



WALDRINGFIELD HISTORY GROUP MARCH 27th 2026
HAVE WE GOT NEWS FOR YOU

Hello everybody and thanks for joining us here this evening for our annual talk which, this year, is entitled : 'Have **we** got news for **you**?'

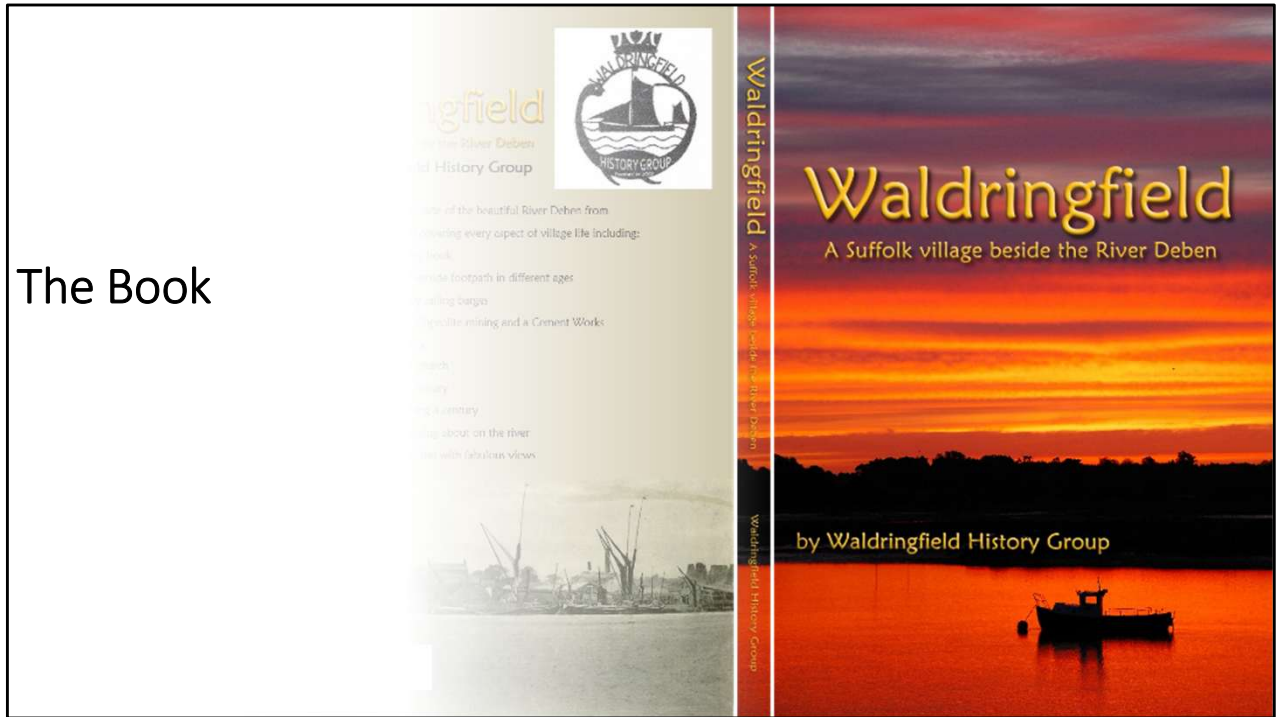
Well, let's hope so. We believe that as the talk unfolds there will be some news for each and everyone of you. If not news, then something at least of interest. For instance, the more observant amongst you may have noticed not 'news' necessarily but, on the tables over there,

- many interesting artefacts found by detectorists,
- the three ring binders containing Kit Clark's millennium survey of the village population,
- the Rolls of Service for Waldringfield, Newbourne and Hemley
- a history map of the village created by WHG member, Roni Hicks.
- And Waldringfield Sailing Club centenary book 'A Century of Sailing' with copies for sale.

Even the less observant amongst you can't have failed to notice this glass plate camera, of which more later.

First, though, for any newcomers to the village, we have the usual introductory patter about the Waldringfield History Group and its activities. Since our foundation in 2007 we have given talks pretty-well every year, with the exception of 2020 when we were stymied by Covid regulations. Covid also hampered our attempts that year to repeat Kit Clark's millennium survey - a project we called 2020 Vision. We appreciate that concerns regarding privacy and data protection were also contributory factors, and we would be interested in your views on whether to try again.

The Book



Despite Covid we were able to publish 'Our Book' in 2020.

We sold about 750 copies. Our chairperson, Alyson Videlo was very pleased earlier this month to see a well-thumbed copy included



in an exhibition at Woodbridge library with other books on Coastal Suffolk

Perhaps this is a good time to say that although the book is no longer available from our original publisher, it is still available via [Amazon](https://www.amazon.com).

Waldringfield History Group

- WEBSITE



Waldringfieldia.com

We also have a well-developed **website**

which is full of information about the growth and development of our village. I should explain that because of data protection much of the website is available only to members of the group – but membership is cheap – about a pound a month - so see us after if you are interested. Part of the website is available without log-in using the address shown but **do not search for it via Google** – go instead to the address bar in your device.

Our membership numbers have increased very slightly since we started nineteen years ago but, quite naturally, we have experienced some turnover, inevitable really - so that approximately thirty per cent of today's membership were not with us at the beginning.



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Some of our newer members have found themselves totally unfamiliar with what was going on in the village even just two and a half decades ago when, for instance, this village hall was so very new.



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and memories of the old one were still not yet lost.

It is for that reason that we thought we would take the opportunity first to recap and then, in the last quarter of the game , so to speak, bring you right up to date with various bits of news which might surprise or interest you, or both.

This evening we are joined by two important guests who are contributing to this presentation – **Andy Pritchatt** leads the Collections Team at Woodbridge Museum. He sought permission from the Museum Trustees to arrange for this camera



and its automatic shutter to return home to Waldringfield for the evening and he has accompanied it to ensure its safe-keeping.

We are most grateful.

We are very grateful to Woodbridge Museum for the loan of this camera and its automatic shutter and to Andy Pritchatt for all his help.

Our other guest is **David Cummings**, a local detectorist. He has brought along this vast collection of locally detected articles and for ten minutes or so in the second half of the Talk he will tell us about some of his more recent finds

We also appreciate the interest shown in the village by detectorist David Cummings and his colleagues

Again, we are most grateful

So, let's look back a bit – we are, after all a **History Group** – although, as we keep reminding ourselves, history is a **living** entity – it's happening now and it was happening, for instance, when **this** camera was being used around **this** village in the late 19th and early twentieth century – that is **one hundred and five** to one hundred and forty years ago.

We like to think that this glass-plate camera, strictly called a **half-plate camera**, was the trigger to the **foundation** of our Group.



Thomas Naunton Waller



It belonged to a certain Thomas Naunton Waller, born 28th February 1863

Here pictured, on the right, in adulthood and, on the left, with three of his sisters and a newspaper which, by virtue of the fact that it is the right way up for the viewer, probably contained information of some significance, perhaps his school results.

He took up photography in the mid 1880s when he was in his early twenties. Brought up in the Rectory at Waldringfield, which for the newcomers, is now Rivers Hall on Fishpond Road, he went off in 1881 at the age of eighteen, possibly soon after the time of this photograph, to live in Walthamstow where he worked in a bank for nine years. He often visited his large family in and around Waldringfield and he must have carted this camera around with him wherever he went. In 1890 he went off to Newcastle to study marine engineering, but he kept up his photography and his home visits.

So, **who was this Thomas Naunton Waller?** Perhaps the surname rings a bell or two. If, for some of you, it doesn't, then maybe you need to come and see me

afterwards in order to catch up.



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Here's a photo of his family taken in 1905.

Just to keep newcomers in the loop, this is **Thomas Naunton Waller** (*second in on the right*) We will call him TNW as we haven't got all night. This is his father and mother (*in the middle*), that being **Thomas Henry Waller, the then retired Rector**. TNW's younger brother, **Arthur** (*second in on left*) became Rector at the turn of the 19th/20th century and TNW's nephew, **Trevor, Arthur's son**, seen in this family photo on his mother's knee, became the Rector in 1948. TNW's great niece, Trevor's daughter, is here this evening – and known to most of you, if not all; **Kit Clark**, of whom some more later. **TNW's wife, Nellie**, and their four children, **Jack, Gwen, Cyril and Janet** are also in the photo which is why we can date the photograph to 1905 as Janet was born in 1904.

When TNW eventually returned to Waldringfield with his family he moved into **Deben Villa in Sandy Lane**, which was then called **Lower Road**. Because of their fond family memories of Newcastle and the frozen north they renamed the house '**Novocastria**'. Anybody 'up North' will tell you that people from Newcastle are called Novocastrians.



When TNW eventually returned to Waldringfield with his family he moved into **Deben Villa** in **Sandy Lane**, which was then called **Lower Road**. Because of their fond family memories of Newcastle and the frozen north they renamed the house '**Novocastria**'. Anybody 'up North' will tell you that people from Newcastle are called Novocastrians.

We need a horticulturalist to advise about these trees. (? Catalpa family)



Anyway, back to this camera and its role in the foundation of our Group (Apols for not being allowed to handle it – too delicate) It was **constructed by TNW in 1886** – the automatic shutter, which is a very precise piece of engineering, was made by him sometime later. The approximate weight of such a camera would be 6 – 9 lbs – 3 kilos and it came with a delicate tripod.

This camera produces images on glass plates and it was the discovery of boxes of glass plates which led, almost directly, to the formation of our Group. Kit's husband, the late **Joe Clark** was reputed to have found these boxes in their attic - which is very strange because, as Kit pointed out about ten years later, they didn't actually have an attic. Well, maybe it was the top shelf of a cupboard.

GLASS PLATE PHOTOGRAPHY – timeline

- 1848– 1860s Plates coated with egg albumen.
Exposure 5-15 mins
- 1851 - 1880s Plates coated with wet collodion.
Exposure few seconds to few minutes
- 1871 - 1970 Dry gelatin plates.
Exposure time is less than a second

*You may be interested to know that glass plate photography was the standard for high-quality photography from the **1850s through to the late 1920s***

➤ **[1848 – 1860s]**

In the early days the plates were coated in egg white albumen but exposure times were very long and only good for still life so to speak;

➤ **[1851 – 1880s]**

new methodology became available in the early 1850s; it involved wet collodion which is a flammable, syrupy solution of nitrocellulose in ether and alcohol, described by some as ‘explosive’

Exposure time was markedly reduced but, as you can imagine, the methodology was very fiddly as the newly exposed plates had to be developed on the spot whilst they were still wet. The chemicals were pretty toxic and when you bought them, the whole kit came with a pair of leather gloves.

➤ **[1871-1970]**

An alternative methodology, using dry gelatin plates, was introduced in 1871 and went into general manufacture in 1878. Gelatin dry plates were coated by machine

so that the coatings were **even**, right up to the edge of the plate, unlike the earlier types of plate.

Wikipedia says that 'glass plate negatives are frequently found stored in the manufacturers' boxes' – our story is a case in point.

Amazingly, gelatin dry plates continued to be used until the **1970s** although, on the whole, the technique had largely faded from the consumer market by the early years of the 20th century.

There are two of Thomas Naunton Waller's cameras on display in the Woodbridge Museum.



Thomas Naunton
Waller's cameras
as displayed in
Woodbridge
Museum

Anyway Joe had several of the aforementioned boxes and his quandary was what to do with them. There is documentary evidence, in the form of a thank you letter, that four boxes went to **Walthamstow Museum**, as they were photographs relevant to that area. Those relevant to Suffolk remained and that's where **Stan Baston** stepped in; a keen photographer and what I would describe as a whizz-kid on a computer, he was able to **digitalise** them – but **not without difficulty**. Others had failed and several of the slides were damaged. Let's hear what Stan had to say

*Joe asked others to try scanning the plates without success. I borrowed a good-quality **light box** from Steve Walsh, a top-end professional photographic developer who used to live along Quayside, and photographed them with an SLR camera. This gave me a B/W image, which I turned into a positive in Photoshop, then removed all the scratches and other light defects.*

Joe was delighted!

How many were there? I have had a good scummage through my folders. I would guess about 30. Some might have been too damaged to process.

*Unfortunately, I did not keep a separate folder for the TNW plates. This was in the very early days, [of the Group] and I just catalogued them into various people and locations. events, etc., in folders that contained photos from other sources. As the Group progressed, I catalogued all the collection sources, but sadly not the original plate images. I think you will **have to make a good guess***

*It is worth noting that **Thomas Waller had a particularly good eye for composition**, which could not have been easy given his bulky camera.*

Yes, there is general consensus that TNW's photographs were usually very well proportioned and pleasing to the eye and many of them showed life exactly as it was in Waldringfield in the last part of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth. They reflected
the demise of the coprolite industry,
the expansion of the cement industry and
the commencement of the tourist industry.

A WALK AROUND WALDRINGFIELD 100 YEARS AGO

With Joe Clark
and Stan Baston

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Armed with these photographs, Joe and Stan presented a Winter Talk entitled 'A Walk round Waldringfield 100 years ago'.



The picture chosen for the **flyer** for that talk
.....is an interesting one; we think it was taken at the turn of the nineteenth and
twentieth centuries and that the gentleman in the picture is one George Farrow, an
agricultural labourer from Woodbridge Road **BUT** was it taken here?



toward the top end of Sandy Lane where the footpath goes down to Deben Lane?
OR was it taken here?



Somewhere on the track which leads to Manor House Cottage?

Remember this photograph because it will come up later this evening

Anyway, back to Joe and Stan's talk.

A WALK AROUND WALDRINGFIELD 100 YEARS AGO

With Joe Clark
and Stan Baston

2007

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It was given in **2007**, nineteen years ago. There were **88 pictures in total** but we have to be quite honest with you: not all of the photographs in the presentation were attributable to Thomas Naunton Waller. Some of the pictures used were more recent, as Joe was trying to get over to the audience some of the ongoing history of the village. At the end of the Talk he invited members of the audience to provide him with any old photos they might have and he left a notebook for anyone interested in the history of the Village to make a note of their name. And that's how it all began. The notebook is over there on the table in case anybody wishes to express an interest this evening.

We were not the first history group in the village – there had been others, but they don't seem to have survived as long as this one has.

Inevitably Joe and Stan's talk started with the river



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– the peaceful River Deben – a beautifully composed photograph, typical of TNW, probably taken about 1910,1912 – the factory managers house is in the background but there are no kilns – five years earlier there would have been twelve there. This was taken close to where the scrubbing posts are now. Of course, it was not always as peaceful and the next photograph, probably taken in the mid 1880s.



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shows **coprolite washing on the shore**

Note the prominent oak tree on the cliff close to where the steps are now. This photograph caused us some grief for several years because it came to us back to front and we couldn't see any solitary oaks on clifftops when looking toward the south.



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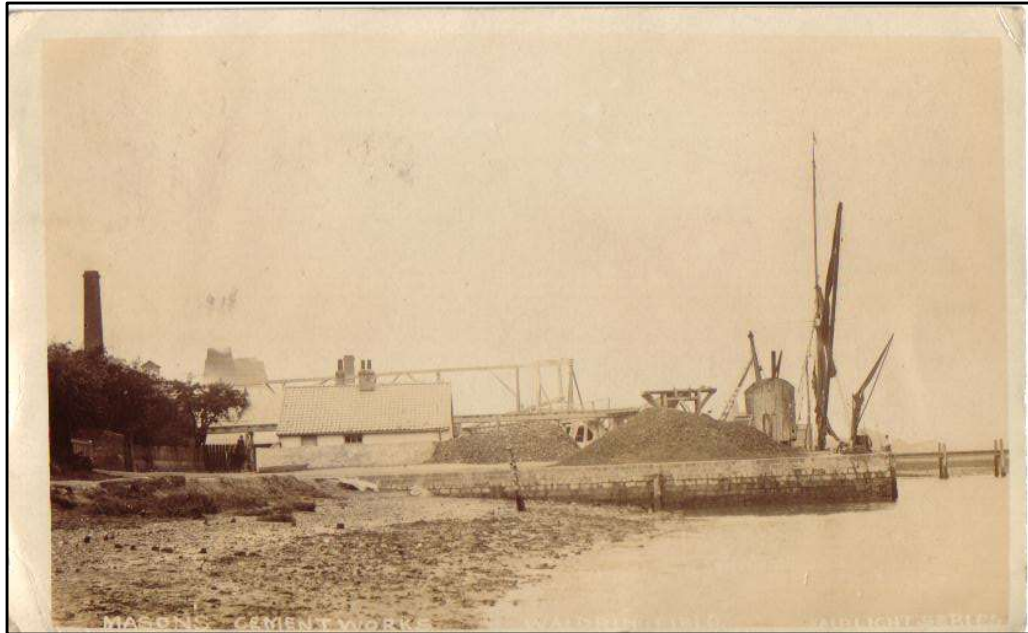
It took great photographic skill to get a shot of these **Suffolk Punches** which were involved in the logistical exercise of moving the coprolite.

Although the coprolite trade faded out in the early 1890s, the Cement Works



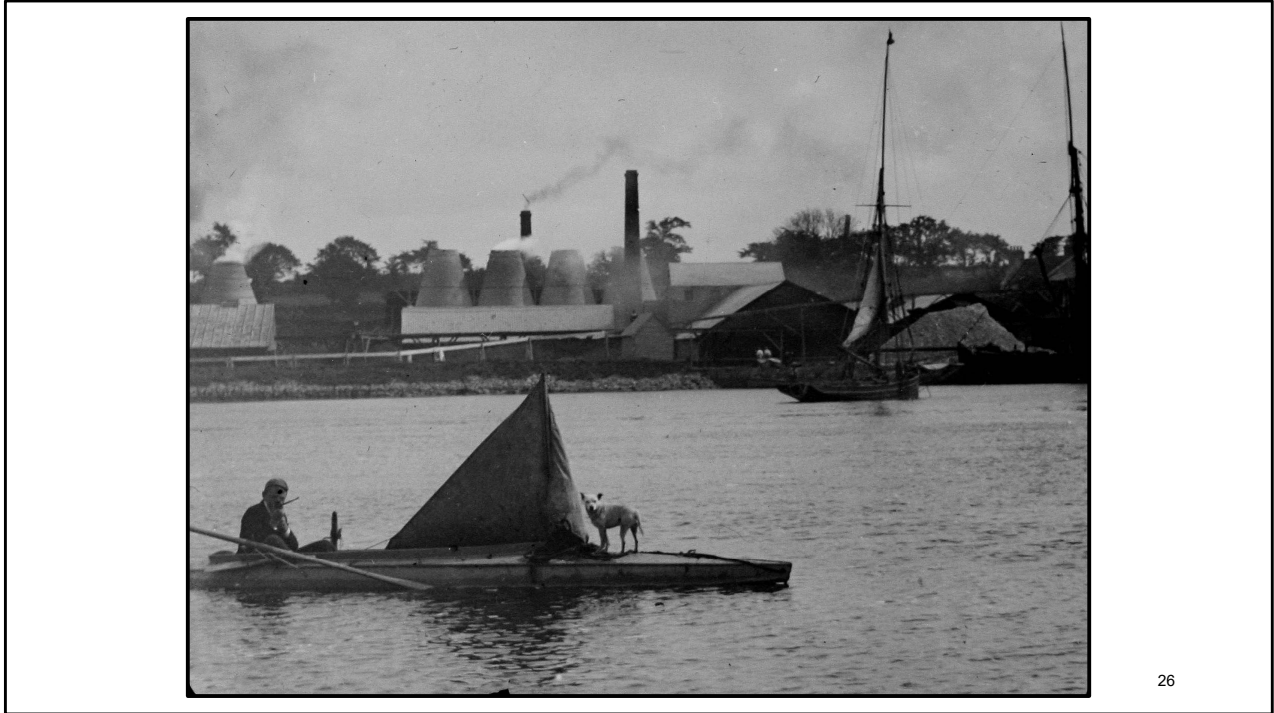
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Although the coprolite trade faded out in the early 1890s, the Cement Workscontinued to flourish with **twelve kilns**, three banks of four, in action in the early years of the 20th century.



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Activity on the quay was completely different to what it is now



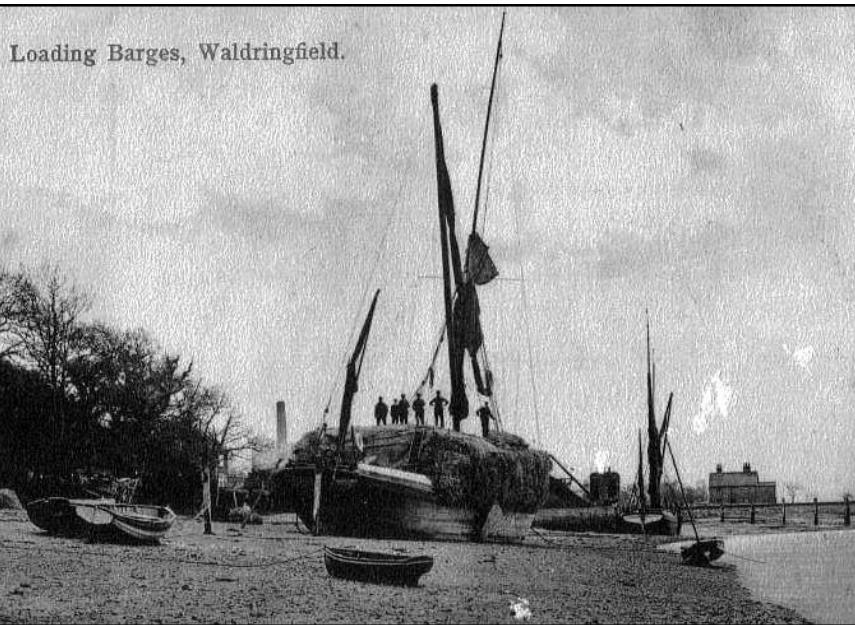
Here's another view of the factory but just look also at the duck punt.

How TNW got this photo intrigues us – it's taken **from the water** – boats **rock** and this camera would have been **very unsteady** on its tripod. In later years he had the smaller camera but, even so, the picture was still taken from a boat. In our opinion it is a superb composition, typical of TNW with his eye for **leading lines** and **contrasts** of tone and contrasts of **subject**. How the cement works in the background contrast with the one man and his dog on the duck-punt, balanced as they are by the sailing barge. And how does he get his animal subjects to look at the camera?



Here's another

how to take such a well-composed in-focus photograph from the water and to achieve all those reflections of movement in the water – and, before it's suggested, it's not taken from the island! And there was no telephoto – and no photoshop. Brilliant



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The **other trade** going on at this time was **'hay'**

here loaded on the beach for transporting to **London**, where **horse drawn traffic** was the norm. This photograph shows some of the blemishes, characteristic of the earlier glass plates. We are not sure about the labelling, whether this was something that TNW was able to do or whether it has been done by a.n.other.



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Here we have another glass plate of the beach probably taken about the time of the coprolite pictures – the mid 1880s



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Now this has the texture and composition so typical of TNW. It must have been taken about 1920, judging by the young lady's attire and the vehicles in the background. Notice the apparent absence of anything to do with the cement works, although we know that behind the little shed are the remains of one row of kilns – because they are still there today. Of course, there is a risk that this is not a TNW. What we can be fairly certain about is that whoever took this photo also took the next two OR, to be precise, that the same person labelled all three.



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There appear to be **no TNW views of 'The Maybush'** or The Old Maltings so, we'll follow the hundred year old walk up Cliff Road, away from the river toward the Cement cottages



Recently snapped for comparison by Group member, Jacky Waghorn.

That metal signpost was not there in the original – neither was the colour or the telegraph post.



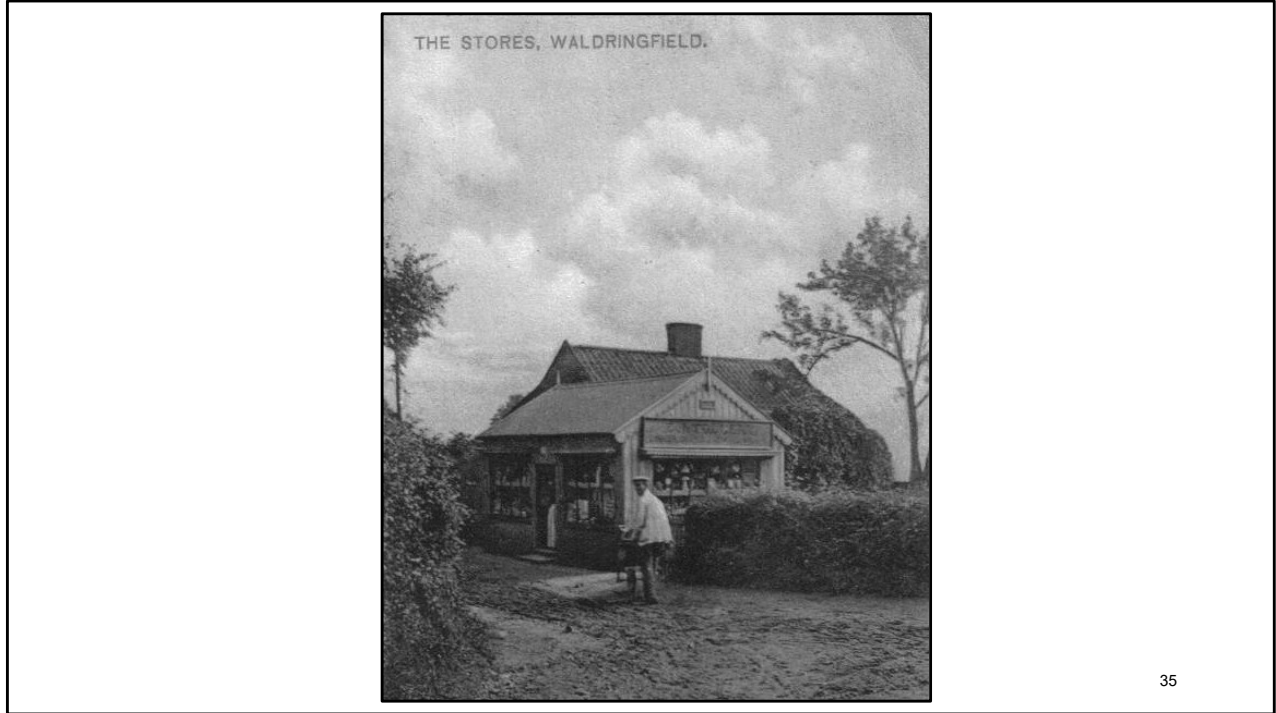
A shop and a turning to the right came into existence about 1902/1904 when they built Riverview Cottages – it became Deben Lane

Here seen – looking back at Cliff Road. These semi-detached cottages were built for cement works



Deben Lane

Here is the same scene for comparison. The top half of the stable was removed in the nineteen eighties and now, of course there are buildings on the left and on the other side of Cliff Road. The lane itself appears to have a serious rash.



Back on Cliff Road we proceed to what was then Lower Road, but now Sandy Lane, we see the village stores.

The annotation on this slide is in the same font and style as that on the barges on the beach scene which we have dated mid 1880s. So, this picture, too, is probably mid 1880s. It bears the name of Stollery and, indeed, we have an earlier shot



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With **Mrs Eliza Stollery** and some of her family standing outside. She was **widowed and left with a young family in 1880** and it seems she was set up in the shop not long after. Note the pair of cottages to which the shop was attached.

Now

The Old Post
Office and
Elizabeth
cottage



Now, of course, that corner looks very different

We'll go down Lower Road, now Sandy Lane – there are no houses on either side until we get to Novocastria and its gardens.



Here we see TNW and his wife, Nellie - certainly **NOT** one of TNW's glass plates because he is in the photograph and I'm pretty sure they had no delayed exposure mechanisms then. We should be able to get some idea of the age of the photograph from Nellie's volunteer uniform.

At the other end of Sandy Lane we turn left into The Street, now called Fishpond Road and it is in this area that we can still see some of the oldest houses, today, Dairy Farm and Rose Cottage.

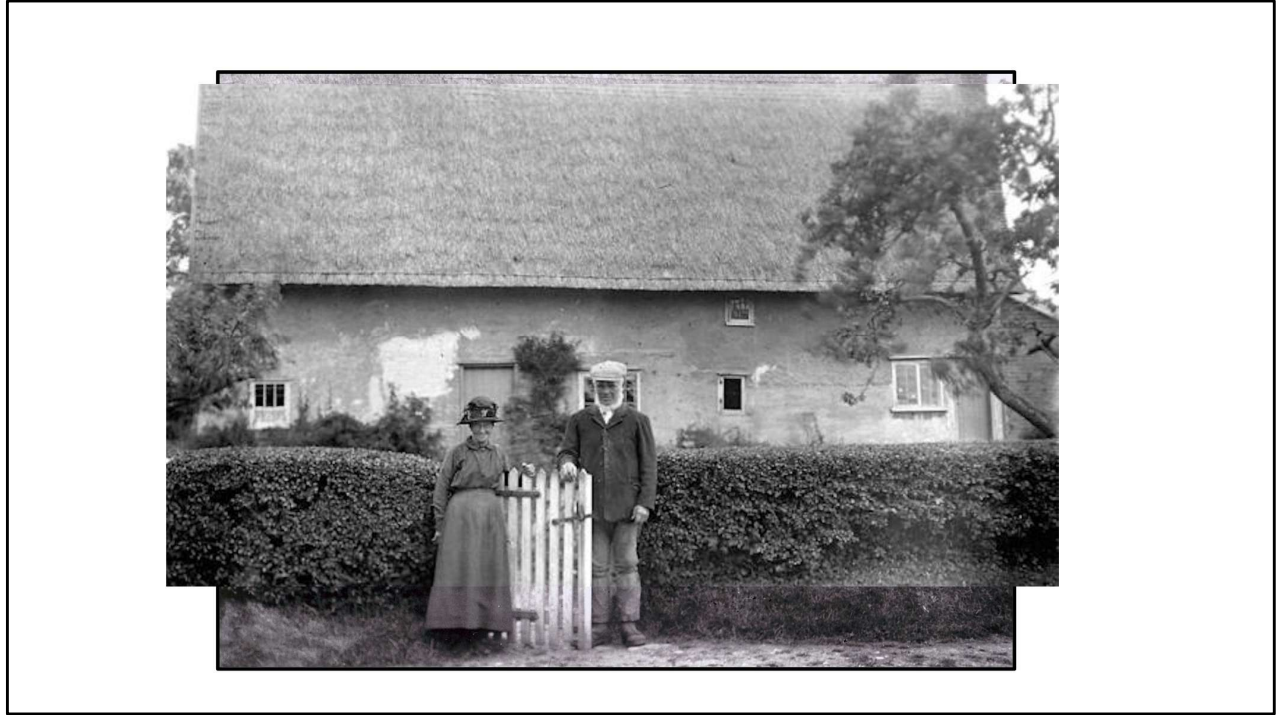
The oldest property?



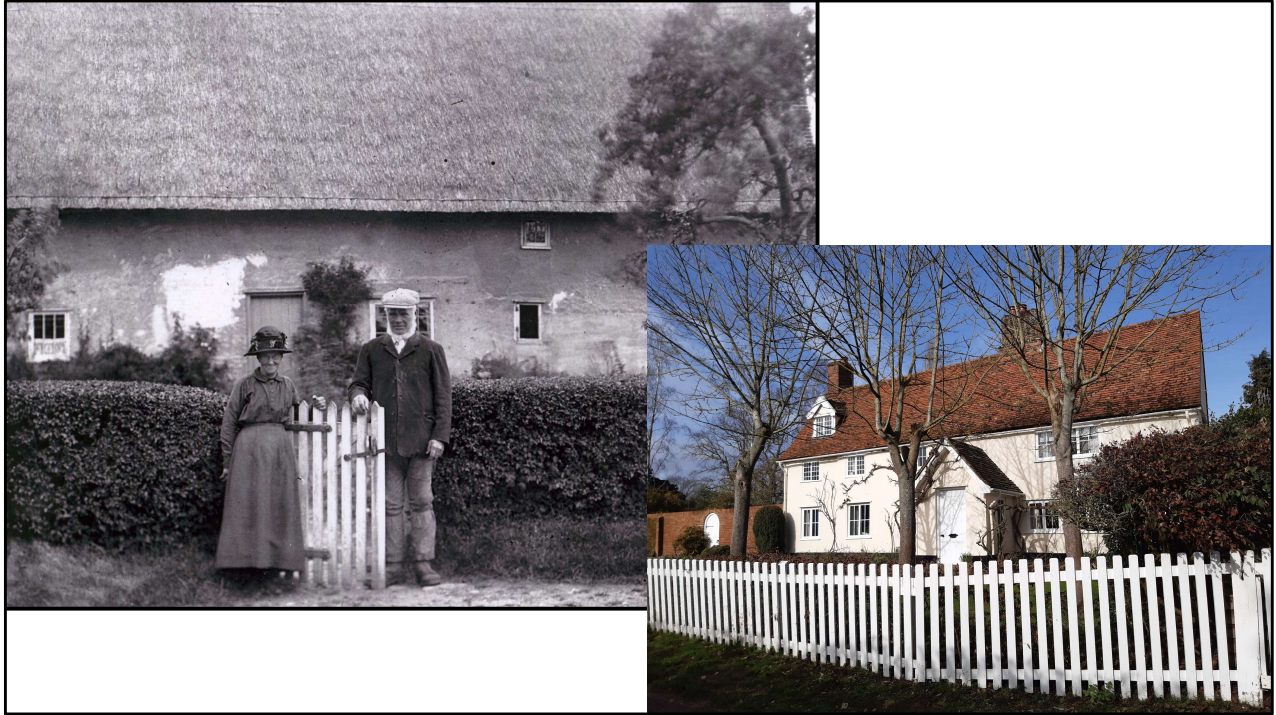
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In Joe's talk there were two pictures – the one of Dairy farm which was labelled as the oldest house

This is not from a glass plate, but the other



..... now Rose Cottage but originally a pair of thatched cottages, probably is ,

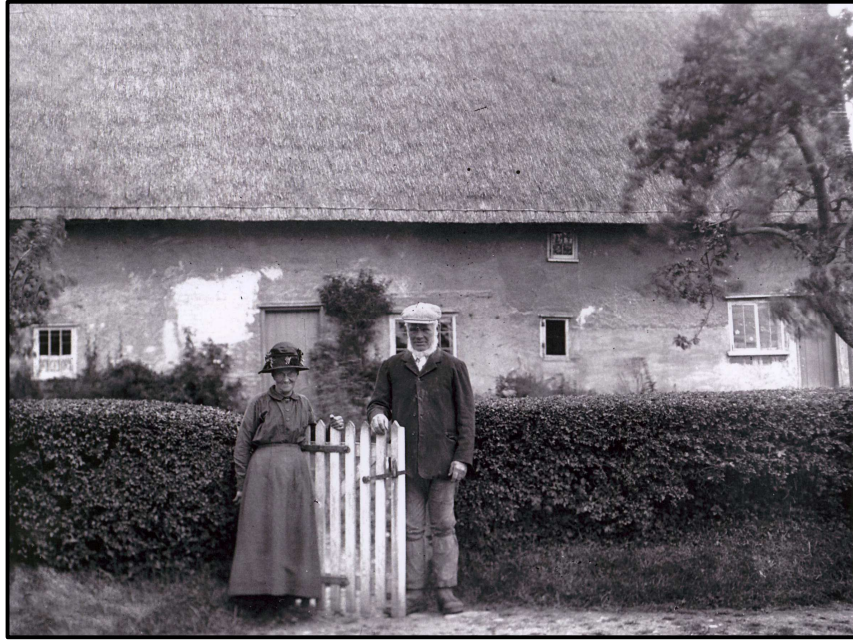


As you might see from comparison

with modern times there are architectural features which make us wonder if it might be another building, elsewhere, **but it was included** in Joe's presentation and the original, before adaptation for Joe's talk, confirms clearly that the building was just two cottages (which we know to be correct for today's 'Rose Cottage')

We believe that the gentleman in the picture is probably one John Jaye, a farmer who lived in various locations in the village, first with his mother and then with his sister who we believe to be the lady.

Passing up The Street, leaving Dairy Farm on our left we would have seen, on our right, Rivers Hall Farm – which is no longer there





This photograph was **not** in Joe and Stan's presentation. It came from an unknown source as a consequence of the call for old photographs; we have included it here because it took us several years to work out where it was – or rather, **where it had been**.

On our right, further up the Street, we pass The Rectory,



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complete with Thomas Henry Waller and two female members of his family on the lawn.



45

Or even better, a game of tennis



Or a gander at the view from the terrace

Another picture not in Joe and Stan's original walk of one hundred years before was this one



which was probably taken on the fishpond after which Fishpond Road was named. We suspect it is one of TNW's. Anxious to ensure that nobody falls in whilst we watch, we will leave you with the work of another great Waldringfield artist – Giles



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This was included in Joe and Stan's presentation: it tells a tremendous amount of the more recent history of the village as there are **all sorts of people** in there from the local sea-scoutmaster to Lord Beaverbrook. (the subject of a previous talk)

Time for the BREAK