



## THE LODDON BLUE PLAQUE TRAIL



## THE LODDON BLUE PLAQUES

Walking up and down both Bridge Street and The High Street in Loddon today, you cannot help but admire the varied architecture and attractive buildings that greet you.



However, have you every considered who used to live behind these facades?

At various times, in days gone by you may have bought your Sunday joint from Mr Lamb, the Butcher or shared a pint with a beer-drinking donkey in The Fox and Hounds. If you had overindulged you might have visited Dr. McClintock or collected stomach powders from Mr. Ellis the Chemist. If times were hard, you may even have paid a visit to Albert Nobbs, the Pawnbroker!

From the 1800s onwards, Loddon was a bustling little Market Town with a variety of supplies and trades available, from the tailor, to the baker, to the blacksmith. There was also regular employment from the watermill and from working the land.

As in many Norfolk parishes, there were churches, shops, schools, pubs (too many!), a dance hall and for a while, there was even a lunatic asylum but first and foremost, always a strong sense of community.

Loddon Town Council has worked with Carol Webb and Julie Appleby to create Loddon's Blue Plaque initiative.

Blue plaques have been installed on some historic properties around the town and this short trail is intended to highlight these and the everyday characters that lived in them, encouraging folk to stop and think and to reflect on the past.

Loddon Town Council would like to thank everyone who participated in this project, particularly the property owners who have given their permission for the plaques to be placed on their buildings.

Thanks also to the Loddon and District History Group for permitting use of photographs from their archive and to Peter Webster for the centrefold map.

Finally, the information has been researched from many sources, and is open to interpretation, therefore we apologise for any errors unintentionally made.



## NAPP'S BRIDGE

Napp's Bridge is a local name for the small road bridge that crosses The Beck, the small stream that runs under Beccles Road. When crossing the bridge in a vehicle The Beck is hardly noticeable but for years locals walking along the road have stopped to look over, on either side, to take in the view. At one time there was an abundance of wildlife here with Water Voles living happily in the banks, the flash of a Kingfisher flying by and the beautiful sight of wildflowers on the adjoining water meadows.

George Napp and his family lived next to the bridge from at least 1911. Before the days of electricity, Mrs Napp would walk around at night with her oil lamp to light her way, probably going to and fro from the outside toilet. There were no mains drains in Loddon until 1948 and 'the privy' was usually situated outside of the house, down the garden. It had to be emptied once a week by what was known locally as 'The Honey Cart' or by some as 'The Iron Duke'.

There were stories amongst older residents of ghosts being seen but they were probably just seeing Mrs Napp with her light swinging in her hand!

The two sons, Pte. George Napp and Pte. Fred Napp both served in WWI, being called up to go from this quiet village in rural Norfolk to fight abroad, for their country. They are both recorded on the recently restored copy of the Primitive Methodist Role of Honour, that can be seen more clearly on the wall of St. John's Chapel in George Lane.

Several of the family now lie in Loddon Churchyard and can be found recorded



on the graveyard survey, available in the church porch. A map can also be found in the folder showing their location. The earliest Napp burial recorded was in 1765.

Gravestone	Sex	Age	Name	Age at Death	Date of Burial	Remarks	
2b	K	7	Myhill	Jesse	72yr	June 20, 1951	
6a	C	4	Napp	Ann (Earry)	84 yrs	17/12/1796	Wife of Thomas.
6a	C	3	Napp	Earry	52 yrs	02/04/1765	Daughter of Thomas and Earry
6a	B	2	Napp	Elizabeth	79yr or 70	07/03/1857	Wife
6a	C	5	Napp	Mary	50yr	12/05/1795	



3	I	13	Napp	Susannah	76yr	October 15, 1935	
6a	B	2	Napp	Thomas	28/06/1843	69yr	
6a	C	4	Napp	Thomas	86yr	01/08/1794	
6a	C	6	Napp	Thomas	85yr	02/04/1824	
5a	C	16	Neal	Katherine Fairlie	1892	1975	
2b	M	6	Nelson	Bertie Reginald	79yr	October 8, 1970	

The next picture is a copy of an engraving of Loddon by John Sell Cotman, completed in the early 1800s. Town Farm is in the foreground and Loddon Church can just be seen in the distance. It gives a rather artistic feel of what life was like to live in that era.





## THE FOX AND HOUNDS.

The Fox and Hounds was a very popular public house at the south end of the Town. One of the oldest available photographs can be seen here.



The earliest record of a public house on this site, from the Loddon and Clavering register, states the landlord as a Thomas Beart from 1789-1794.

It seems that by 1916 motor cars could be hired from the premises and petrol was available.

There was also good stabling offered, along with accommodation.

On the left side of the building can just be seen a small brick built building that was, at one time, the Loddon Blacksmith Shop. This may have been where the cars and petrol were obtained.

Kelly and Monica Scarfe, recorded as Mr and Mrs Alfred Charles Scarfe, ran the pub from 1955-1978. They are still remembered affectionately by many locals. Kelly had a donkey that was stabled at the rear and was often brought inside and given a drink of beer. This



can be seen in this rather faded newspaper cutting. The donkey became a bit of a legend and frequently took part in both Easter and Christmas services at Loddon Church.

The photo below shows another picture of Kelly, with his pony and trap, at Langley County Primary School at Christmas, sometime in the 1970's. Father Christmas has just arrived with his sack full of gifts for the children.



The last photograph was taken when the building was for sale before it was converted to the two houses we see today.



## FORMER BANK HOUSE

This building, now known as Farthing Green House, was once known as Bank House. This can be seen printed on the bottom of the old postcard, shown here. The photograph was taken sometime in the early 1900s.



Originally begun in the early 1700s, the house has been extended and altered many times in its history. The first recorded owner was Nathaniel Harvey and it was passed down through his family, first to his daughter Sarah and her husband Daniel Nelson. It is a notable example of Georgian architecture in Loddon.

Colonel C.R. Cadge was the last to fully occupy the house as a private residence. His father had bought it from his business partner Mr. James Cole Copeman in 1885. Loddon Rural District Council, formed in 1894, appointed him as Clerk of the Council and also to the Board of Guardians. One small room in the house was then allocated as an office for the District Council. The east end was used as solicitors offices and another room on the ground floor was used as a bank. In 1902, a small extension on the right of the building was added for the bank that later became Barclays. Around 1930, the bank moved to a larger building, in the centre of the town. As the District Council expanded and acquired the responsibility for rating, the office moved to larger premises and the building reverted to a private dwelling. Colonel Cadge looked for another name and chose Farthing Green House from the nearby small triangle of land called Farthing Green. The Cadge family were well known as solicitor who worked from offices in the town for many years.

In the 1950s, the Cadge family moved out and the building once again became the Loddon Rural District Council offices. Many older residents remember going there for anti-natal classes, paying their rates or attending a court session! Following the restructuring of local government in 1974, The Council moved to new offices in Long Stratton. The building was then used as offices by Tilbury Roadstone (then Redland Aggregates/Lafarge) until the arrival of the current owners in 1996 with their company Risk and Policy Analysts (RPA), an international consultancy. The photo shows some of the young staff in its early days.



After RPA moved to offices in Norwich in 2020, the owners restored many of the rooms back to how they were when the Cadge family was in occupancy. Some of these are now available as holiday apartments. They include the Old Bank (former bank offices) and the Skylight Apartment (formerly the caretakers flat for The Council in the 1950s).



## THE CHESTNUTS

The Chestnuts was built in 1830 by James Cole who is described as a gentleman merchant. There had previously already been buildings on the site.

In the early 1900s the house became the home of a succession of doctors, many of whom were members of the Royal Army Medical Corps. Dr. Lawson Tate McClintock came to Loddon in 1902. He lived in The Chestnuts with his wife. He was appointed Medical Officer of Health for the Rural District Council in 1910. Dr. McClintock also had several other appointments and had an extensive private practise. ( NB. the National Health Service did not begin until 1948).

At the outbreak of WWI he was instrumental in organising the Red Cross Hospital for wounded and convalescent soldiers, in what is now, The Lecture Hall, George Lane. Mrs. McClintock was the commandant and ran the hospital with a staff of volunteers. Tragically, Dr. McClintock died aged only 39, on 11.11.1918. He is buried in Heckingham churchyard. The photograph shows Dr. McClintock outside the Red Cross Hospital in 1917.



By 1922 Dr. Henry Woodruff was practising from The Chestnuts. He was also known for his cricketing skills. He can be seen here, front left, with the Loddon cricket team.

From 1927, Dr. Edward Martland was local physician and public vaccinator to the old Heckingham Workhouse. He worked from a small wooden lean-to shed on the side of The Chestnuts. He had served in WWI and when he was called up at the outbreak of war in 1939, the area was left without a doctor. Dr.

Taylor-Ray took over the practise until his return, although he lived elsewhere in Loddon.

On his return from the war Dr. Martland began practising again and when the National Health Service was set up in 1948 he 'signed up' most of the inhabitants of Loddon. In 1952, he sadly died after having a stroke and Dr. Bennett was appointed to take his place at The Chestnuts. At this time there was neither bell nor telephone with which to call the doctor at night.

Dr. Bennett worked alone for a couple of years until Dr. Armitage came to join him. By this time the wooden building had been replaced by an extension that housed consulting rooms.

When Dr. Bevington arrived in 1971 the practise continued to grow and another outside room was converted. These rooms were in use right up to 1978 when Dr. Bennett retired. Dr. Bevington then took over and the surgery moved to new premises on Church Plain.

The house then became a private family home once more.



## BROWNES GARAGE

In 1870 Mr. P.W. Browne came to Loddon and took over an existing business on the site of a blacksmith shop. He was a coach and carriage builder and needed a blacksmith to make the iron rims for his carriage wheels. In the old photo shown here you can see the site with several of the men who worked there.

In the second, slightly later picture, taken from the roadside opposite Farthing Green, it can be seen that the business was also a cycle shop spanning the road frontage. The 1891 census records Philip Browne, his wife, 6 sons, 3 daughters and a servant present at no.55 The Street.



From carriages and coaches Brownes progressed to making cars. They bought in the chassis and hand built the bodies. You can see one in the picture below.

As time went on and cars began to be mass produced, Brownes stopped building themselves and began to buy in completed vehicles in order to sell on. The garage also sold fuel. A very old petrol pump can just be seen in the picture above, on the right of the windows.



This was a thriving business that was later taken over by local partners Alan Shearing and Pat Potter, just before WWII, who retained the name of Brownes. During wartime, when petrol was rationed and coupons were required for purchase, Brownes had a special licence to trade, when other garages were forced to close. The business continued to grow on the site until modern car transporters could no longer gain access.

The business then moved to Chedgrave in 1990 and later to Loddon Industrial Estate, Beccles Road, where it still trades under the same name in larger more accessible premises.

The original garage site was sold and the buildings and showroom that by then fronted the road were converted to award winning private dwellings. Saxon House, the sheltered housing complex at the rear, was built on the site of the old workshops.



## OLD COOPERS SHOP

This house was the home of Mr. Braddock, The Cooper. The building joins The Angel pub. The deeds of the house state that it was built in 1780, leaning on the gable end of the pub called The White Lion. It seems that the name of the pub must have been changed sometime after that. The house was apparently built over existing brick vaulted storerooms that were later used by Mr. Braddock, as his workshop. The basement windows, that can now only just be seen, were at one time much more visible as the pavement has

been raised over the years. (note the 5 steps up to the front door, today there are only 3)

The barrels were made from oak planks that were delivered from the street and fed through the right hand window into the basement workshop. In this very old photograph from the early 1900s, the shop sign can be seen above the door. We presume that it is Mr. Braddock and his workers who are posing outside.

The workshop, in the basement of the house, had an old tree stump in the centre over which the barrels were made by hand. There was a blacksmith shop on the other side of the street where the metal bands were forged. When complete the barrels would have been rolled from the back entrance through the archway, behind the men in the picture, and collected by horse and cart on the roadside.

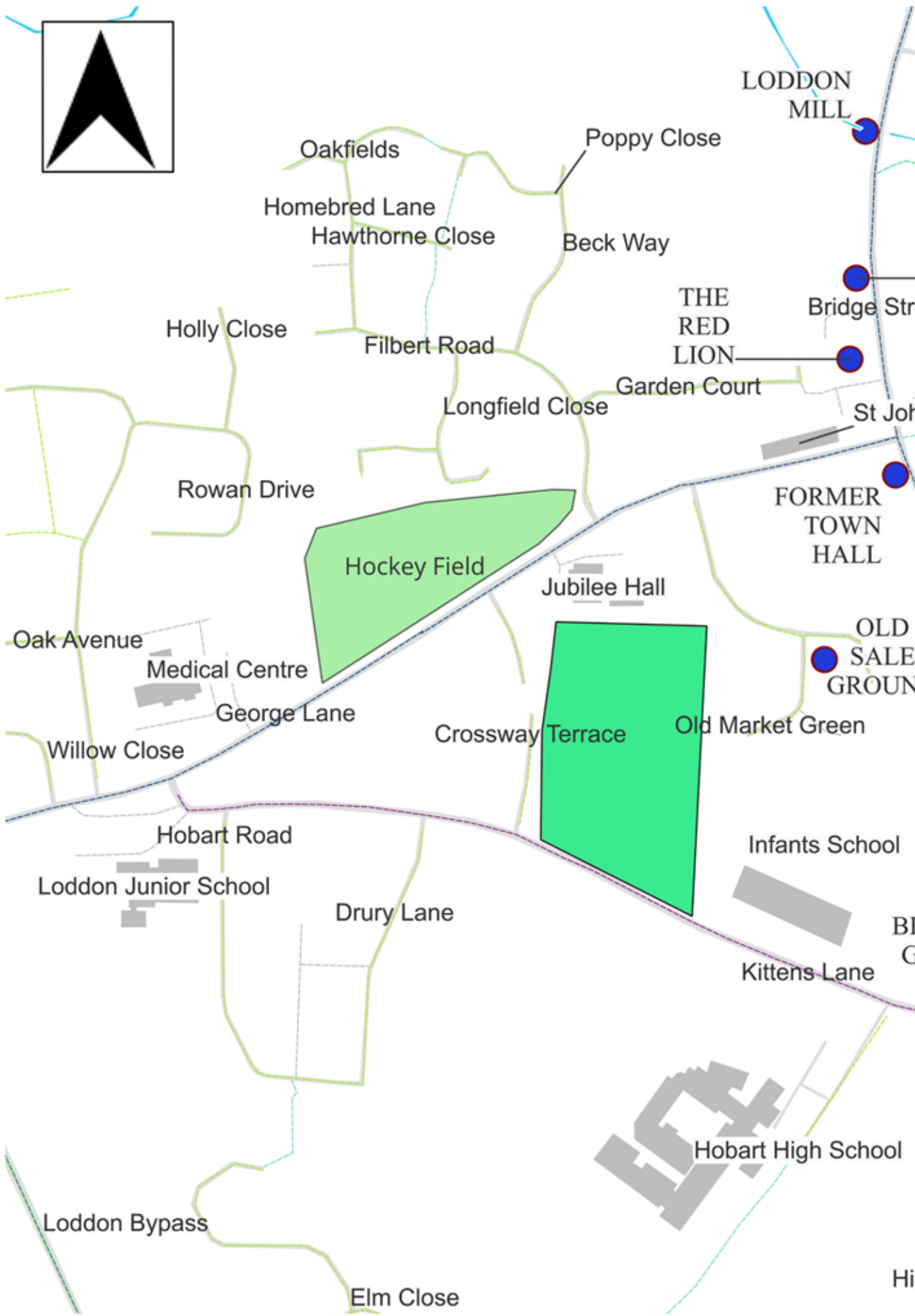


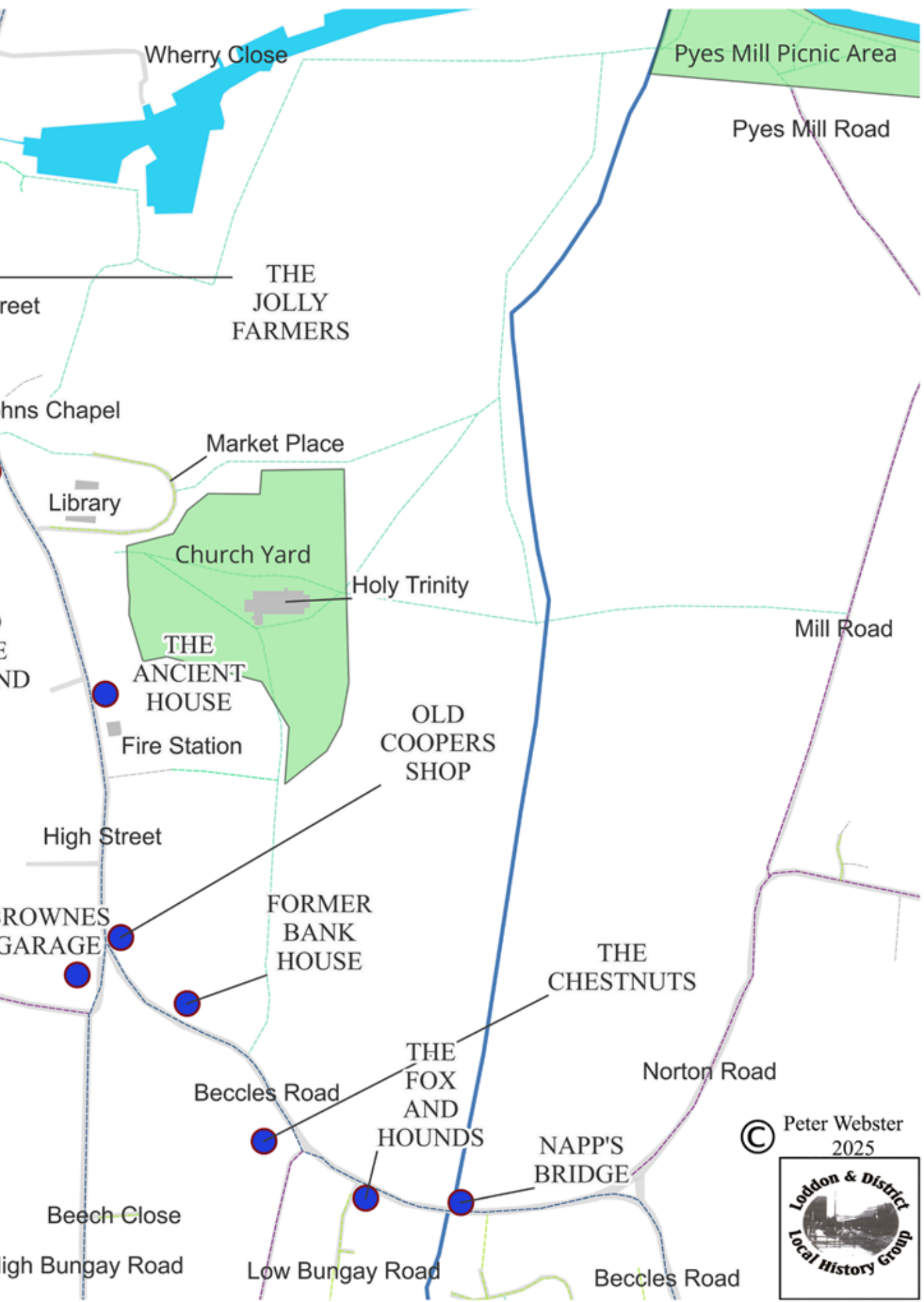
The wood shavings would have been gathered up and taken next door. At the rear of The Angel there was a smokehouse where they were used to cure various meats and most probably fish, for use in the Inn.

In this second picture of the High Street you can just see the old Coopers Shop, behind the car, on the right. The Angel is the white building behind and the blacksmiths shop was where the garage sign is hanging.

During WWII the house was the home of Mick and Geraldine Cowley. They rented it as a newly married couple. Mick worked as a nurse at the old Heckingham Workhouse that later became Hales Hospital. (This is now private housing)

Mick and Geraldine were compelled by the authorities to take 2 evacuees into their home. Many children were evacuated to the Loddon area, for their safety, during wartime. It was a very unsettling time for all of these children and the two boys allocated to Geraldine were really unhappy to have been parted from their mother and baby sister. They were from the East End of London and not used to country life. When bought new clothes they kept them on all of the time and even went to bed still wearing their boots. They just couldn't adapt and eventually their mother later came to fetch them and took them back home. An interview with Mick and Geraldine, on their time spent in the house, is lodged in The Loddon and District History Group Archive.





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## THE ANCIENT HOUSE

The Ancient House, as it is known by many, was one of the two original farm houses in the centre of Loddon, the other being Street Farm, situated further down on Bridge Street. It is thought that it may have been built with flints from Langley Abbey, brought to Loddon after the dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry VIII, in the 1530s. The area of pasture behind the wall, seen in this picture, was once used in the 1850s to keep the animals that the opposite butchers shop, run by Mr. Lamb, would then slaughter for meat. This was before the days of refrigeration!



The original farm and buildings were quite extensive and the large thatched barn, just visible in the centre of the next picture, was eventually demolished and is now the site of Loddon Fire Station.

In March 1915, The Ancient House finally became the Loddon Institute, after many years of discussion. The building had previously been occupied by the late Mr. John Garrard but was owned by Mr. Leman. He, along with Mr. Cadge and a bequest from the will of the late Sir Reginald

Beachamp provided the £300 necessary for the purchase. It was to be a working men's club, set up in the days of the rise in Methodism, when alcohol was frowned upon and a meeting place other than the local public houses was deemed necessary in Loddon.

The minute book of meetings held between 1914 and 1921 gives an extensive account of the way that this was accomplished.

There were to be rooms for billiards and small games, with a reading room where several daily papers would be available and a bowling green and garden at the rear. It is reported that 38 ladies applied to be members and although supported by some, it is not clear whether this was allowed. It has been said by some older residents that there were once 2 tennis courts at the rear, one private and the other public and that ladies were allowed to walk through the building to access them.

The Institute was closed at the outbreak of WWII in 1939 and never reopened.

Since then both of the remaining buildings have had many uses including a place for catholic worship. The now private house was once a pawn brokers, and later a labour exchange, run by Mr. Albert Nobbs, who can just be seen in the doorway of the premises in the next picture. It was also a fine dining restaurant for a while.

The flint building was a craft shop that many locals still remember as 'Diversions'. It now houses the Lawnes Beauty Clinic.





## OLD SALE GROUND

The area of Loddon now called Market Place seems to have been the site of a market during the Middle Ages. According to White's Directory of 1845, a new Charter was obtained in 1245, by John Selgrave, from Roger Bigod who was Earl of Norfolk, after he was granted the chief Manor of Saxon Loddon. This area was once filled with stalls and hawkers, selling their wares from market to market as they travelled the around. Soon after the new Charter it seems that the market moved to Church Plain and by the 1700s, records show the High Street referred to as the highway between Bungay and Loddon Market. Deeds from what is now called Mornington House, next to Loddon Library, say that this building was bordered by the Old Market Place.

Church Plain at this time was known as Church Green and was an open piece of land in the centre of Town and twice yearly travelling fairs were also held here. Many of Loddon's older residents have memories of these still coming here when they were children.

By the late 1880s the fortnightly market had moved to the open land behind The Swan. This market was run by the auctioneers, H.J. Waters and Son, from around 1895. In it's heyday the market was held on alternate Mondays and was the highlight of life in Loddon Town. Local residents and those from surrounding villages would spend the whole day here as sale day was also a very social occasion.



All manner of goods and livestock, from cattle and pigs to household goods and brick-a-brac were sold. When eventually Whitbread brewery, who were the owners of the land, managed to negotiate access onto George Lane, the site was sold and the houses seen today were built. The road names of Market Green and Sale Court are now the only reminder of these days gone by.

The pictures shown here were taken in the 1980s, before final closure in 1991. The old bus was used as the payment station before a new shed was erected. They are a reminder of happy days gone by.



## FORMER TOWN HALL

The Old Town Hall, as it is now known, was built in 1870 on land purchased from the owners of Loddon Swan, lying between the pub and Bugdon House, together with the stables at the rear. This photo is the oldest one available of the finished building. The magistrates court that used to be held in the upper room of The Swan had outgrown its premises and money was raised, by public subscription to build a Town Hall.



The money had been deposited with Hudson's Bank, that unfortunately collapsed and all funds were lost. Not to be deterred, The Loddon Town Hall Company was formed and shares were sold. Here you can see the official company seal.

One of the Loddon magistrates was Sir Reginald Proctor Beauchamp of Langley Hall and he promptly purchased 70%. Albert Wharton, late of Loddon Hall, also bought a share. The Company was managed by the local solicitors, Copeman & Son. No formal meetings were ever held.

During the 1939/45 War, the Town Hall served several important functions. Air Raid Precaution duties were coordinated here and the southern front room was the main Civil Defence Report Centre, which was in direct communication with the Observation Post on Beccles Road. The First Aid Post was also based here and for the evacuee children, it was their first port of call before being allocated to local families.



The brick 'stable block' was used for paper salvage, before suffering fire damage. Some of the paper can be seen stacked against the wall in this picture.

Dances were held as a regular feature with visits from American Airmen, based at Seething Airfield, being a highlight.

Various social activities carried on until well into the 1950's until transport to other events became easier and the hall was no longer popular.

In 1962 the building was bought by Thirtle and Harris, a local firm of builders, for £900 and in 1967, the rear section became an indoor bowls club, that still remains. The front section became Thorntons Hairdressing Salon.

In 1998 the then Parish Council purchased the front section of The Town Hall with the aim of preventing further deterioration and to return the building to community use.

At this time, The Loddon Buildings Preservation Trust was formed and registered as a charity. The management of this section of the building was then transferred to their Board of Directors.

In 1999 the central foyer was opened as The Loddon Tourist Information Centre and for several years the two front rooms were hired out to local businesses.

In 2015, Loddon Parish Council made the decision, to sell this part of the building once again. As a result, the building has now gone full circle, being once again owned by The Swan, who completed their purchase on 3rd. June 2016.



## THE RED LION

Information taken from the Norfolk pubs website states that The Red Lion was a Loddon pub from 1851 to 1861, run by John M. Goff. His is credited with being a farmer, wine, spirit and seed merchant. There were frequent changes of licensees up until 1909 when the then ale house was refused a renewal licence as it had already closed. It is said that there were, at that time, too many pubs in the area.

The building seems to have been used for several businesses until becoming a firm of builders and undertakers called Youngs.

When Frances Freestone applied for a job, as a young girl, she had no idea that her career would span 70 years in the business. She became a partner in the 1970s and ran both the funeral parlour, from the rear of the building and the D.I.Y. store that fronted the road.

In 2010 along with her business partner, Martyn Smith, the decision to close the hardware shop was taken as it was no longer viable. The Funeral Business was then expanded to the front section. This change caused great sadness in the town but Loddon Garden and Seed Centre, next door, agreed to take on much of the stock and the wool section moved to Bridge Stores.



The picture here shows Frances Freestone with Arthur Sturman, her brother, Charlie Freestone and two of the lady workers in front of the hardware window display, in 1999.

Frances died in September 2014 and is buried just outside Holy Trinity Church, Loddon, in a plot that she had walked past with so many others on their last journeys. Martyn Smith, her partner for 14 years, continued to run the funeral business after her death, until his retirement.

The front window of Youngs has been used for many years as a site for various local display boards containing interesting information for both residents and visitors alike. One of these displays, created for the 100 year commemoration celebrations since WWI can be seen in this picture.

In recent years Gordon Barber has taken over the business which still continues to provide funeral services for Loddon and surrounding villages.





## THE JOLLY FARMERS

The Jolly Farmers was opened as an ale house in 1789, it also had stabling for horses at the rear. Until 1794 the licensee is listed as Samuel Howling.

Records show that on 20.11.1872. George Doy, chimney sweep, was found guilty of being drunk and disorderly in The Jolly Farmers along with George Bailey, who had similar previous convictions. In 1852 the building was sold at auction, under lot no. 42 in the sale of Beccles Brewery, to Mr. T Kerrison.



Not much more is known until WWII when American airmen, who were then based at Seething Airfield, would frequent the pub. They would find out which local pubs had been supplied with beer and ride from Seething, on bicycles, to drink in Loddon. The picture shown here is one of the American airmen drinking with local man Sonny Taylor, standing outside the building at the sideway.

Cannells of Chedgrave had been a very prosperous family firm in Chedgrave for many years. It all began in 1870 when Mr. G.W. Cannell, living in Broome at the time, began stripping mangel seeds from dried plants and selling them to local farmers. The business expanded and several of the family rented farms in the local area to grow and trial their seeds. At one time penny packets of seeds could be bought from where Loddon Post Office is now. They became prize winning competitors at the Norfolk Show and also regularly exhibited at the Smithfield Show in London.

In 1904 the offices and warehouses at Chedgrave were built and by the 1950's the firm had been incorporated with other seed producers. By 1969, one of the partners had bought out the firm and the headquarters moved to King's Lynn. However, Jim Leathers, general manager at the time, who was the great grandson of the founder, decided not to make the move and instead he opened the 'Seed and Garden Shop' in the premises of the old Jolly Farmers, as he wished to stay in the area.



Jim, along with his wife Eileen and her brother Keith Todd, continued to run the shop for many years, along with help from Keith's wife, Marion. They are all fondly remembered by many older Loddon residents.

This photo shows Jim Leathers, in the green coat, in 1999, with Marion and Keith. They were posing outside of the shop for a set of millennium photos, to be placed in a time capsule in Loddon churchyard.

Eventually Jim retired and the present owner has since expanded the shop to take on the hardware business from Youngs. It is now called Loddon Garden & D.I.Y.



## LODDON MILL

It is believed that the present building on this site was built in the 18th century when the river was diverted to run underneath it. This must have provided enough power, at the time, for the miller of the day to meet the needs of the local farmers and villagers.

From the early 1800s the Gilbert family were owners of the mill. Recorded in the 1841 and 1851 census, William Burton was the tenant miller. He lived in the Mill House (the building on the left) with his wife, son, daughters and grandson, along with two men serving as mill labourers. By 1871 Jonathan Feltham, described as a farmer and miller, was living there.



By the 1890s, Woods, Sadd, Moore, the corn and seed merchants, had moved into the area. They first took over The Maltings in Beccles Road and then Loddon Mill from William Chapman.

In the first picture, shown here, you can just see the offices of Woods, Sadd, Moore, on the left hand side before the road bridge. This picture was taken when the mill had been converted to steam. Note the chimney on the right.



Woods, Sadd, Moore became a main employer in the area and built up a fleet of wooden sailing wherries. They had several storage sheds on the north and south of the river for wheat, barley and oat seeds. They were also the main suppliers of coal to the local area. In this picture you can see a group of employees standing on the bridge that linked the two banks.

Once an osier bed, the land on the north side of the river, next to the road, was filled with rubble and the new Woods, Sadd, Moore offices were built. Soon after taking over, a coal fired engine house was built and the mill was converted to steam power as the water wheel could no longer provide enough regular power for local demand.

In 1928 the main mill area was converted to electricity and was then used as a trefoil mill. This was mainly exported to Germany and grown as animal fodder and to improve soil fertility.

On the night of 12th. January 1930 a devastating fire began, believed to have been started from a burning cigarette, that burnt the wooden warehouses to the ground. Fortunately the fire did not extend over the road to the mill. After the fire, most of the business was carried on at the works in Thorpe although the mill was still in use up to 1968 when it was sold by the Gilbert family.

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