

The Broadland District Council Blue Plaque Scheme

The scheme celebrates local people from Broadland's past who made valuable contributions to their community.

With the recent centenary celebrations of the first women to vote, this begins by commemorating women in the community.

The first three plaques in the Broadland District Council Blue Plaque Scheme to be unveiled honour five women from Old Catton, Buxton and Aylsham.

Alice
Hoare

Lucy
Sewell

Margaret
Sewell

Anne
Wright

Mary
Sewell

We are delighted to launch the Broadland District Council Blue Plaque Scheme – a very special initiative to commemorate notable people from all walks of life who have made an important contribution to our wonderful district historically.

A blue plaque is a recognised symbol of our national heritage and here in Broadland they will serve as permanent, visible milestones in our history to remind us of what has been achieved in our communities by local people, whether those people were born here or chose to make Broadland their home.

We hope we have created a fitting tribute to those individuals who made an impact on the lives of others, who in this instance are all women. We wanted to shine the spotlight on remarkable local women as a way of honouring last year's centenary celebrations of the first women to vote. Next, we will be looking for both men and women to commentate as the Broadland District Council Blue Plaque Scheme continues, giving us the chance to pay respect and highlight the efforts made by more people of Broadland.

The photographs and records you'll read in this leaflet are thanks to the kind contributions of many of our local parish councils and history archives – special thanks goes to those people and organisations for helping to make our new Blue Plaque Scheme possible.



Cllr Judy Leggett,
Chairman of Broadland
District Council



Cllr Karen Vincent,
Vice Chairman of
Broadland District Council
and Heritage Champion



Cllr Jo Copplestone,
Economic Development
Portfolio Holder for
Broadland District Council

Alice Hoare

(Nee Woodfall)

Born in 1849 and died in 1938 in the village of Belaugh.



She is buried with her husband at St Peter's Church, Belaugh.

Alice served the interests, and promoted the welfare of, those less fortunate in Aylsham. She was also committed to giving women a voice.

As the wife of the vicar of Aylsham, Revd John Gurney Hoare, Alice set up regular meetings for local women around Aylsham, which she actively encouraged the heads of local households to allow their female servants to attend. Topics for such meetings varied throughout the years; we know of a meeting in 1913 where a female speaker talked to attendees about the issue of white slave traffic.

Alice successfully stood for election to the Rural District Council of Aylsham, writing in a leaflet at the time (1894) that as a large proportion of people who received shelter at workhouses were women or young children who needed women to care for them, it is "desirable that at every Board there

should be some women who have a recognised position and voice in the management".

She was one of four women who were successful in that election, serving Aylsham alongside the other 41 councillors, who were all men.

During her time as a councillor, there were outbreaks of small pox, scarlet fever and diphtheria all over the Aylsham area. Alice helped in the response to this by overseeing compensation for clothes that had to be destroyed in an attempt to halt the spread of scarlet fever in Cawston. She was also on a committee securing additional relief for workhouse children.

Alice was involved in the war effort and the women of Aylsham made clothes, bandages and surgical dressings, boarded members of the armed forces, and took on the jobs of men recruited to the war, particularly from 1916.

Alice is known to have had six children with her husband Revd Hoare, who was also Rural Dean of Ingworth and the Diocese of Norwich in 1889 and an Honorary Canon of Norwich in 1899. He died in 1923 and Alice went to live with one of her daughters near Hoveton, where she remained very active until she suffered with blindness for the five years prior to her death in 1938.

Lucy Edith Sewell

Born in 1853 in Spain and died in 1914 in Catton.

(Lucy) Edith Sewell was the granddaughter of Mary Sewell and the niece of Black Beauty author Anna Sewell. She was one of at least seven children and spent much of her childhood visiting her grandmother Mary in Old Catton. She later lived in the village, on North Walsham Road.

Known as 'Edie' to her family, Lucy Edith shared her aunt's interests in animals, education and charity work. She was honorary treasurer of Norwich's Anti-Vivisection society, which was the world's first body to challenge the use of animals in research.

She was also honorary treasurer of the Norwich Suffrage Society, a branch of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies. The organisation aimed to achieve women's suffrage through peaceful and legal means, in particular by gathering members, writing to MPs about introducing Parliamentary Bills, and holding meetings to explain and promote their aims.



Lucy Edith attended training in London and passed a Cambridge University examination in Astrology in 1884.

When she died in 1914, she was mourned by the local community. Her sister, Helen Ada Sewell, erected a triangular animal drinking trough – now used as a flower planter – in front of Sewell Park (once part of her father's estate) to her as a memorial. It reads: "This fountain was placed here by Ada Sewell in memory of her Aunt Anna Sewell authoress of Black Beauty and her sister Edith Sewell – two lovers of animals."

Mary Sewell

(Nee Wright)

Born in 1797 in Suffolk and died in Old Catton in 1884.

Mary was born in Sutton, Suffolk and lived in Great Yarmouth, Brighton and Bath before settling in Old Catton where she lived at White House (now Anna Sewell House).

She married Isaac Sewell in 1819 and had two children, Anna – who would go on to write *Black Beauty* – and Philip.

Mary took great interest in philanthropic movements, was deeply concerned with the lives of those less fortunate and consistently urged others to help. She was also a member of the Anti-Slavery Association.



Mary was a very successful author, selling millions of children's stories. Later in life she wrote ballads and poetry with the hope of instilling moral lessons in people as she was a deeply religious woman. Before she died she wrote 'Sixpenny Charity' as an attempt to show people that even a sixpence per week could make a big difference to the poor.

Mary died in 1884 and was buried with her husband and daughter at the Quaker Burial Ground in Lammas.

Margaret Amie Sewell



Born c.1851 in Brighton and died in 1937 in Buxton.

Margaret Amie Sewell was the daughter of Philip and Sarah Sewell, niece of author Anna Sewell, and granddaughter of Mary Sewell.

Margaret Amie – known as Amie by many family members – lived in Norwich and spent much of her childhood visiting family in Old Catton. Aside from staying at White House (now Anna Sewell House) in Old Catton to look after her grandmother, Mary, before her death, Margaret lived in the family residence of Dudwick Cottage, Buxton. Here she was heavily involved in village life; some of her achievements included organising the building of the village hall, the rebuild of Honeysuckle Cottage, and helping to manage the Red House School.

In 1906 Margaret took on the job of getting the numbers up from 65 boys to 90 at the school by writing to local authorities that seemed most likely to need places, and achieved this target by 1910. Rev Stracey, the Chairman of the school, was insistent that the main school

be kept for the sole use of boys, with girls and infants using the church school in Back Lane. However, Margaret successfully fought for boys and girls to be taught together in the main school.

Margaret's impact reached beyond Norfolk. She was a visiting Social Science lecturer in other cities and wrote lectures on a variety of subjects including philanthropy, transforming the lives of the poor, and charity work. For many years, she was a headworker of the Women's University Settlement (now Blackfriar's Settlement, a charity in London), which promoted the welfare of people in poverty, especially women and children.

In Norfolk, Margaret opened Sewell Park in Norwich to the public in memory of her father, Philip, and, in 1927, wrote a book called History of Buxton. In 1937, she died in Buxton and was buried in St Andrew's Church. She was mourned by the Buxton community as well as in other counties; it is known that a memorial service was held for her in Brasted, Kent, where she was a generous benefactor to the area.

Anne Wright (Nee Harford)

Born in 1792 in Middlesex and died 1861.

Anne was the daughter of Mary and Truman Harford, and wife to John Wright (the uncle of Anna Sewell), whom she married in 1816 in Ipswich. The couple spent many years living at Dudwick House in Buxton.

Anne was a respected author, founded the Red House School, and was a keen lecturer in natural history and geology. Her papers include 'The Globe Prepared for Man', 'What is a bird?' and 'Our world: its rocks and fossils'.

Extracts from 'A brief memorial of Mrs Wright late of Buxton, Norfolk' read: "She laboured in her own immediate neighbourhood. In the village school, she was highly valued... one of her choicest gifts was the power of imparting instruction... the animation of her voice and countenance, aided her fluent, well-connected, illustrative thoughts, that held the pleased attention of the young. Children would group around her, and listen to 'Mrs Wright's stories' with affectionate interest."



When she wasn't able to spend time with the children, she wrote to them and was urged by her friends to publish the letters. In 1850 they went to print in three successive parts, which were brought together in one volume in 1853 that's now familiarly known as 'The Observing Eye'. This volume of her work reportedly reached Queen Victoria, who gave it to her children to enjoy and directed that her thanks be presented to the author.

'The Globe Prepared for Man', inspired by her love of geology, was widely praised by numerous publications at the time of publication and a second edition was well received, particularly for the way it engaged children in geology.

Anne founded the Red House School in 1853 and took an ardent interest in imparting religious and moral instruction combined with general knowledge. She loved being busy and working hard, despite her fluctuating health, and remained active until her death at home in 1861.

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The first plaques in the Broadland Blue Plaque Scheme will be installed in early 2019 in the parishes that have relevance to the women being commemorated.

The scheme will continue with a small number of plaques being installed each year to celebrate notable men and women from the district.

Broadland District Council welcomes nominations for local people to be considered for a Blue Plaque.

To request the nomination criteria and an application form, email visit@broadland.gov.uk or call 01603 430496.