



## THE HOWES FAMILY

By Peter Steward

**T**he first time myself and my cousin Belinda walked across the Abbey grounds together, we were taken by the ornate nature of the two gravestones pictured. They were for members of the Howes Family. Howes, being quite a common Wymondham name, we decided to look a little deeper into some members of the family and here's what we found.

Walter Howes was born in Wymondham on 18th October, 1845, which was a Saturday (not that this is of any relevance). His parents were James Howes and Susannah (nee Todd). Walter was the fourth child of eight (four boys and four girls).

In the 1841 census the family (obviously without Walter who had yet to be born) was living in Damgate Street and James was a weaver.

Ten years later the family were still living in Damgate Street and Walter was listed as a scholar.

By 1861, the family had moved to Church Street and Walter was a 14-year-old shoemaker - and this is where it becomes interesting. Wymondham at the time was awash with ale houses and pubs. James was listed as a worsted weaver and publican. It looks as if he was licensee of the Goat Public House which was next door to another pub - The Rose and Crown and which today is the offices of Spire Solicitors.

Just across the road from The Goat and the Rose and Crown was the historic Green Dragon, making three major alehouses within a matter of a few yards and just around the corner from Wymondham Abbey.

James was licensee of the Goat

from 1856 to 1865. But things didn't go well and we are told that "Following an objection to the licence renewal on Friday, 8th September, 1865, Messrs Crawshay and Youngs informed the bench that it was their intention to remove Mr Howes on 6th January, 1866." As a consequence, a licence was granted for just six months.

The next licensee didn't fare much better - James Skipper was fined "for permitting drunkenness in his house at two o'clock in the morning of Tuesday, 22nd June 1869." Two months later the licence was renewed but with a caution. As for the Goat Public House: Well, it started its life in 1794 and closed in 1926.

But back to James Howes. Sadly, he didn't live long and prosper after leaving the pub. By 1871 both he and his wife were dead and Walter had moved away. He was living as a shoe and bootmaker with the Cook family in Old Market Plain, Lowestoft, Suffolk.

But Walter's time in Lowestoft was short. He died on 17th, January, 1872, in Duke's Head Street, Lowestoft. He was unmarried and just 26 years-of-age. Present at the death was F Howes who may well have been his older brother Frederick. The cause of death is given as apoplexy which could have been a stroke or fit of some kind.

Walter was buried in Wymondham Abbey on 21st January, 1872, which was a Sunday. A Frederick Howes is listed as licensee of the White Horse Pub from 1879 to 1886 - this could have been James' son and Walter's brother.

Wymondham today has a handful of pubs for a population of 17,000 plus. In 1622 there were 33 alehouses and, in

1747, 39 alehouses for a population of 3,213. That means one alehouse to every 82.38 people and if you've ever seen .38 of a person we would like to know!

Over the years many of the alehouses were closed as demand dropped and many became redundant and unable to pay their way.



By Alex Perry

## War Reporter

**“**I sat on the top deck of the bus, near Britannia Pier in Yarmouth, and watched them fire rockets into the sky.” This was not a recollection of a bonfire night or of some grand royal occasion. No, Ted was remembering the Second World War, when men with white helmets marked “ARP” needed to see through the thick fog off the Norfolk coast just in case the Germans were coming to invade!

Ted Barham had four brothers, and the two older ones, Reggie and Jim, served in the Royal Navy as cadets. Unfortunately, you did not have to join the Armed Forces to be on the front line, and you had the Morrison shelter under the table and the Anderson shelter in the garden to prove it.

Ted recalls that there were several evacuee children from Gravesend who took up lodging near the War Memorial in Wymondham, including two boys who stayed with his Aunt Edie. They were warmly welcomed by the community in which they both worked and studied hard.

The War coincided with Ted's school days, and he always had his gas mask on him when he went about his studies. His teacher, Mr. Clark, ensured that there was a vital supply of locally grown vegetables.

Mr. Clark taught Ted to recognise a plant called Fat Hen; a weed which is poisonous to cattle. Ted had to gather up the fat hen without staining his hands with the toxic berry juice and arrange for it to be burned. This way he protected cows and he did his bit to win the War.

It may be tempting to think of dividing our rubbish into black, green, and brown bins as just modern environmentalism. We can easily forget that, before the age of mass consumer goods, there was a time when second-hand rubber boots were treasured. Ted watched the people of Wymondham bring their 'rubbish' to the "Stray Ground" and saw volunteers carefully sort it into categories so that nothing was wasted.

Next time, Ted will tell you about his days as a teenage farm worker.

## Did you know?

Population growth statistics for Norfolk over the last ten years show an increase of **6.6%** and last 20 years **14.7%** increase. Whereas the parish of Wymondham has had population growth of **27.6%** in 10 years and **47.46%** over 20 years.

The 2001 census put Wymondham at **11,865** people and in 2021 at **17,496**. Norfolk has grown from **798,600** in 2001 to **916,120** in 2021. Of all districts in Norfolk, South Norfolk has seen the largest increase in the number of people.

(Source <https://citypopulation.de/en/uk/>)