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WALBERSWICK
LOCAL HISTORY
GROUP

WALBERSWICK

FAMILIES

1600 — 1900

COMPILED BY:

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ANCHORLEA,

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INTRODUCTION.

This comprehensive list of persons who have been born, lived and died in Walberswick during the period from about 1600 to 1900 has been compiled after intensive research into the mainly 3 most important sources of information: The Parish Register, Census and the Public Record Office, in the latter of which all entries of births, marriages and deaths from July 1837 onwards are kept.

Parish Register: This consists of entries by the local priest (vicar) of christenings, weddings and burials at the local church. These entries can be inspected on micro - films at the District Public Libraries (Lowestoft, Ipswich etc.), but the very early entries - before the 18th. century - are very sketchy and often illegible and as these entries are also very difficult to check, they have to be accepted at their face value. A further element of inaccuracy, which has to be taken into account, is the erroneous-spelling of names, which was often carried out by copying the phonetic sounds, as in those days many of the inhabitants were illiterate and signed their names with a cross.

The marriage entries are always correct to the day of the wedding, while the death entries denote the day of interment which can take place from apprx. 3 days to one week after death.

The baptismal entries are far less accurate in relation to the date of birth, because a christening can take place any time from the day of birth (private baptism) to an interval of weeks or sometimes years after the birth and occasionally parents have several of their children baptised simultaneously. For this reason both dates - that of the birth as well as that of the christening - have been quoted whenever they were given in the Parish Register.

Also parents who did not belong to the Church of England, like i.e. Non-Conformists, Methodists etc. did not have their children baptised at the local church, but at the appropriate chapels which, in case of Walberswick, had their nearest centre of administration in Southwold and therefore no proof of accurate place of birth could be obtained in these circumstances, as both places come under the same register of Blyth in P.R.O. and some of those birth entries may have been "lost" in that way.

It may also be worth mentioning that prior to 1752 the church year ended on Lady Day (25. March) and some - but not all - ministers used this method with the result that entries from January to March were given the date of the previous year, which could be confusing.

To minimize all possible errors it was essential that all these entries were checked at Public Record Office (Catherine's House, London), providing they occurred after July 1837, the beginning of the compulsory registration. All birth, marriage and death entries are displayed in the research rooms in heavy volumes, mostly divided into 4 quarters of the year, therefore the actual event of birth, marriage and death can thus fall into the 3 months prior to March, June, Sept. and Dec. (indicated by the capital letters M. J. S. D.) if no other proof of a correct date is available.

Although the P.R.O. is the most reliable source of information, on rare occasions omissions of entries have been encountered but after every successful check-up at the P.R.O. this sign: ° has been placed after the date, while the sign: # indicates an unsuccessful check-up, inspite of extensive search.

A further and most essential source of information can be obtained from the: Population Censuses which are taken every decade, starting (in case of Walberswick) in 1841 and end in 1891, the last census available to the public to date.

The 1841 census is rather basic for it does not give the occupation, place of birth, relationship of families, nor the correct age which has been rounded off to the nearest figure ending in 0 or 5.

The following censuses correct all this, but also these contain errors and omissions. Here too misspelling of names have occurred for the same reasons as in the Parish Register and in addition the handwriting of the officiating clerk is sometimes so careless that they could only be deciphered with difficulties - even on enlarged photo copies - or even guessed when no other check-up was possible. In the 1891 census many entries of the ages were written in very small figures which were then obliterated by a bold tick.

A further consideration as to the possible inaccuracies in the censuses has to be given to the fact that all information were given by the head of the household at a certain date (as still to-day) and these information, especially of ages, were occasionally incorrect and did not tally with later census data.

Also, if the birth and consequent death of an infant occurred in the decade between the two censuses and providing they were not entered in the Parish Register, they could not be traced.

Some more important data have been obtained from :

Tombstone Inscriptions in the local churchyard. These not only give the correct date of death, but in most cases also the age or even the date of birth of the deceased and the relationship with others interred in the same family grave.

Some more information have also been obtained from wills which are kept at:

Somerset House providing the exact date (day, month, year) of the deceased. But this only in case when the person has left a will which was not the rule in a fishing and agricultural community like Walberswick.

Further sources:

Maggs' Diary. John Maggs born 1797 as the youngest child of Thomas Maggs, the landlord of the "Blue Anchor" and his wife, Ann née Snell, who became in Southwold the: Coroner, Secretary of the New Medical Dispensary, vestry clerk, salt officer, bailiff of the Court Leet, surveyor of the highways, auctioneer etc., left behind a comprehensive diary with many entries about Walberswick affairs.

"Ferry Knoll". A charming little booklet by Carol Christie (Caroline Louisa Pickthall 1855-1925) printed in 1910 with a collection of local incidents and an interesting addenda of the history of the local church.

Ancient records from Gardner's History of Dunwich and other historical books.

All these collected data have been assembled in alphabetical order of surnames and arranged into families, wherever possible, for easy reference.

The left margin of each page provides the addresses which are rather spasmodic as the houses had no numbers nor names and the right margin provides the source of information.

The various entries of the same family name are mostly kept in chronological order, with some exceptions, when for the sake of grouping the families together, further details of the same person appear closely below the first entry and are thus marked with the sign * .

While no efforts have been spared to check and countercheck every entry in order to maintain a high standard of accuracy, errors and omissions may have occurred, for reasons mentioned above and for which the author offers his apologies.

Any corrections and additions will be gratefully received.

In order to preserve strict privacy, none of the entries refer to living persons.

This book of "Walberswick Families", a genealogical study of its inhabitants, has been solely compiled by myself and is meant to assist anybody who wishes to trace his or her roots in the community of this village or takes a keen interest in the history of Walberswick.

Finally, the author wishes to convey his thanks to all those who have helped him in his research, like the Rev. John Murrell by supplying a list of burials in the Parish of Walberswick; Mrs. Merle Rafferty by lending a copy of Carol Christie's "Ferry Knoll"; Mrs. Pat Wythe for assembling early wills and many members of the Walberswick community who willingly supplied data of their ancestors. But last not least, my gratitude goes to my wife Edna who helped me tirelessly by copying lists of birth, marriage and death entries from the Parish register and deciphering the entries in the various censuses.

Hanns W. Lange
(Hanns W. Lange)

"Anchorlea"

Walberswick. March 1993.

Walberswick is an ancient village near the sea, on the south side of the river Blythe, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles S.S.W. of Southwold, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles N.N.E. of Dunwich, with a station on the Southwold and Halesworth Railway. The parish is in Blything union, Halesworth county court district, Yarmouth bankruptcy court district, Blything hundred and petty sessional division, Dunwich rural deanery, Suffolk archdeanery, and Norwich diocese.

It had 289 inhabitants in 1881 and comprises 1,900 acres of land: the rateable value is £ 1,621. It is a place of great antiquity, and was once a considerable town, which carried on an extensive commerce both by land and sea, especially in fish, having, in 1451, 13 barques trading to Iceland, Ferro, and the North Seas, and 22 fishing boats employed off this coast. The alteration of the port, which ruined the town of Dunwich, proved a source of increased prosperity to Walberswick, which continued to thrive till the middle of the 16th century, when the alteration made in the established religion [region?] proved highly detrimental to this, as well as to many other towns on the coast whose principal support was derived from the fishery. From that time Walberswick began gradually to decline, and frequent and destructive conflagrations hastened its ruin. Before 1583 it had suffered severely by fire; in 1633 a great part was burned; in 1683 it was again visited by a similar scourge; and in 1749 about one-third of the small remains of the town was consumed. There is now a quay for vessels of 100 tons. Sir Ralph M. Blois, Bart., is lord of the manor, which is mostly freehold. The Church (St. Andrew) was rebuilt by the parishioners, who commenced the new fabric in 1473, and finished it in 1493. It was a large and handsome structure, consisting of a nave, chancel, aisles, south porch with high pitched roof, and contained a chapel of Our Lady, and images of the Holy Trinity, the Rood, and St. Andrew and other saints. Though it suffered considerably from the Puritanical visitors of the 17th century, it continued nearly entire till 1696, when the inhabitants, unable to support the charge of repairs, took down the greater part of it, reserving only the south-west angle for divine service, but the tower and some of the outer walls of the chancel are still standing. Several of the windows have been recently restored and repaired. When entire, the church was 124 feet long, and 60 feet broad. The tower, which is 90 feet high, was partly blown down in 1839, and was repaired in the following year; but is now in a dilapidated state, and an effort is being made to restore it. The organ was formerly in Lowestoft Church. The Register dates from 1656. The benefice is a vicarage, valued at £ 51, in the incumbency of the Rev. Thos. Hy. Royal Oakes, together with that of Blythburgh. Sir R.M. Blois is patron, and also impropiator of the tithes, which were commuted in 1840, for a yearly rent-charge of £ 193. The late Sir Charles Blois gave the present parsonage house.

The National School is attended by about 60 children.

The Reading Room was established here in 1889. It is supplied with daily and weekly newspapers and has a small library of about 200 vol., and about 50 members. Mr. John Benham is secretary.

There is a small Congregational Chapel and a Primitive Methodist Chapel erected in 1846. Lampland Marsh, let for £ 2 per annum, has been held from time immemorial for the repairs of the church.

Upon 34 acres of enclosed marsh, every housholder has a right to turn one head of cattle.

On 40 acres of salt marsh, all parishioners have a right to turn what stock they choose.

A heath of $84\frac{1}{2}$ acres is an open pasture for all resident parishioners, who have also the liberty of cutting furze, turf, ling, &c.

The marshes and heath are let for grazing at about £ 230 a year, and the proceeds, after paying certain charges, are distributed amongst the parishioners. An agent of the Charity Commissioners was here in 1887, making enquiries for the purposes of a new scheme, but nothing of the the kind has yet been introduced. The tenant of Westwood Lodge (see Blythburgh) has also the right of turning sheep upon this heath, adjoining which is $3\frac{1}{2}$ acres of open marsh, stocked in the same manner. This marsh might be enclosed and improved at a small expense.

KEYS TO ABBREVIATIONS.

DESCRIPTIONS

B = Birth
b = born
bb = base born (illegitimate)
c = christened
M = Marriage
m = married
D = Death
d = died
i = interred
um = unmarried

DESCRIPTIONS

s.o.= son of
d.o.= daughter of
h.o.= husband of
w.o.= wife of
wid.o.= widower of
r.o.= relict of

ABBREVIATIONS

perh. = perhaps
prob. = probably

LOCATION

T = Tombstone inscription in local churchyard
TF = " " in front of church
TS = " " at side of church
TR = " " at rear of church
TI = " " inside (ruined) church

Ww = Walberswick

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

C = Census
PR = Parish Register (Lowestoft)
RO = Record Office (London)
SH = Somerset House (London)
BR = Miss Browton's Diary
MD = Maggs' Diary
GH = Gardners History of Dunwich
FK = Ferry Knoll (book by Carol Christie 1910)
KD = Kelly's Trade Directory
MD = Morris' Trade Directory
WD = White's Trade Directory
W = Will

M,J,S,D before year = Entry in Public Register during 3 months leading to:
March, June, September, December.

w (after age)= week (in case of death)
m " " = month " " " "
y " " = year " " "

SIGNS

* = further entries (post or prior)
*abv = " " above
*blw = " " below
*pp = " " previous page
*ovl = " " overleaf

o = tallies with Public Record Office

= does not tally with " " "

@ = after names are mentioned in Tithe Map Apportionment 1841