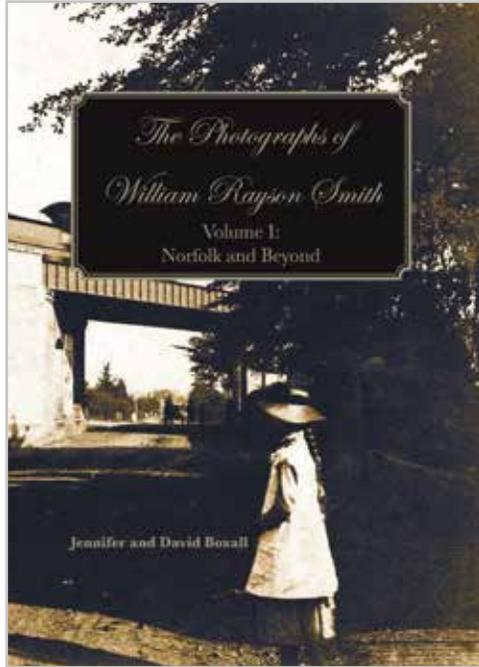


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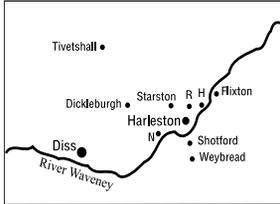


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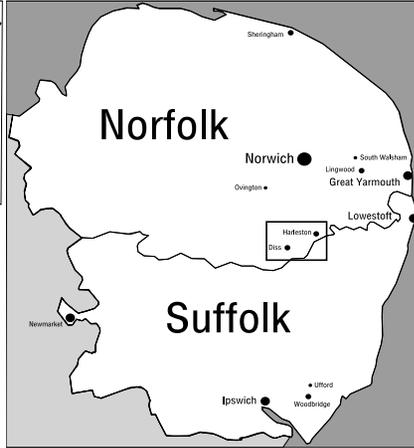


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Sketch maps showing the position of places relevant to the book (not to scale).



R = Redenhall H = Homersfield N = Needham



Poppyland Publishing is pleased to announce *The Photographs of William Rayson Smith Volume 1: Norfolk and Beyond* by Jennifer and David Boxall.

Many have an old photograph album that has been handed down in the family through the generations. Often studio portraits, sometimes we know the people shown through annotations in the album or the research of a family member. We might also be familiar with the photography of professionals in the 1880s through postcards or collections, but it is rare to come across the work of an amateur photographer whose plate photography captured both everyday and family life in the period. It might be for this reason alone that William Rayson Smith's albums are unique, however, his photographs, nearly all of which have never been seen before, provide us with a special glimpse into the past.

William Rayson Smith hardly left his native land being baptised in Dickleburgh Church in 1841 and dying only five miles away in Harleston in October 1932. Apart from a decade in Belleville, Canada, where he acquired a taste for the new technology of photography. Purchasing a camera he was to spend much of the late 1880s photographing what he saw around him. The result is a special collection of distinctive photographs covering Norfolk and beyond. This first volume provides around 130 photographs from that collection. While highlighting the area around Harleston in particular, they also show visits to family, as far afield as Newmarket, Woodbridge, Sheringham, Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, as well as his early work in Canada. The authors' careful research into Smith and his family adds background to the collection. A second volume is in preparation using his Lowestoft photographs.

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## FAMILY VISITS

**W**ILLIAM returned from Canada to find three of his sisters married, with children, and living some way from Harleston. The train provided an easy way to get to see them.

### Family Visit 1: South Walsham

Mary Smith married Spencer Rix in 1877. Their daughter Ethnie Eva was Jen's grandmother, born in 1886, and is probably the little girl on the donkey. We will meet the twins in the pushchair again as teenagers. Oddly two older brothers are not here, perhaps at school.

The photograph is actually at South Walsham, reached by train via Norwich to Lingwood Station. Spencer Rix farmed 30 acres but is described in the 1881 census as a merchant and miller employing 12 men, 2 clerks and a boy and, as we can see here, a nanny. He came from Thrandeston near Diss where his ancestors had owned Goswold Hall. The family has a memorial and grave spaces in Thrandeston churchyard. There is a second photograph of this family about 10 years later. William took photographs in the surrounding area which give us an impression of the Norfolk Broads at that time. The captions are his.





*Staithe, South Walsham*



*South Walsham Broad*



*On the Bure*

## Family Visit 2: Woodbridge

William's youngest sister Joanna married Edward Eaton, born at Thelveton, near her home. They lived in Woodbridge. Edward was a chemist so a rare move for a Smith out of the milling/farming community. They appear here with their son Edward wearing a dress, so not yet "breeched", in front of an unusually decorated doorway in a conservatory. Joanna died, aged about 40, in 1895.

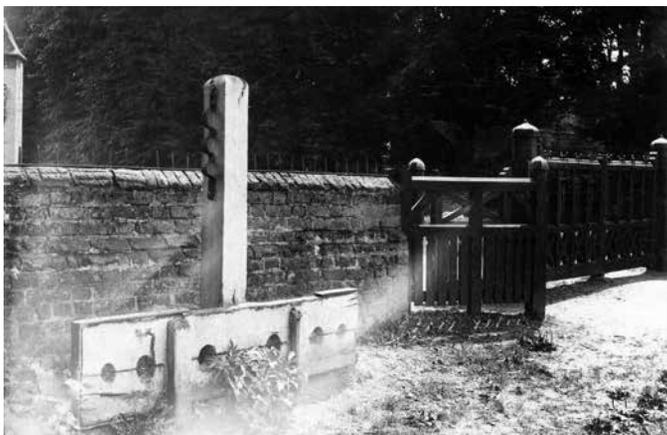
The lower picture shows Woodbridge Harbour. We can see a Thames sailing barge and the tide mill on a site used since 1170. The present building is from 1793 and now a museum.





*Seckford Almshouses, Woodbridge.*

This grand building dates from 1834 and still functions as a much-extended residential complex for the elderly. In 1587 Queen Elizabeth I granted Thomas Seckford permission to build almshouses "to relieve need and distress for thirteen local men". He also owned the tide mill.

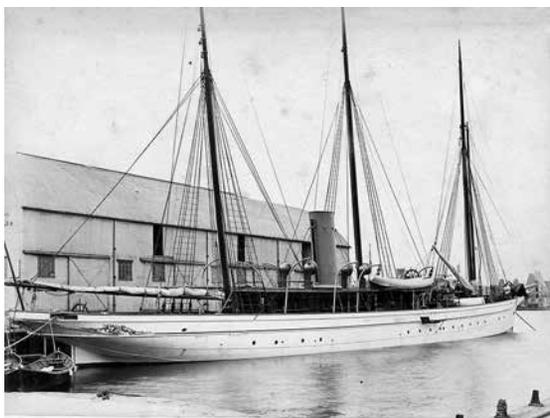


*Stocks at Ufford.*

William took a walk to nearby Ufford. Ignoring the fine church with its famous telescopic medieval font cover, his interest was captured by the "Stocks at Ufford". It is by the church gate and a butress of the church appears here. These stocks can still be seen.

## Ipswich Docks

While at Woodbridge William took the train to nearby Ipswich and visited the docks. The lock admitted ships to the inner harbour in which ships are visible. The "Thistle" was about ten years old, built in Glasgow; 165 feet long, it was built of iron. It was wrecked in 1917. The Duke of Hamilton owned Eaton Park near Woodbridge.



*Duke of Hamilton Yacht, "Thistle."*



*Ipswich Lock gates*

### Family Visit 3: Ovington

William's sister Emma was married to Frederick Womack from Fersfield, a few miles from Dickleburgh. He was a farmer, and here we see them at Ovington near Watton. The house can still be seen, well off the road and away from the village. The farm was probably a tenancy and large enough to employ ten men nicely posed here with a wagon. The family eventually had four daughters and a son, so from census information we can date these photographs at around 1889. We also know that the governess was Grace E. Ruffle from Essex and the maids were Emma Tennant from Essex and Millicent Frost from Beeston in Norfolk. William's journey here by train was via changes at Norwich and Thetford and from Watton by pony and trap.



### Visit to Newmarket

We do not know who William visited, but they make a good group and it is an impressive house. Another easy journey by train.



*"Fairstead House" Newmarket.*



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