

# 1896 Newspapers

Eastern Daily Press 07 April 1896

## NORWICH VOLUNTEERS IN THE FIELD. ENGAGEMENT AT FLORDON.

A dull and leaden sky, with an exceedingly humid atmosphere, and the highways and bye-ways in a very muddy condition, did not promise an interesting or comfortable experience to the men of the Norwich Rifle Volunteers and of the Norwich Artillery who mustered shortly after eight o'clock yesterday morning for an expedition which meant tramping along miry roads and over ploughed fields, and making tracks across fences and over ditches. About 240 of the Rifles turned up at the rendezvous, Victoria Station, in a smart and soldier-like condition, well equipped for a rough march, for they wore their Glengarries and leggings, and carried rolled capes. Major Hill was in command of the men, who constituted four companies, led respectively by Captains Spelman, Orams, Clarke, and Prior. There were about 100 rank and file of the Artillery under the command of Major Beck, the other officers being Captain Taylor, Lieutenant Curl, Lieutenant Paterson, Surgeon-Captain Compton, and Quartermaster Hayward. On Adjutant and Captain Besant of the Rifle Volunteers, an officer who has seen active service, devolved the greater part of the

responsibility for the day's expedition, as he sketched and mapped out the plan of campaign.

A special train, starting at nine o'clock, took the volunteers on to Flordon. There the Rifles alighted, while the Artillery went on to Forncett, a newspaper correspondent being attached to each of the forces. The Norwich Battalion, formed into column in the station yard, marched off, preceded by signalmen, cyclists, and the band, towards the village, but were soon brought to a halt in an open space on the brow of a hill commanding a view of the valley and of the rising ground of the little village of Hapton. Companies 1 and 2, led by Captains Spelman and Orams, under the command of Major Raven, were sent in advance to occupy the high ground from Hapton Hall to Hapton Church; while Companies 3 and 4 under the command of Captain Prior were held in reserve between Forncett and Hapton.

Though there was no change in the atmospheric conditions, yet they seemed when associated with hedgerows putting forth tender leaves, and with fields and meadows even in damp verdure clad, to be entirely different from those which had enveloped the city, and consequently the men marched with a springy step. Through bye and accommodation roads, a farm yard, and across fields, Companies 1 and 2 marched, till they were in a position from which to send out scouts right and left along

the road between Hapton Hall and the church, each company maintaining a centre on which the scouts could fall back. Cyclists scoured the lanes and roads on either hand within the V-shaped angle of the two lines of railway which meet at Forncett, from which the attack was expected, and scouts crept along behind hedges and trees, that they might give the earliest possible alarm of the approach of the enemy to the supports, who sought cover behind buildings or woods.

Meantime the attacking force, supposed to be in great strength, had at ten o'clock despatched the Artillery, serving as infantry, through Forncett village, a number of the men being sent in advance as scouts, and the main body, under Lieutenant Paterson, making their way by Bayes's Lane towards Hapton. The object of the attacking force was to capture Flordon village and station, and it was to prevent this that the defending party occupied the intervening ridge at Hapton. Certainly no more suitable bit of country could have been selected for the morning's operations, and as the Eastern Counties' Tactical Association have recently been over the ground some of the officers were familiar with it, while each side had a map of the district.

Little or nothing seemed to be known in the country side of the storm cloud gathering about Hapton, for there were not more than a score persons on the road watching the movements of the redcoats, whose scouts, some with glasses, had a good view from the ridge of a gentle valley extending on their left from Tharston mill to a large farm alongside Bayes's Lane below the distant upland on the right. It was towards the hedgerows of the fields on the high ground on the other side of the valley that the scouts of the defending force directed their attention. But the swift moving cyclists, Lieutenant Taylor leading those of the

attack, notwithstanding the miry condition of the roads, were the first to discover the whereabouts of the forces opposed to them. About two miles of country had to be covered by the skirmishing companies of the Rifles, to meet a possible attack from Tharston on the one hand, and from Bayes's Lane on the other, some of the intervening tract being too marshy and too open for an advance in that direction.

Flag signalling gave the defenders intimation that the enemy were approaching, and about eleven o'clock the dark uniformed Artillerymen could be seen stealing up from fence to fence, keeping well under cover, till they came to the descent of Bayes's Lane. As soon as these extended skirmishers broke cover to cross a field to the next fence the defenders opened fire from behind the hedges lining the Hapton Road. In an instant, as it were, the scene seemed to undergo a change, as the Artillerymen in extended line advanced across the valley towards the Hapton slope, firing smartly the while, but answered as promptly by the rifles of the red-coats. As the main attacking force was advancing across the valley towards Hapton Church, a detachment made a detour by Bayes's Lane to take the defenders on their right flank, while another detachment had come by Tharston Mill, nearly two miles off, to attack them on the left flank.

Directly the Artillerymen had turned the right flank of the Rifles, the latter had to retreat all along the line from the Hapton Road and fall back upon their supports, who poured in upon the pursuers a fire that would have been disastrously destructive had it been a real battle. The excitement increased with the sound of firing from the left of the defenders' position, which was being threatened by the detachment of Artillery who had marched by Tharston Mill. But meanwhile, Captain Prior's reserves had been

marched from Flordon towards the part of Hapton thus endangered, and effectually intercepted the movement on the left flank.

The scene was at some points of the most animated and picturesque description, for the opposing forces were extended over a very wide area, and now and again rallied behind fences, and sometimes in the open, to deliver a volley. Unquestionably if the action had been real a good many on either side would have been more careful to seek cover, and not to expose themselves so unnecessarily to each other's fire. As the redcoats retired towards Flordon village, contesting the ground field by field, the firing was exceedingly brisk, and in the dip to the common the effect even rose to grandeur, owing to the remarkable reverberation from the heights around. The firing had so effectually awakened the attention of the people of the district to the fact that something unusual was occurring at Flordon that by the time "cease firing" sounded no inconsiderable number of labouring folk and others had been attracted to the spot from the villages around.

The different companies then marched back to the green in front of the Railway Inn at Flordon, and made a combined and annihilating attack on the refreshments which Quartermaster Hayward had disposed in the most convenient order for an assault thereon. Major Back, addressing his men (who had done the roughest and most of the work), congratulated them on the way in which they, acting as infantry, had acquitted themselves. All of them, he was sure, had learned something from the morning's operations. He asked his men to give three cheers for Major Hill and the Rifle Volunteers. This was heartily done, and Major

Hill and the Rifles reciprocated the good feeling shown by their "friends the enemy" in like manner. Punctual to the time the station-master had the special train alongside the plat-

form, and in a few minutes the travel-stained volunteers had returned to Norwich. Great credit is due to all concerned for the way in which the programme was carried out.

Eastern Daily Press 04 June 1896

### **HAPTON.**

**PRESBYTERIAN CHAPEL.**—On Sunday afternoon last the usual service in connection with this place of worship took the form of a P.S.A. gathering. A variety of sacred songs and solos of a choice and interesting character, were rendered by the choir, assisted by friends from a distance, and, in lieu of connective readings suitable remarks were interspersed by the Rev. J. C. Knapton, the minister. The chapel was crowded with an attentive and appreciative audience. Too many thanks cannot be accorded to every one who sought to render the service effective, particularly to Mr. George Ludkin, who very kindly and ably presided at the organ, and to the choir generally, whose successful songs and solos need no praise.

Norwich Mercury 27 June 1896

**DUNTHORNE.**—On the 21st inst., at Hapton, after a long and painful illness, Hannah, the dearly beloved wife of Norton Dunthorne, of Hapton Chapel Farm, in her 43rd year.

Eastern Daily Press 13 July 1896

### THE THARSTON WATER, STEAM, AND WIND MILLS ESTATE.

**M**ESSRS. SPELMAN have received instructions to Sell by Auction, on SATURDAY, JULY 18TH, 1896, at Two for Three o'clock, at the Agricultural Hall, Norwich, the FREEHOLD ESTATE known as THARSTON MILLS, situate on the Road from Hapton to Tasburgh, about two miles from Flordon, Forncett, and Ashwellthorpe Stations on the G.E.R., in the County of Norfolk, in the occupation of Mr. Alfred Phillippo, at the yearly rent of £105, comprising the Water and Steam Power Mills, with Engine and Boiler House, and fitted with a 10-h.p. Boiler by Riches & Watts, and 8-hp. Vertical High-pressure Engine by Riches & Watts, with all Steam Pipes and Fittings; a Centrifugal Scalper put up six years since by Riches & Watts; a Centrifugal Silk Flour Mill, nearly new; a No. 10 Flour Mill and Sifter 3 Pairs of 4-ft. Stones, &c. The House contains, Sitting-rooms, Counting-room, Kitchen, Store-room, 2 Wash-house, 4 Bedrooms, Cheese-room, &c.; also adjoining are good Gardens. The Out-buildings comprise a Brick and - Tile Cart Shed, 2 Open Sheds, Loose Box, and Yard, a Modern Range of Brick-and-Tile Buildings, viz., Loose Box, Hay House, Harness House, and Stable, with Three Stalls and one Box. Also adjoining are Several Valuable Pastures of good quality, and another Pasture next the Road, at a short distance. Standing at a considerable elevation is a Brick Tower Wind Mill, with Two Pairs of Stones and other Machinery, the whole containing about 9a. 0r. 13p.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale may be had of Messrs. Spelman, Norwich and Yarmouth; at the Estate Exchange, Tokenhouse Yard, E.C.; and of  
**LEATHES PRIOR, Esq.,**  
Vendors' Solicitor, Norwich.

Norfolk News 21 November 1896

### HAPTON.

**MARRIAGE.**—The marriage of Mr. George Ludkin of this place, eldest son of Mr. George Ludkin of Tacolnoston, to Miss Emma Spicer of Forncett St. Mary, third daughter of Mr. Thomas Spicer of the Chenery Farm, Pulham Market, was celebrated in the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Forncett St. Peter, on the 17th inst. The ceremony was performed by the Rev. A. Parkin, assisted by the Rev. J. C. Knapton, in the presence of a large congregation. At the close of the service the bride and bridegroom, with their respective friends, repaired to the bride's residence, where the evening was spent most pleasantly and agreeably. Mr. Knapton, on behalf of his congregation at Hapton, presented the bridegroom with a silver-plated teapot, as a small recognition of his services as organist, accompanied by suitable remarks. The father of the bridegroom, Mr. G. Ludkin of Tacolnoston, presented his son and daughter-in-law with a very handsome family Bible, accompanying the gift with many tender and touching remarks on the importance of making it their study and guide and future rule of life. The bride and bridegroom were also the recipients of many other presents, to the kind donors of which they gratefully desire to express their acknowledgments. The Rev. A. Parkin spoke humourously and effectively on the duties of married life, illustrating by anecdotes why marriage was sometimes a failure. After a few closing remarks from the brother of the bride, Mr. Henry Spicer, the usual games and pastimes were resorted to, and the remainder of the evening was spent pleasantly and agreeably.

## NORFOLK ORCHARDS.

A special commissioner of the *Gardeners' Magazine* has been in Norfolk inquiring into the present condition of fruit growing in the county. In the course of an entertaining article he says:—The soil in this county is very varied in character, much of it fertile, and well suited for fruit culture. Undoubted evidence of its suitability is to be found in the exceedingly fine forest trees to be seen in great numbers distributed over most of the districts. The oak and beech in particular predominate, and in no other county in England, I believe, are so many and such fine trees of the latter to be found as in Norfolk. Very numerous and of goodly proportions are the walnut trees, which are found in greater or less numbers distributed over almost the whole county.

Taking the ancient city of Norwich as a starting point, which for centuries has been commonly called "The City of Gardens" and "The City in an Orchard," I found it surrounded by very fertile land, and good private gardens. Well-cultivated market gardens also abound on all sides. The designation "City in an Orchard" is, however, at the present time misleading, as in its immediate suburbs orchards are neither numerous nor good. A few miles south of the city, however, passing through Poringland, where a few old neglected orchards are visible, we come to the large and picturesque village of Brooke. The district of which Brooke is the centre is very frequently described as "The Garden of Norfolk." Here are good gardens fronting most of the cottages, which are usually set back some considerable distance from the roadway, and in the main these gardens are very well cultivated, and bright in summer with roses, dahlias, and hardy border flowers. Many of the cottage fronts are covered with grape vines, and large walnut trees abound throughout the parish. At Brooke, Berghapton, Seething, Mundham, and other villages in the neighbourhood, old orchards are numerous, and the great size and vigorous growth of many of the apple trees testify abundantly to the suitable character of the soil for the successful cultivation of these fruits for market.

Here, however, as a most throughout the county, gross neglect of all a proved cultural methods is only too evident. In all directions the trees are densely covered with lichens and moss; little or no pruning is ever done to them, with the result that the trees of some kinds, "Dr. Harvey" in particular (which is a favourite over the greater part of Norfolk, and found in a most every orchard, and not a few gardens, and has a thick crowding habit of growth), are so dense in summer that hardly any light can penetrate them. The trees in these orchards usually crop heavily, 20 to 30 bushels of fruit being frequently taken from a single tree, but no thinning of the fruit is ever practised. As the result of this, combined with the crowded state of the branches, much, if not the greater part of the fruit is very small, inferior, and practically worthless for market. The gathering, packing, and marketing of the fruit is as crude and unsatisfactory as the fruit is inferior. A large portion of the apples are shaken from the trees to the ground (and of this I had plenty of proof), and form a thick layer, the fruits, falling upon each other, are badly bruised and many broken. They are then thrown together to form a heap against the tree stem, and from this, without any sorting, they are pitched into baskets and sacks. Yes, sacks! for many of the Norfolk apples are sold at per sack, and thus sent to either Norwich or Yarmouth markets. If they are not sent to market by the growers, they are sold to one of the many dealers who are constantly traversing the country districts in the autumn months for the purpose of buying apples. Berghapton, Seething, Mundham, and the small town of Loddon, enjoy a reputation as centres of cherry culture, the Black Gean being the variety usually found in the village cottage gardens. The trees are mostly old ones, often very large indeed, and they are still very vigorous and healthy, seldom failing to yield a heavy crop, a point to which I would direct special attention, as showing how thoroughly suited is the soil, the situation, and the climate to the culture of this fruit. More than one tree was pointed out to me on my visit to the villages as having paid the rent of the cottage, in the garden of which it stood, for the past thirty years at least.

Travelling westwards, I came to Banham and Attleborough, where there are cider manufactories,

well known for the excellence of the beverage produced at them. I found, in the course of my inquiries, that in Norfolk, special varieties, such as the Fox-whelp, are not grown for cider-making, as in the West of England; but instead, a mixture consisting of varieties in general cultivation is used, preference evidently being given to the sweeter sorts. Norfolk cider is much sweeter and somewhat clearer than are the ciders of Somerset and Devon. It has a good reputation, and there can be no doubt that the industry might be greatly developed. The orchards in this part of the county, although fairly numerous, are, I regret to state, old, dilapidated, and badly cultivated, and consequently unprofitable.

In the neighbourhood of Aylsham—which is a small but very interesting market town, where are many good private gardens, and in the beautiful churchyard is seen the grave of Humphrey Repton, embowered in roses.—Mr. John Howe, for many years a Kentish fruit grower, is largely engaged in cultivating the small fruits, particularly strawberries and black currants. These fruits are grown principally for the northern markets, and give good results. The vigour and fine appearance of the plantations testify alike to the suitability of the land and climate for the small fruits, and the industry and skill with which they are cultivated. The proof that is thus given of the success with which soft fruits may be grown for commercial purposes should have induced some of the more enterprising residents in the district to plant apples and plums also, and cultivate them in accordance with advanced practice. But it has not been a sufficient inducement, for in the district no recently planted or cultivated orchards are to be seen; but many that are small and old are met with, and these present a great similarity in their characteristics, which are old age, decrepitude, and neglect.

At Langley Hall fruit is well cultivated. In the large kitchen garden is a long embowered arch of apples and pears, running through the centre of the garden the whole length of them. This apple arch is formed by espalier trees planted on either side of a broad walk, and so trained across the walk as to form a perfect arch overhead. The trees, I would mention, carry fine crops of fruit, and, at the same time, provide an enjoyable shady avenue for summer walks.

In the grass orchard the large standard trees are judiciously pruned and liberally fed, and consequently carry good crops annually. Sir Reginald Beauchamp, Bart., the proprietor of Langley Hall, is very anxious to encourage fruit culture upon his large estates, and annually makes purchases of large numbers of young apple trees for distribution amongst his tenants. But few of these, I greatly fear, from what I saw during my investigations, are making satisfactory progress. They appear in too many cases to have been badly planted, and very indifferently cared for since planting. I should say that the after management is even worse than the planting of trees.

At Ashwellthorpe, Tacolnstone, **Hapton**, and the Fornetts are many orchards, and these, unhappily, are, with few exceptions, of the neglected order, and all of great age. At the rectory of the latter is an orchard and fruit garden much gone to decay, said to have been planted by the now many years deceased Bishop Colenso, who was at one time rector of Fornett St. Mary. About seven miles from Thetford and four from Stoke Ferry is a tract of land called "The Fruit Colony." This comprises a large area, probably some 150 acres, which previously was devoted to the production of farm crops. The land is situated between the villages of Methwold and Northwold, and has been laid out in two-acre plots, on most of which a dwelling-house and outbuilding have been erected, and the land planted with apples, pears, and plums, in most cases bush trees on the Paradise stock. The founder and guiding spirit of the colony is Mr. R. H. Goodrich, a very well-known lecturer on Vegetarianism and Thrift, who himself occupies and cultivates two of the plots, and has built for himself thereon a good dwelling-house, offices, warehouses, and a jam factory. He has also established a consumers' "village produce direct supply" business, by which mixed packages of fruit, vegetables, jam, honey, eggs, and other similar products are sent direct, carriage paid per passenger train, to consumers in London. This business is apparently growing rapidly, and with the aid of the advantageous railway rates for the carriage of farm and garden produce in small quantities up to sixty pounds, seems destined to find a market for most of the produce, fruit, vege-

tables, &c., of the colony. Many of the colonists are inexperienced in fruit culture, and it would be surprising were it otherwise, for they chiefly consist of London tradesmen and shopkeepers, who, having acquired a small capital, have given up town life and invested in one of these small freeholds. They, however, obtain good advice, and on many of the plots the trees are doing well and giving good returns.

The principal fruit-growing district of the county at the present day is that around the small, but busy, market town of Wisbech and bordering on Cambridgeshire. This district, which is almost entirely given over to fruit culture and market gardening, comprises the parishes of Walsoken, Upwell, Outwell, Walpole, Tarrington, The Tilneys, Wisbech, and Wisbech St. Mary. One of the pioneers of fruit-growing was Mr. Richard Bath, a member of a well-known Kentish family of fruit-growers. Some twenty years back he took over the Manor Farm, Wisbech, and quickly converted the whole of his land into extensive fruit grounds, planting all kinds, large and small fruits. Other pioneers were the Messrs. Crockett of Walsoken and Messrs. Harrison Bros. of Tilney St. Mary.

Against this one district, in which enterprise and good cultivation prevails, I have to set almost the whole of a large and naturally fertile county, where neglect and waste characterise the orchards, and neglected, often ruined fruit trees, are the rule in gardens. As I have already stated, a large part of the county is well suited to fruit culture. The winter moth has never been seriously troublesome in the county, proximity to the sea coast ensures a temperate climate, and spring frosts are not nearly so destructive as they are further inland. The absence of good local markets for all save those near enough to Norwich or Yarmouth is the most serious drawback, but the railway companies are fast doing their part to afford the utmost facilities for the profitable disposal of the fruit; and it now remains for those who own or occupy land to give their serious attention to the question of fruit growing and replace the thousands of worthless fruit trees that are so depressing to those who are conversant with advanced methods of fruit culture and the capabilities of the county, with young trees that, under a proper course of procedure, will afford an ample return to their owners.

Norwich Mercury 21 November 1896

### TASBURGH.

STAG HUNT.—On Monday, the 7th, the Dragoon Guards' staghounds met at Tasburgh Hall, the residence of Mr. B. Ficklin. Shortly after 11 o'clock the deer was uncartered in a meadow in the occupation of Mr. Gowing, of Tharston Hall. After the usual 20 minutes, the hounds were laid on. They headed for Long Stratton. When nearing that village the deer turned by the turnpike road to Tasburgh Mill, where it took the river, and remained there for about 20 minutes, until the hounds arrived. The animal then broke away in the direction of Rainton Hall, and on to Flordon Station—along the railway—and from there to Hapton Hall, where, we believe, it was captured, after an hour's run. There was a large gathering of ladies and gentlemen at the meet.