

Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 33

Gorleston, Southtown and Runham Vauxhall

1. Introduction

These areas are now within the Borough of Great Yarmouth but they have not always been part of the Borough. This leaflet gives some brief details of their history and suggests where the relevant archives may be found.

2. Southtown

This is the settlement that grew up on the west bank of the river, where the upper ferry crossed and where the Haven Bridge was put up in 1417. It was also known as Little Yarmouth. It was in the county of Suffolk, apart from the small area known as Runham Vauxhall which was in the county of Norfolk. In the Middle Ages it had its own parish church - St Mary's. However in 1511 the parishes of Gorleston and Southtown were united: this means that inhabitants of Southtown used Gorleston church and their baptisms, marriages and burials are recorded in the Gorleston parish registers. The church of St Mary's in Southtown was pulled down in 1548 and the stone used in building the pier at the mouth of the Haven.

There were many disputes between Southtown and Great Yarmouth about harbour dues and related matters. These were resolved finally in 1681 when Southtown became part of the Borough of Great Yarmouth. From this date records about the administration of Southtown should appear in the archives of the Borough of Great Yarmouth rather than those of the county of Suffolk. However Southtown still remained in the parish of Gorleston, so records of baptisms, marriages and burials will be found in the registers of Gorleston church, not those of Great Yarmouth church.

3. Runham Vauxhall

This was the area bounded by the parish of Runham, the river Bure and Breydon Water. It is now largely occupied by the railway station and a supermarket. Until 1890 it was part of the parish of Runham: in that year it was separated from the parish of Runham and brought into the Borough of Great Yarmouth. At the same time it became an ecclesiastical parish of its own.

In spite of its small size (it had only one school), Runham Vauxhall had its own School Board from 1877 until 1891 when it was taken over by the Great Yarmouth School Board. The Runham Vauxhall School Board records are among the Yarmouth Borough archives. Runham Vauxhall was also outside Yarmouth for Poor Law purposes: it was part of the East and West Flegg Incorporation.

4. Gorleston

Gorleston is recorded in history before Great Yarmouth. The Domesday Book says that in 1066, the manor was held by Earl Guert. He had 20 villeins and 24 fishermen, and produced salt from salt-pans on the seashore.

Being on the west bank of the river, Gorleston was in the County of Suffolk. From 1832 it became part of Great Yarmouth for electoral purposes. In 1835 it became part of the Borough of Great Yarmouth. Yarmouth maintained its poor as a Union under the Poor Law Act of 1834. The parish of Gorleston (including the hamlet of Southtown) was not part of this Union. It was in the Mutford and Lothingland Hundred which was incorporated for the maintenance of the poor in 1763, and by an amended act in 1833. Records of this Union (including burial registers for the workhouse at Oulton 1834-99) are at the Suffolk Record Office.

Gorleston has always been a separate parish from Great Yarmouth, with its own **parish records**: these are now in the Norfolk Record Office. (Bishop's and Archdeacon's Transcripts are in the Suffolk Record Office.) The Norfolk Record Office also holds the **tithe maps** for both Gorleston and Southtown.

Copies of the Gorleston **Inclosure map and award** of 1813 are available at the Norfolk Record Office. Gorleston and Southtown came under the control of the Great Yarmouth School Board, formed in 1875.

Gorleston had two **manors**, the main manor of Gorleston and the small manor of Bacons. Gorleston manor was purchased by Great Yarmouth Corporation in 1890 and the Court Books are now among the Yarmouth Borough archives. Court books for the manor of Gorleston Bacons are also in the Norfolk Record Office.

Census returns for Gorleston 1841-91 are available at the Norfolk Record Office, Great Yarmouth Borough Library and in all branches of the Suffolk Record Office.

Free Church (nonconformist) registers. Gorleston Independent Church baptisms and deaths registers 1828-37 are at The National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), Ruskin Avenue, Kew, Richmond, TW9 4DU (tel. 020 8876 3444, website <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk>>. Microfilm copies of the registers are available at the Lowestoft and Ipswich branches of the Suffolk Record Office. Gorleston Ebenezer Wesleyan Reform Church marriage registers 1901-91 are at the Norfolk Record Office (see list FC 48/72-75).

Before 1858 **wills** were proved in church courts. Three courts had jurisdiction over Gorleston:

- Archdeaconry Court of Suffolk (records at the Suffolk Record Office).
- Consistory Court of Norwich (records at the Norfolk Record Office).

Prerogative Court of Canterbury (records at The National Archives).

Since 1858 wills have been proved in local Probate Registries. There are national printed indexes to all wills proved after 1858: these are available in good libraries including the Norfolk Heritage Centre, Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library, Millennium Plain, Norwich, NR12 1AW (telephone (01603) 774740).



If you need this leaflet in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language, please contact the County Archivist on 01603 222599 and we will do our best to help.

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