

SOUTH WILLINGHAM CHRONICLE

to inform on the present and reflect on the village past
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Let There Be Light!

Excitement reached orbital levels in South Willingham when the remaining old street lights were renewed with LED bulbs.

The photo above (by Nigel Spencer) shows workmen on September 9th removing the old concrete lamp post and replacing with a new one at the Station Road junction with Blacksmiths Lane. Some of the street lights in the village had not been working for 18 months and were originally due for renewal in May 2017 as part of East Lindsey District Council's Transformation Programme. All the village lights have now been upgraded.

Residents reminded to cut contamination

East Lindsey District Council are sending new leaflets out to area residents to remind them what can and cannot go in the bins:

GREY RECYCLING: - **YES:** paper & cardboard; waxed cartons eg: Tetrapack; Elopac; SIG; all plastic bottles; margarine tubs; plastic food trays; yoghurt pots; empty aerosol cans; drink cans; food tins (washed); pet food tins (washed); clean aluminium foil - **NO:** glass; plastic carrier bags and plastic sacks of any kind; batteries; electrical items; food waste

GREEN WASTE: **YES:** grass cuttings; leaves; plants; sticks; pruning; cut flowers

BLACK RUBBISH: - **YES:** food waste; nappies; plastic bags; ash.



Superfast Broadband

The Chronicle has contacted OnLine Lincolnshire to find out when the new cabinet will be "enabled". There is still no firm date but BT have assured them it will be completed shortly



South Willingham Local History Group

is being restarted in the village and will hold its first meeting on October 3rd with an interest in exploring and documenting the history of the buildings and people of our village. Members of the reconstituted group will be: Debbie Challender; Paul Ferguson; Paul Fuller; Eric & Celia Payne; Kevin Parker; Simon & Raea Pettit; Nigel Spencer.

TWO IN, TWO OUT

The Parish Council met on September 12 at the Village Hall. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Edmundson and Cllr Challender. Since the last meeting in July, Cllr Cutts had resigned by email (having last attended a meeting in Sept 2017), and Cllr Asquith had also resigned after the July meeting - but would remain as Parish Clerk. New councillors, Paul & Maureen Ferguson had joined in May. The September meeting numbers were swelled by the attendance of District Councillor Fry and County Councillor Bradwell. A quick count of Parish Councillors established that Councillor Elliott and Councillors M & P Ferguson were in attendance but once again there were two vacancies.

As Shirley Asquith was now no longer a councillor it was agreed in the budget that she could receive payment for her role as clerk - the first time this had been funded in the Parish Council's history. An amount of £480 per annum was agreed at the meeting. The current precept is £600.

Cllr M Ferguson reported that the post box would receive a new plaque with the right collection times on it - thought to be either 4 or 4.30 rather than 5pm. A noticeboard had been obtained and it was planned to attach it to the side of the bus shelter for parish notices. The ownership of the bus shelter was then queried. The use of the phone box for a village history display and information point had been agreed at the May Parish Council Meeting. District Councillor Fry suggested an application to ELDC for a grant. A grand opening of the adopted phone box was thought to be a good idea to involve the village. The South Willingham village signs



had had the "please drive slowly" lettering removed by members of the Parish Council - following thoughtless vandalism over the last couple of years by persons unknown. Councillor P Ferguson suggested flower tubs around the bus shelter, parish hall, bus shelter, near the bench and under the village signs.

NEXT PARISH COUNCIL MEETING: Nov 14 2018 7PM

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MAY 2018 - At the Annual Parish Meeting held on May 9 Cllr Elliott had reported SWPC was carrying two vacancies which had been difficult to fill. In the case of absence, the meeting had only just been quorate on many occasions. In the open forum Paul Ferguson asked what would happen if the parish council folded. Cllr Elliott said that Richard Fry, the ELDC councillor, would make decisions on behalf of the village. County Councillor Patricia Bradwell had also been supportive in the past. Each household would save £20-25 per annum should the council be disbanded but they would lose their local voice.

JOINT PARISH COUNCIL IDEA WITH HANTON DROPPED

Cllr Challender acted as chair at the Parish Council meeting held on July 4. The Clerk had contacted ELDC about how to set about creating a combined parish council with Hainton and had circulated a draft letter via email for discussion. District Councillor Richard Fry had spoken to Stuart Davy, ELDC chief executive, on this issue and shared the email reply he had received. He recalled that there used to be a parish council for Hainton but that it had folded. For this to proceed, SWPC would need to conduct a consultation in time for a May 2019 commencement of any combined entity. The application to ELDC would have to demonstrate a strong link between the villages, identify what had changed in both to bring the idea about and then 'sell' the idea to the district council. The meeting discussed the proposal covering such issues as: - the original reason for the idea being lack of sufficient SWPC councillors (which had been resolved at the previous meeting);- that Hainton did not have many owner-occupiers being an estate village;- that a combined council would lose focus on South Willingham issues;- that this would not solve the lack of interest in SWPC from South Willingham residents. The discussion widened to the purpose of the parish council and how it could spend the precept as it saw fit without requiring the approval of residents. It was commented that a high precept might encourage residents to take an interest in where their money was being spent. Cllr Ferguson saw part of its purpose as giving residents a sense of community so that they felt South Willingham was a good place to live. Richard Fry suggested adding an agenda item 'parish initiatives' under which projects could be identified and a budget set. This was agreed.

LIFE CHRONICLES - HAROLD & ALICE BRAY

As reported in the last edition of the Chronicle Harold & Alice Bray celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary on April 20th 2018. Harold is 97 and Alice 96. Over 4 visits volunteer editor, Nigel Spencer, asked about their upbringing, farming, the war years and their memories of the people and places of South Willingham.

Harold was born in Gayton le Wold. His father worked for a tenant farmer, F Wallace. He went to school in South Elkington - often walking there and back until a bus later became available. His father later took on a mixed farm at Legbourne before moving on again to farm at Fotherby Top. Harold then attended Monk Dyke School, Louth, in 1935. Leaving school at 14 he moved to Benniworth, once again working for his father. He then started working for Charlie Betts as a farm labourer at Springfield Farm

Alice was born in Legsby. her father worked for a Mr Beverley as a waggoner on the farm. In 1928 the family moved to Poplar Farm Cottages in South Willingham and Alice used

charge of the peacocks on the estate. Alice and 5 others lived at the Hall having their own rooms on the top floor. Alice helped with serving food and cleaning the silverware, going home to South Willingham once a fortnight. The servants had to attend church in Hainton "but not sing too loud!"

When war broke out in 1939 Alice went to work at a canning factory in Bardney to help with the war effort. Harold meanwhile had left Springfield Farm and joined the Ministry of Transport working with the searchlights in the area - locally there was one sited at Benniworth and another at Hallington. His brother remained in farming and, as a result of it being a needed occupation, was not called



HAROLD & ALICE BRAY OUTSIDE CORNER FARM SEPTEMBER 17 2018
(PHOTO BY NIGEL SPENCER)

to walk to Hainton School. At the age of 14 the family moved to Corner Farm in 1935. In 1937 her first job was as a Parlour Maid at Hainton Hall. There were 12 servants including: 3 Housemaids; 2 kitchen staff; Laundry Maid; a Dairy Worker. The Butler also doubled up as the Chauffeur and was in

up for service. Harold was called up for service in 1941 at the age of 19.

Full details of Harold's service during WW2 are detailed on the next pages.

As mentioned in the last edition of the Chronicle, Alice and Harold married in 1948 after he was demobbed. In 1948 Harold's father moved to Silver Street in Benniworth and the couple moved into a farm cottage owned by Grange Farm. When Alice's father died in 1953, the couple took on Corner Farm as part of the Heneage Estate. Originally it had 18 acres. Land was added at the rear of Pasture House. When the Heneage Land in South Willingham came up for sale in 1957 Harold bought Corner Farm and land for £1,050. The Estate originally wanted £1,200. Harold explained that all tenants had the opportunity to purchase the properties they occupied. If they did not want to or could not - they then went into the auction.

Around this time Harold purchased the plot of land now occupied by Bridge House. The original house there was badly built and in a poor state - having been built originally at the time of the Great Northern Railway. When his son, Alan, married a new and current house was built in the late 1970's.

Initially Harold started with pigs at Corner Farm and subsequently chickens before the financial climate made dairy farming more viable. He started with 6 heifers in the early 50's - building cubicles in the rear yard we see today. Eventually he built up to a stock of 120. The herd were fed on free vegetable waste and Harold would go to the Boston area 2 or 3 times a day, 3 or 4 times a week to collect - using eventually 3 trailers.

In May each year the grass was cut for silage which was stored in a pit in the yard. Once the weather permitted the cattle went out into the fields before being brought back in in early September before the land got too badly poached. Harold used to get up at 6.30am each day to start milking at 7am. It would take an hour. The process would reoccur at 4pm. His son Alan started helping at the age of 16. Harold recalled that they were never affected by foot and mouth outbreaks although precautions had to be taken. It was better for farmers when the Milk Marketing Board existed - fixing prices for winter and summer for all producers. Milk was stored in a refrigerated tank in the yard and was collected once a day and taken to different dairies - typically Lincoln.

Over the years Harold enjoyed all the fresh air. The biggest change being the increasing size, and cost, of equipment used. Harold retired in

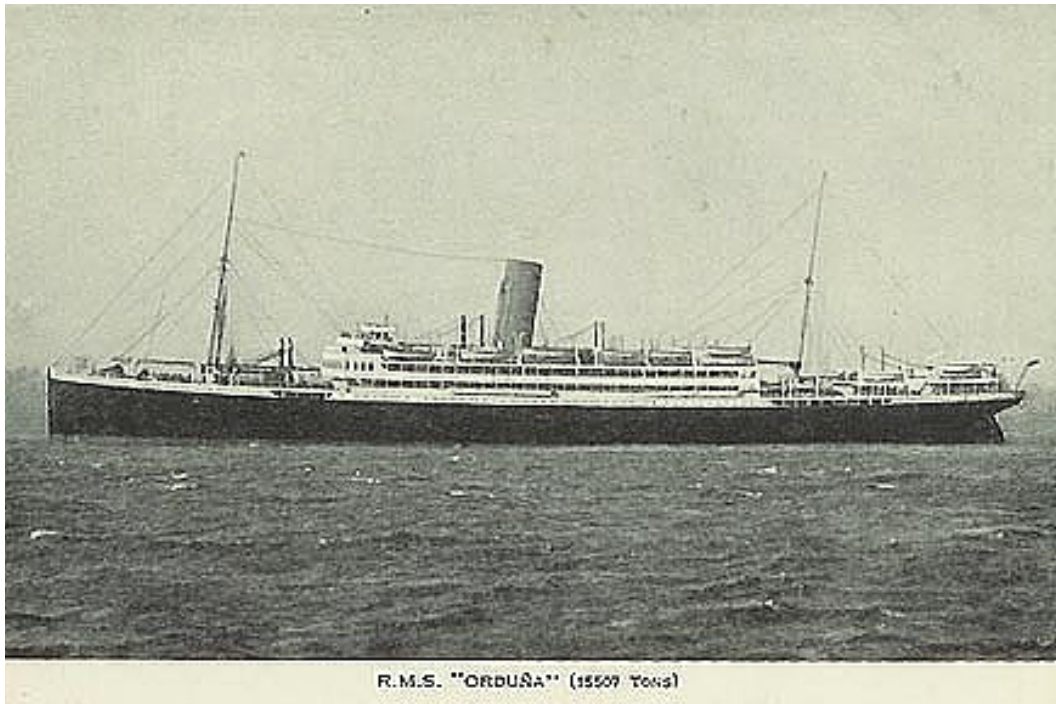
1997 at the age of 76. His son, Alan, now runs the farm.

HAROLD BRAY - THE WAR YEARS

In 1941, at the age of 19, Harold was sent for basic training in Chesterfield. His brother remained in farming and, as a result of it being a needed occupation, was not called up for service - joining the local militia instead. At Chesterfield Harold joined the Royal Army Service Corps - all to do with supplies - ammunition, food etc. It was said it took nine men in supplies to provide for one man on the front line. Pay was one shilling a day and a tin of 50 Players cigarettes

After basic training he was based initially in Bradford with 404 General Transport - which itself was split into various platoons. All this changed on 20 August 1942 when they sailed from Liverpool on board SS Orduna. They were not allowed to undress for the first 5 days due to possible attack. At the first landfall, Freetown in West Africa, they were not allowed to disembark - but had some shore leave for 4 days at the next port of call, Cape Town, South Africa. The journey there took a long time due to the ship zig-zagging to avoid enemy radar and torpedoes which took 10 minutes for the Germans to line up. From South Africa they went up the Red Sea to Port Said in Egypt, arriving in September 1942. Harold was involved in the battle of El Alamein. Fought in the deserts of North Africa, is seen as one of the decisive victories of World War Two. The Battle of El Alamein was primarily fought between two of the outstanding commanders of World War Two, Montgomery, who succeeded the dismissed Auchinleck, and Rommel. The Allied victory at El Alamein led to the retreat of the Afrika Korps and the German surrender in North Africa in May 1943.

Journeys to Tehran in modern day Iran followed and a lorry load of rum to Baghdad, Iraq. Christmas Day was spent in the Syrian desert on route to Palestine with rations of bully beef and biscuits. They camped in tents near Haifa. It was here Harold learnt how to swim in the sea. Moving onto to Beirut he recalls sleeping on the docks and from there back to Egypt and Alexandria. Once more at sea, July 3 1943, it was one day into the journey that they were told where they were going - Sicily - everyone was handed a booklet "A Soldiers' Guide To Sicily".



SS "ORDUNA" WAS AN OCEAN LINER BUILT IN 1913-14 BY HARLAND AND WOLFF IN BELFAST FOR THE PACIFIC STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY. AFTER TWO VOYAGES SHE WAS CHARTERED TO CUNARD LINE.

ORDUNA WAS REQUISITIONED AS AN AUXILIARY CRUISER AND TROOP TRANSPORT IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR RUNNING FROM HALIFAX, CANADA TO LIVERPOOL WITH NOTABLES SUCH AS QUENTIN ROOSEVELT ON BOARD. IN 1921 SHE WENT TO THE ROYAL MAIL STEAM PACKET COMPANY, THEN BEING RESOLD TO THE PSNCO IN 1926. WITH THE NEED FOR MILITARY TRANSPORT IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR, IN 1941 SHE WAS PUT INTO SERVICE BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AS A TROOPSHIP. IN THE AUTUMN OF 1945 THE ORDUÑA BROUGHT BACK PRISONERS OF WAR AND INTERNEES FROM THE FAR EAST, LANDING AT PRINCESS LANDING STAGE IN LIVERPOOL ON 19 OCTOBER. ORDUNA WAS DECOMMISSIONED AND LAID UP IN NOVEMBER 1950 AND DISMANTLED THE FOLLOWING YEAR IN DALMUIR, SCOTLAND. A MEMORIAL TO THE SHIPS INVOLVED IN THE REPATRIATION WAS UNVEILED ON THE LIVERPOOL WATERFRONT ON 15 OCTOBER 2011. (ARCHIVE RESEARCH: NIGEL SPENCER)

The Allied invasion of Sicily, codenamed Operation Husky, was a major campaign of World War II, in which the Allies took the island of Sicily from the Axis powers (Italy and Nazi Germany). It began with a large amphibious and airborne operation, followed by a six-week land campaign, and initiated the Italian Campaign. Husky began on the night of 9-10 July 1943, and ended on 17 August. Strategically, Husky achieved the goals set out for it by Allied planners; the Allies drove Axis air, land and naval forces from the island and the Mediterranean sea lanes were opened for Allied merchant ships for the first time since 1941. The Italian leader, Benito Mussolini, was toppled from power in Italy and the way was opened for the Allied invasion of Italy. Hitler,

cancelled a major offensive at Kursk after only a week, in part to divert forces to Italy, resulting in a reduction of German strength on the Eastern Front. The collapse of Italy necessitated German troops replacing the Italians in Italy and to a lesser extent the Balkans, resulting in one fifth of the entire German army being diverted from the east to southern Europe, a proportion that would remain until near the end of the war.

Harold got off the ship on the second day dealing with supplies. Syracuse was taken on the first day. They dug trenches on the beach for protection from German planes. Allied Spitfires and Hurricanes came from Malta (itself under siege) and were at the limit of

their fuel reserves. The Americans also landed at Pollina. One memorable moment occurred when 40 tons of land mines exploded, blowing lorries into pieces. Harold survived but 43 others did not.

Harold stopped on Sicily for 6 months at Catania before moving on into Italy. Meanwhile Rome was now in Allied hands and the invasion of Normandy in northern France took place. Harold later passed through Monte Cassino. Between 17 January and 18 May, Monte Cassino and the Gustav defences (the surrounding peaks and ridges, formed the Gustav Line) were assaulted four times by Allied troops, the last involving twenty divisions attacking along a twenty-mile front. The German defenders were finally driven from their positions, but at a high cost. The capture of Monte Cassino resulted in 55,000 Allied casualties, with German losses being far fewer, estimated at around 20,000 killed and wounded. In the winter of 1944 he was based in Arezzo.

Leaving Italy at Livorno Harold and his platoon sailed to Marseilles, travelling through France - 150 miles a day - until they got to Brussels. After 3 years away he got 2 weeks leave at home. Travelling back to Brussels he was at the station at Lille in France when a porter told him the news that the war was over. When he arrived in Brussels there were wild celebrations. Those who joined first were first to return home so Harold was based in Dusseldorf in Germany until demobbed in August 1946 with his demob suit and trilby and £84 gratuity. He remembers having to keep quiet about tonsillitis - in case it prevented him from travelling. He returned to Springfield Farm, Benniworth aged 24.

HAROLD & ALICE BRAY IN CONVERSATION: *people and places of South Willingham*

I invited Harold and Alice Bray to do a virtual walk around the village based on their memories.

The Station - once a year there was a Sunday School outing from South Willingham by railway to Mablethorpe. Children came from Benniworth, South Willingham, Hainton and Sixhills. It would depart between 9 - 10 am and comprise of 2 -3 railway coaches returning around 7pm. There were goods

sidings at the station - catering mainly for coal deliveries. Beet would be taken by train to Bardney. The brick hut which is just at the entrance (where the old station gate still exists) used to be for the weigh bridge. The stationmaster lived at the station. The large building which exists where the sidings were was built after the line closed in the early 50's, and probably erected in the 60's. Initially it was used for sacks. South Willingham also had a signal box and the bridge over Station Road was removed in the 1960's/70's. In the field beyond the platform looking towards Benniworth the South Wold Hunt held point - to - point racing for a 5 year period in the early 1950's until it moved to Revesby.

Pasture House - used to be two houses. In **Oak Cottage** lived two sisters and later a Mrs Gadd. Harold moved into **Corner House** in 1953 from Benniworth. From 1928 Alice lived in one of the two original houses at **Poplar Cottages** - named after the trees around there - and her grandfather was a farmer at **Moses Farm** - which remains today part of the Heneage Estate. It had a minimum of 3 men working there. It was a mixed farm - growing crops as well as livestock - Lincoln Reds. There were a number of heavy horses based there to help in the fields. Alice can recall going by pony and trap to Market Rasen. In the early 50's there were only 3 cars owned in the village.

Booty Bett lived at **Pump Hill Cottage**. According to Harold he had such large feet he had to go to the crossroads to turn round. He had a horse and cart and once when he was at the pub at East Barkwith some wag came out and turned his horse round in his trap so it was facing the wrong way - to hilarious consequences! His wife used to go hawking - selling items from a basket around the village. It used to be two properties - living in the other side were the Bontofts.

Living at **Rose Farm** was Art Johnson who was a bricklayer on the Heneage Estate. Later came the Seabournes who owned the land down to the station and had many chickens/huts. **The Thatch** was originally two cottages and **Woodbine Cottage** is believed to have been similarly divided. The last known vicar living at **The Rectory** was Rev Simpson in the 1950's. Later Eddie Baker sold plots of land along Barkwith Road for bungalows - the first of which was **Millendreath**.



ALAN BRAY AGED 9 DIGGING SEPTIC TANK CORNER FARM 1961



LOOKING UP STATION ROAD TO CORNER FARM FEBRUARY 1947

At **The Forge** lived Billy Greenwood and later at the time of Heneage land and property sale in South Willingham in 1957, Mr W. Sentance, both as blacksmiths. The blacksmiths shop was **The Anvil** which had a brick skin put round the original building when it was converted to a house by Bill & Margaret Bett in 1978 - who until then lived at Church Farm which had been in the family for generations. At The Anvil horses came for shoeing, harrows repaired etc with stables used at the rear. W Sentance also ran a blacksmiths shop in Benniworth. He stayed on until approximately 1960 and was the last blacksmith in the village. Lenton Farms of Boston bought the old blacksmith shop site and land at the same time as acquiring Benniworth Walk Farm.

The Old Post Office shop used to be run by the Johnsons, selling sweets, cigarettes, tinned food, newspapers. Billy Greenwood left The Forge to live at **The Manor House**. Before him a Mr Rushby lived there. He was "posh" and had a silk top hat. He had a housemaid and was related to Singer sewing machines work wise. Where **The Sycamores** now is there used to be a thatched cottage. Down **Moor Lane**, in the valley, there are the remains of the sandpit used for building work in the village.

Alice can recall singing at Harvest Festivals at the **The Methodist Chapel**. At **Carpenters Cottage** Jack Hobson was a wheelwright and made coffins in the shed opposite the gate entrance. Opposite **The Cobblers** on the other side of the road there used to be a thatched cottage where a Jack Whitlam lived. On the site where Oak Leaf Cottage was built there was another old chapel which was partially demolished - some of it still remains.



LOOKING DOWN STATION ROAD FEBRUARY 1947



Photos: above:

Harold Bray at Tel Aviv 1943; with platoon Egypt 1942; WW2 Campaign medals left to right: African Star; French & German Star; 1939-1945 Star; The Italy Star; The Defence Medal; The Victory Medal; making a brew in the desert Egypt 1942

Photos below:

Harold Bray - Egypt 1942; Alice Bray - photo taken in Louth circa 1948

