was himself only seventy.). With Louisa living at home and working as a dressmaker their finances were better but once she married, things became bleaker. Leah in her sixties had to step into the breach and work as a laundress to pay the rent and provide for their other needs. They appear also to have moved from the upper common to the low common i.e. a cottage near Valley Farm by 1881. After Edward died 1889, Leah stayed there until her death seven years later. Her second daughter Rachel (now in her forties) returned to live with her.

The Surveyor, roads and the pound

We have surmised that the earliest inhabitants of Welborne had travelled by water to reach the area and then travelled up the valley to settle. Once established they would have walked to and from the river and to the fields. Later, strangers – travellers, wandering friars, chapmen (pedlars) carrying packs of small luxuries (ribbons, lace, needles, knives etc.) might have passed through. In good times, surplus produce would be carried to the nearest market and other goods brought back. On the few Holy days, when work was suspended, families might have gone to a fair or sports event in a neighbouring parish or been visited by their families. Thus over centuries, constant movement of human feet, the occasional horse and pack animal and farm stock created the ancient footpaths and trackways. Ox teams going to plough the fields and carts carrying produce from the fields would have transformed these single tracks into double tracks and these tracks became the roads of Welborne.

The development of the Manorial system meant that each manor had responsibility for road maintenance within its boundaries but no one had responsibility for roads between manors. The Way warden was the Manorial official responsible for supervising the work which the Lord then imposed on his tenants – the maintenance of roads in his domain. While the system never worked particularly well, it was deemed to be satisfactory, until the decay of feudalism in the sixteenth century forced the development of an alternative. The Highway Act of 1555 set up framework which was to survive until the eighteenth century. As in so many other matters, the Parish and its governing organization, the Vestry meeting was to take over this responsibility. But while the name of the supervisor might gradually change as the office of Road Surveyor came into more general use, the actual pattern of work remained the same. Welborne farmers, horse owners and other householders i.e. the most likely users of the road, were required to provide a number of days labour a year towards keeping the roads in reasonable repair. Those who could afford it, would have paid others to do the work for them and to the poorer families of Welborne, such paid labour would have been welcome.

The office of surveyor would be filled by Vestry appointment and was considered sufficiently important to require a property qualification, i.e. only men who owned property in the parish or were a tenant of some substance could serve (originally £10 owners, £30 occupiers – increased to £20 for owners in 1835). We should also remember that although we are talking about roads. They were in fact still just tracks. The heavy clay might turn them into quagmires in winter and the ruts filled alternatively with water, ice or dust, depending on the season but travel was not widespread and the individuals who suffered the hardship, were often in no position to complain.

No early surveyor's accounts for Welborne survive but we think it safe to assume that they would have varied very little from the two that survive in the East Tuddenham records, although probably involved a lower expenditure as this parish was smaller:

“14 loads of stones carried into highway 14/-; 5 days work of 2 men 10/-, Beer for labourers in highway £1.10.0' 2 men filling the carts with stones 2/-.” (1765–6).

The following direction for the Enclosure Award is also instructive: “*Directions respecting the Herbage of Public and Private Roads.* And, I do hereby order, direct and declare, that it shall be lawful for the several persons whose lands do, or shall, front or adjoin to the Public or Private Roads or Ways, hereby set out and appointed, to use and enjoy the grass and herbage growing and renewing on such roads . . . in manner following: viz. Such

person or persons, whose Lands do, or shall front or adjoin to both sides of any such . . . lying between his, her, and their lands, shall rise and enjoy the grass and herbage . . . on the whole . . . one side . . . on the moiety or half . . . such moiety to be considered as extending from the respective Lands of such persons, to the middle . . . but nevertheless, no stock of any description shall be turned loose upon any such roads or ways for the purpose of taking herbage thereof, until after the end of six years from the date of this my award." As there was 16 acres of road in the parish the amount of grazing would have been substantial.

The Surveyor's Rate

Throughout the 1870s was set at 1d except where exceptional circumstance created specific problems with the road. eg. 17/2/76 Surveyor asked for a 2d rate because of the extra expenses brought about by heavy snowfall. It does not appear to be a rate that created much interest in the Vestry meetings. It was not unusual to find the minute such as that of 20/3/80 "no one attended beside the Surveyor, he set 2d and collected same." But this was obviously insufficient, when W.K. Green presented his accounts the following year. They showed expenditure on materials between May 1880 and January 1881 to be £4.10.0 and on labour £5.6.2 with the result that, "the surveyor has spent beyond what he has received £4.9.0." In November 1881, Green therefore asked for a 3d rate explaining "2d would have been sufficient had it not been for a bill due to Mr L Norton, amounting to £3.5.6 for painting and lettering direction posts (that is to say should we escape a heavy fall of snow). The balance in hand is £3.19.6 the expense to Nov 19 for stamp and labour amounts to £3.2.0." The responsibilities of being the surveyor also seem to have been creating difficulties getting people willing to serve. The Vestry seems to have adopted the expedient of appointing Mr Dring, although he was not present at the meeting. At the meeting the following year, "Mr Dring's son attended to say Mr Dring would not act as surveyor." And apparently no one else was prepared to act either as the minutes noted "Outgoing surveyor having refused to act during his year of office the roads got into a very bad state. After an hours talk it was agreed that the Overseer should report the fact to the magistrate and explain why no appointment." William K. Green was apparently persuaded to take up the task once again and served alone in the office for the next three years.

Road Improvements

While the village roads continued to be "green", some improvements had



Going to market

occurred in “main” roads by the end of the eighteenth century. Turnpike Trusts had been established to collect a toll from the users of the main routes between larger towns and local routes to and from market towns. A turnpike (a gate or bar set across the road) was erected at regular intervals and a fee structure drawn up to govern how much a traveller or drover would pay to have the barrier removed. Welborne residents faced the first of these tolls when they turned out of the village onto the Mattishall–Norwich road. The gate appears on Bryants Map (1826) at the Welborne/East Tuddenham boundary and is marked TB10.

As main roads were not an expense to the parish the decision to give a road this status had a lot of appeal. The final decision of the Vestry minutes concerning roads was made in May 1890 when it was “agreed to make application to County Council to declare the road leading from the Parish Boundary on the Mattishall Road [Welborne Road] to the Parish Boundary on the Barnham Broom Road [Vincents Road] via Horse Shoes Road a main road.”

The Pound and Public Grazing of Stock

We had expected that grazing stock on public land would have ended with the enclosing of the land in the parish. At the same time, the Commissioners directive quoted above seemed to allow grazing to continue on the roads, albeit restricted to adjacent landowners. Wandering stock had always and would

continue to be a problem, so enclosure did not end the usefulness of the village pound. Its pre-enclosure location, appears to have been at the edge of the great Common, being used to establish the eastern boundary of Henry Edwards Award in 1811. Twenty seven years later it appears to have been moved across Pound Lane to the Horse Shoes land and is shown there on the Auction map of 1838.

In June 1856 at a Vestry meeting attended only by the Rector and the Surveyor “the subject of the indiscriminate feeding of stock upon the road was discussed and it was resolved that a meeting should shortly be called with a view to a resolution.” The next meeting decided on the appointment of a “pounder of stock found feeding on public roads.” On the 11th of May 1857, the Vestry appointed Henry Green to the office. He did not hold the job for long, five years later (12/6/62), the meeting proposed giving the job to William Howard, who was living in the Black cottages. They must have anticipated a reluctance to serve as Edward Randall was proposed as an alternative, should Howard not want to serve. There are no other references to the pound or the pounder in our sources so we assume that as vehicular traffic increased and roads became tarmacked, public grazing ceased to be feasible and the pound was discontinued.

Morality, Law and Order and the Petty Constables of Welborne

There is neither pillory nor stocks on the village green or ducking stool by the village pond to give the brutal story of peacekeeping in our past a pseudo picturesque image. But while we know where Welborne shut away its stray animals, we have no idea where errant parishioners were lodged before being brought to justice, if that is what you would call it! We can agree with the general sentiment, that over the centuries when life itself seemed unbearably harsh, “nothing is . . . more dreadful than the punishments inflicted by the law.” Crime prevention operated on the principle of “terrifying evil doers . . . by the ferocity of the penalties for those caught.”

The individual responsible for carrying out this policy at ground level, was the parish or petty constable. The office has deep historic roots, existing at least from the time of the Conquest and was incorporated into the manorial system, when “the manor chose the constable for the townships.” The Constable was subsequently given the major responsibility for law and order in the parish. This involved not just detaining felons and those responsible for minor offences, but also of keeping the peace. His duties involved, ensuring that those without settlement rights, not just beggars and vagabonds but also

people seeking work, 'did not settle in Welborne, moving them on' and bringing the other offenders before the magistrates. The Parish Constables Act of 1842, placed the selection of office holders into the hands of the Vestry, who could also pay them if they so chose. No Constables' accounts for Welborne have survived but we feel it unlikely, that our Vestry chose to have a paid official.

We do not know just how busy these constables were in the earlier centuries but we can see the parish as it appears to the young John Barham Johnson, when as a child and teenager, he accompanied his father to Welborne: "The Parish was very bad as to morals. It was out of the way and thieving was carried on to a sad extent." It is interesting to note the way immorality and illegality were intermingled and considered to be of equal importance. To illustrate the immorality, the young John noted the vile doings of one resident "he cohabited with the wife of one of his sons when his tidy wife was living and living with him." He also observed that "bastardy was very common." In cases such as those above, we can be fairly sure that the Rector's ideas of moral behaviour conform to the general meaning of the word but we have to be more careful when examples are not forthcoming. The Rector was a man of his class and this was a period when the privileged position of the clergy, the landed gentry and the nobility was constantly being challenged. He was inclined to identify as 'evil', views that we today would merely call 'liberal'. We have already noted his inclusion of the telling of profane jokes and reading books written by reformers among immoral acts. In the area of crime in his father's time, Barham Johnson records: "we used to find that young trees had been cut and carried away from the churchyard, poles being tempting things." A fairly trivial crime one might think but the view should be tempered by the knowledge that cutting down a young tree along with poaching, and theft of goods worth 5/- or more, were among the 223 crimes for which you could be hung before 1832. His concern with possible theft continued during his own incumbency. In June 1863 he was called away from home to be with his son who had fallen ill while staying at Cromer. His letter to his daughter reflects his concern: "I should like to have the study and hall staircase shutters put up every night or perhaps a pane of glass will be taken out and some of our goods carried off – the shutters can be made to go up in the staircase windows by J. Parling if you sent for him."

He had also drawn our attention to the cottages in the Welborne/Brandon Parva border as 'the hot bed' of criminal activity in the parish, asserting that "thieving of sheep and corn was very common at the Lownds." The weaker inhabitants of Welborne were apparently being led astray by the inhabitants of

cottages in Bickerstone (a hamlet in the area where the Barnham Broome Golf Club now stands). Tracing Welborne people, who may have been brought by the parish constables before the Magistrates, is a very difficult task. We know that any suspected offenders, to be charged of petty offences including such things as public drunkenness, would have appeared at the Forehoe Petty Sessions. These were held “on the first Tuesday of every month, at the White Hart, Hingham and the third Tuesday, at the King’s Head, Wymondham. Unfortunately very few of the records of these courts survive and those that do, contain a minimum of information and only identify the defendants by name. Because both Christian and surnames were very common within the Hundred, we could only identify Welborne inhabitants accurately where another source had already provided a clue. The one offence that we were able to identify, concerning ‘stalking’ and had dramatic consequences, which have been described in Chapter 21.

More serious crimes were tried at the ‘General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, held in the Shire-house within the Castle of Norwich and it was here that we directed our attentions following up the Rectors assertion that “the stealing of sheep and corn was common.” Again, the records are sparse with the detailed papers associated with the trials being destroyed. Nevertheless, we found that on “the ninth of March 1836” four Welborne inhabitants were brought to trial, the judgement being delivered by a jury of their peers. The accused were all of one family who did indeed live in a cottage on the Lowndes. The father, James Dale (63), pleaded not guilty to a felony charge involving receiving stolen goods. His oldest son Thomas (33), pleaded not guilty to larceny (we presume the theft of sheep and/or wheat). Both men would have had to defend themselves, as lawyers were not available to help the accused until 1837. While James successfully persuaded the jury of his innocence, Thomas did not. The two younger brothers, John (20) and Jeremiah (19), confessed to the crime of larceny.

The three brothers were sentenced to transportation to Australia for seven years, a comparatively light sentence in those times. There is no record that suggests that any one of them ever returned to Welborne, if in fact they ever left Australia at all. We assume that Thomas’ wife Sarah and her two-year-old son went to live with her own family.