

[Skip to main content](#)[University links](#)

## University links

### For staff

- [For Staff](#)
- [Services A-Z](#)
- [Student Education Service](#)

### For students

- [Minerva](#)
- [Mobile app](#)
- [For Students](#)

### Faculties

- [Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Cultures](#)
- [Faculty of Biological Sciences](#)
- [Faculty of Business](#)
- [Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences](#)
- [Faculty of Environment](#)
- [Faculty of Medicine and Health](#)
- [Faculty of Social Sciences](#)
- [Lifelong Learning Centre](#)
- [Language Centre](#)

### Other

- [Staff A-Z](#)
- [Campus map](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Alumni](#)
- [Contacts](#)
- [Library](#)
- [IT](#)
- [VideoLeeds](#)
- [Leeds University Union](#)

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- [Facebook](#)
- [Twitter](#)
- [YouTube](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Medium](#)
- [Weibo](#)
- [The Conversation](#)
- [RSS news feed](#)

[Close quicklinks](#)

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Search  Destination  [Living With Dying](#)

- [Home](#)
  - [Home](#)
- [Blog](#)
- [Family Historians](#)
  - [Family Historians](#)
  - [Workshop: Family history and academic history](#)
- [Leeds General Cemetery](#)
- ['Remembrance' Exhibition](#)
  - ['Remembrance' Exhibition](#)
  - [Events Programme](#)
- [The Grief Series](#)

1. [Home](#)
2. [Blog](#)
3. A Visit to Common Farm

# A Visit to Common Farm

Category

[Family Historians](#)[Research](#)

Date

Monday 13 November 2017



## A guest blog from Sarah Sykes

I always knew that my maternal grandfather, David Leslie Noble, was the son of a Nottinghamshire farmer, but didn't know much about that side of the family.

My grandfather joined the army as a young man and then had a long career in the Leeds Police. He made his life here in Yorkshire and had very little contact with his family "down south".

My mum remembers visiting her grandma at Kneesall as a girl. By this time, grandma was quite elderly, but still churned her own butter and cooked on an open range. Mum remembers that she wore long dresses. The journey from Leeds took "forever".

Book *111*  
Page *35*

Certificate of  Registry of Birth.

Pursuant to the Act 6th and 7th William IV. Cap. 86.

REGISTRATION DISTRICT OF SOUTHWELL.

1916 BIRTH, in the Sub-District of KNEESALL, in the County of Nottingham.

No.	When and Where Born.	Sex, if any.	Age.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.	Regimental Name if added after Registration of Birth.
<i>5622</i>	<i>19/6/1916</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>David Noble</i>	<i>Alice Draper</i>	<i>Farmer</i>	<i>David Noble</i>	<i>19/6/1916</i>	<i>David Noble</i>	<i>Kneesall</i>

My mum has my grandfather's original birth certificate from 1916, so that was my starting point. I was quite surprised to find that my grandfather was named after his father, also David Leslie Noble. (That explains why they always called him Leslie when he went home!)

David Leslie Noble (Senior) was born in Girton, Nottinghamshire in 1877. Girton is a small village to the east of the River Trent. He was baptised on 13 May 1877 at the church of St. Cecilia, Girton. David's father, Henry, was a farmer.

David started his working life as an agricultural labourer and married Alice Draper in 1899. He seems to have done quite well and by 1911 he is a farmer at Maplebeck, Kneesall, just a few miles away from Girton. He is a tenant farmer, living in a farmhouse with nine rooms and farming 100 acres. David and Alice now have three children and a waggoner (horseman) called Jack. My grandfather was born at Kneesall in 1916.

I found a record of David's will and was sad to discover that he died in August 1925, aged only 48. He had made the will a few days before his death. My grandfather, the youngest child was just 8 years old at the time.

BE IT KNOWN that *David Noble of*  
*Common Farm, Norwell, in the County*  
*of Nottingham* \_\_\_\_\_  
 who at the time of *his* death had a fixed place of abode  
 at *Norwell aforesaid* \_\_\_\_\_  
 within the District  
 of *Nottingham* \_\_\_\_\_  
 died on the *9<sup>th</sup>* day of *August* *1925*.  
 at *Norwell aforesaid* \_\_\_\_\_

By this time, the family were farming at Common Farm in Norwell Woodhouse, just down the road from Kneesall. The eldest son, Wilfred, took over the tenancy.

A few weeks ago, returning from a holiday in Suffolk, we were able to stop off at Norwell Woodhouse and take in the atmosphere. It was a lovely October afternoon.



The landscape around Norwell Woodhouse is still very rural and there is just one village lane with several farmhouses on either side. Most of the farmhouses are now upmarket houses, but there are still two working farms. Common Farm sits on the hill at the top end of the village, looking back down the lane. The adjacent barn is a dwelling called Jack's Barn and we wonder if it's named after Jack the waggoner: we will probably never know.

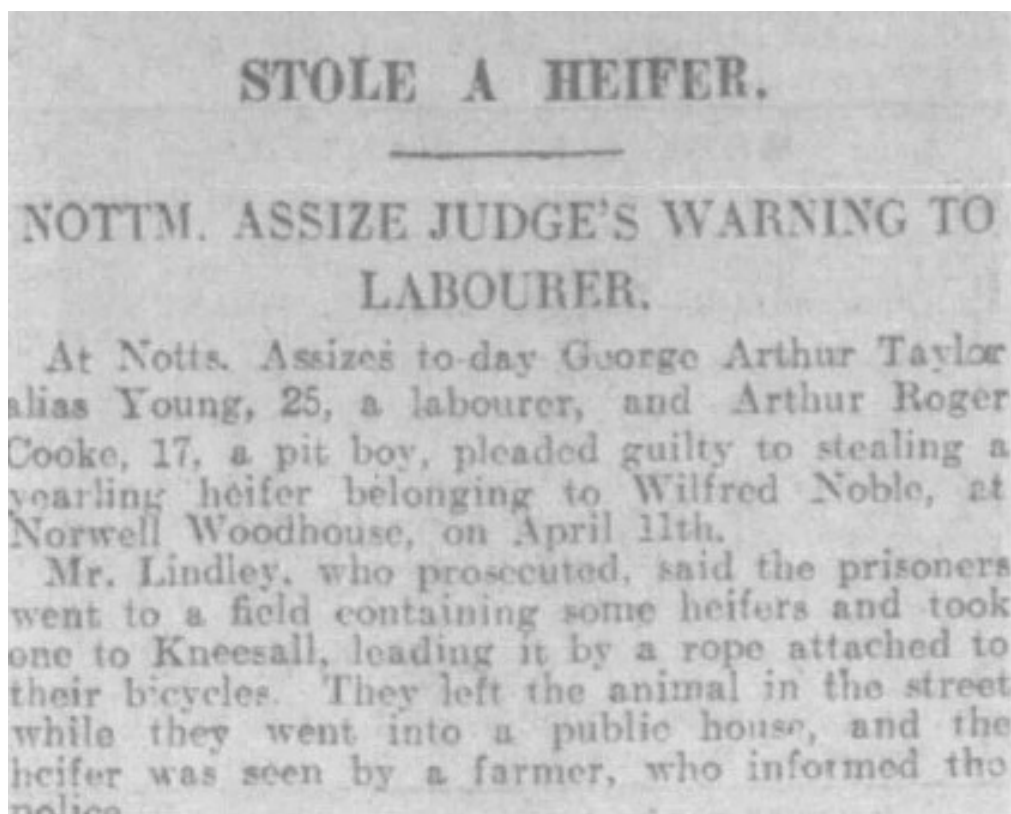
We walked up and down the lane imagining what it might have been like in the 1920s. It was lovely to see where several generations of the family lived and worked and there's still a lot to find out, so another visit is planned soon.





The Old Smithy, Norwell Woodhouse

I don't know how long the family stayed at Common Farm. I do know that Wilfred was still farming at Norwell Woodhouse in 1928 because I found this report in the *Nottinghamshire Evening Post* from 20 June:



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