

The Nineteenth Century

Politics

King George III underwent periods of madness. War with Napoleon cut England off from the continent, trade languished and food prices rose. Men to serve in the Militia were raised from the parishes. Enclosure robbed the poor of pasture and fuel rights on the Common, and concentrated ownership in a very few hands. Population censuses began in 1841, revealing that many were leaving the County, a large proportion to London. This had probably always been the case. Newspaper adverts tried to lure workers to the Lancashire mills, but I see no evidence that our villagers went. We were involved in national and international affairs, sending a petition to Parliament supporting the abolition of slavery in 1830. The Dalling family's Jamaican sugar plantation's slave labour earned around £5,000 for Earsham Hall at this time.

Crime

Theft, poaching, arson and poisoning (the latter two by women) and suicide (a crime then) which affected several men locally.

Industry

At Ditchingham, where the maltings stood was a large water and later steam-powered silk manufactory belonging to Messrs. Grout and Co. of Norwich, who employed about 400 women and a few men, some of them from Ellingham and Kirby Cane. George Baldry in the "Rabbit-skin Cap" writes that they started work at six in the morning and finished at five at night with an hour and a half for breakfast and dinner. They were paid between five and seven shillings a week depending on the class of work. He writes that Grout bemoaned the lack of children to work in his factories, the wages being too poor to attract adults. Despite this opinion, Ellingham provided mostly girls in their late teens (12 in 1851; 3 in 1861; 5 in 1871; 6 in 1881 and 1891). Five daughters of the Savage family were employed. Kirby Cane had 5 in 1851; 10 in 1861; 7 in 1871; 5 in 1881. Some male steam loom weavers are recorded. At a time when there was little employment for young women other than seasonal agriculture, or domestic service, the indoor steady employment must have made up for low wages. A silk winder was a person who wound the silk from silkworm cocoons onto bobbins. The buildings were converted into Maltings in 1896. Linen was woven in Bungay where John Henry Smith of St. Mary's Street had six looms until mid-century. Bungay canvas was considered very good for sails for the fishing industry.

Certain trades still done locally: brick making, corwainer, shoemaker, tailoring & dressmaking, wheelwright, blacksmithing, corn milling

Entertainment

The annual Bungay horse races took place and were held under National Hunt Rules from 1883 until 1956. Wrestling and cricket matches.

Agriculture

There was a move towards better yielding crops (wheat instead of rye), and greater care in replenishing nitrogen in the soil (use of manure from stall fed cattle and the growing of clover). At the end of the century farmers found themselves competing with grain from the American Midwest. Bad harvests in the 1870s, farm workers competing with new technology and after 1875 agriculture was in depression. The introduction of Death Duties further hit the landed gentry, and many estates were broken up, or left to decay. Ellingham still had two shepherds.

Religion

Change in the Tithe system. More Non-Conformist chapels built.



Health

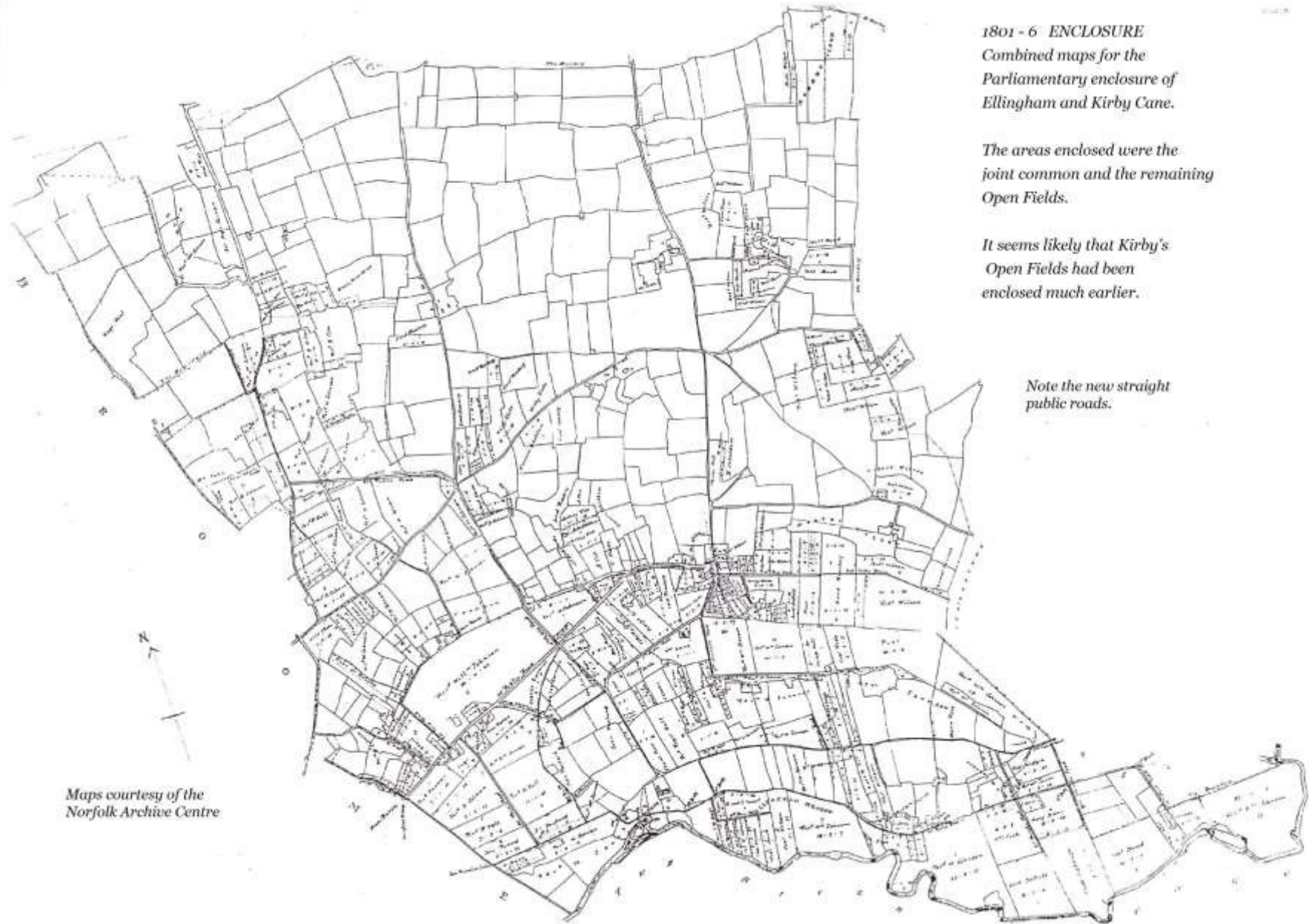
The outbreak of Cholera in Beccles lead to a greater concern for hygiene.(1849) Smallpox still reported in Beccles. Accidental deaths: drowning, many gun-related. Two or three inhabitants of our parishes were in the Workhouse each census time, only 2 were over 60 years old. Measles and scarlet fever rife. Suicide.

Education

At the midpoint of the century, only the better off youngsters are recorded as scholars. The Haywards and the Rev Cobb had live-in governesses. After 1861 both villages had a schoolroom, supported by the lords of the manors, subscription and fees. By 1886 fathers were fined for neglecting to send their children to school, or simply for neglecting them.

Communications

Railway. Trade Directories. River. New Roads. Enclosure roads. Post Office. There were few turnpike roads, making long distance travel difficult, especially in the winter. Building the railway probably provided navvie work locally. The railway took trade from the river, and made population movement for employment or pleasure an enticing possibility. Loddon and Clavering lost about 5% of its population, mostly to Suffolk, but also to London.



*1801 - 6 ENCLOSURE
Combined maps for the
Parliamentary enclosure of
Ellingham and Kirby Cane.*

*The areas enclosed were the
joint common and the remaining
Open Fields.*

*It seems likely that Kirby's
Open Fields had been
enclosed much earlier.*

*Note the new straight
public roads.*

*Maps courtesy of the
Norfolk Archive Centre*