

FEATURE

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These pollen beetles found a home in our strange 'herb'

After years of good service the time had come to sort out the herb garden, replace the soil and, where necessary, plant fresh stock. After the spring clean, if I may call it that, the results were all that I had dared hope for.

There were initial problems. Blackbirds took to digging out soil from the edges of some of the compartments and a neighbouring cat made a few excavations. All that was sorted out and the young herbs grew remarkably quickly. Then came the emergence of unwelcome additions in the form of nettles and thistles. These were easily removed.

One stranger, however, just had to be left, simply because we could not give it a name. Growth was rapid. From nothing to twelve inches tall in just a week is in the super-speed class. At two feet tall tiny yellow flowers began to form on spidery side limbs. Leaves and prospective flowers suggested we were looking at one of the huge number of brassicas.

Growth continued, very tiny flowers opened and we felt certain we were correct but the exact species still eluded us. I have just been outside with my tape measure. The height of the stranger has risen to five feet seven inches and the widest span is three feet nine inches. Only the fact that all of that is so spindly as to be only vaguely apparent from a distance has allowed the plant to continue before removal.

Before the petals dropped I noticed many of the flowers were hosting numbers of tiny flower or pollen beetles. These are general terms for several species of tiny creatures which feed in garden flowers and field crops. Evening primrose, which is self-set here, always used to house them. Now after a couple of blank seasons, I see they are back.

When on one of his morning strolls, John Juby saw what he took to be an extremely early blackberry. This turned out to be a flower so densely covered with such beetles they made a solid ball. I wonder if there was a field of rape close by? One species of pollen beetle which favours yellow flowers is considered to be a prime pest on that crop.

Howes that for history in a name!

From the Wymondham soldier who was the last to emerge alive from the Charge of the Light Brigade to a magnificent American mansion named after a Norfolk village - family research has revealed some remarkable people, writes

ROWAN MANTELL

When his 11-year-old son brought home a school project about family history, Paul Howes was

happy to help.

More than a decade later, he is still tracing people called Howes around the world - and is now the international expert on his surname. He has found many thousands of Howes, reached back through seven centuries of history and discovered that his home county of Norfolk is the worldwide epicentre of the Howes name.

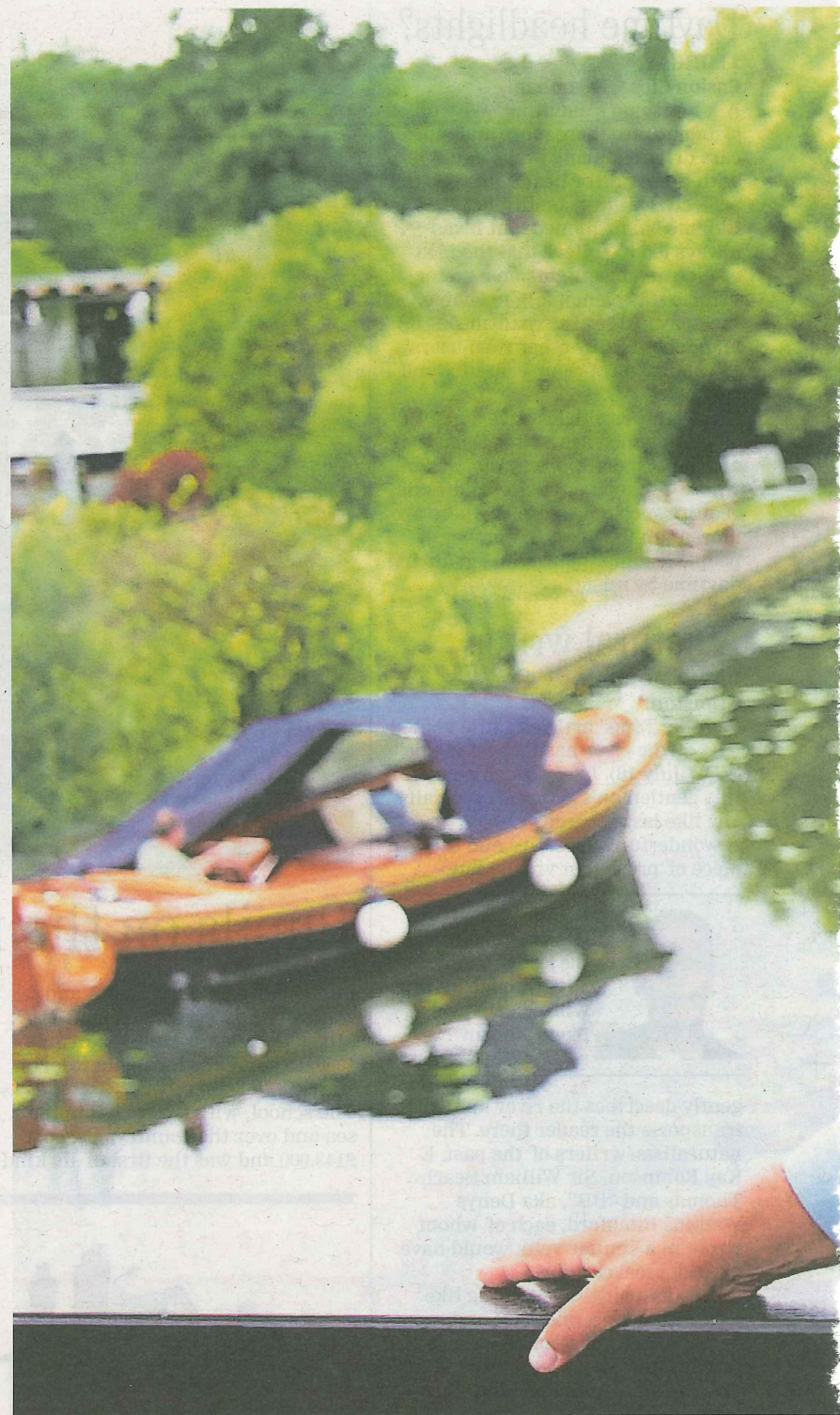
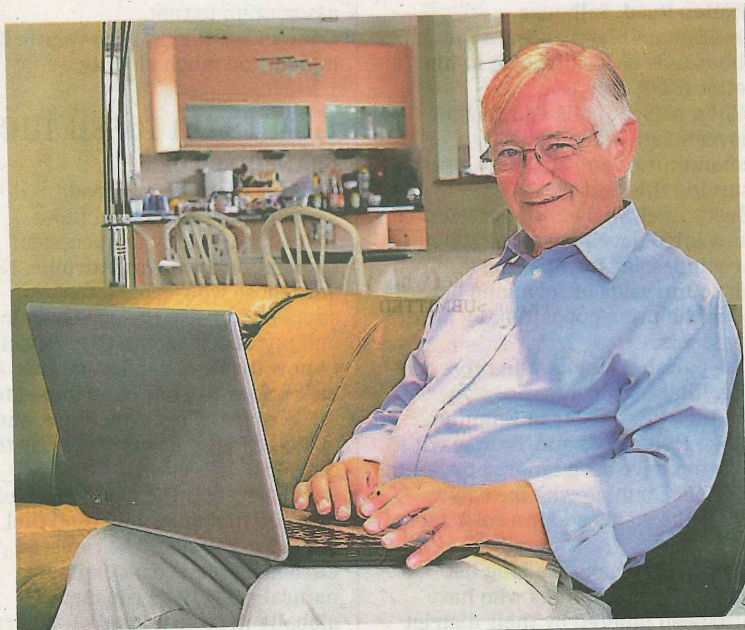
His son has moved on to university and a degree in computer engineering, but Paul is still fascinated by the project and puzzling out connections between

people called Howes (and House, Hows, Howse and Howze) across the world.

He has also found many fascinating characters who share his surname - from the last man to come alive out of the "Valley of Death" after the Charge of the Light Brigade, to the founders of a travelling circus and Norwich City Football Club.

Born and brought up in Norwich, Paul wondered, early on, whether it was a particularly Norfolk name, because there were two unrelated strands of Howes in his father's family tree, and another in his mother's.

Now he knows that Norfolk is indeed a Howes hotspot, with the families spreading out across the globe from their East Anglian



roots. The name derives from the Old English for "beside a hill", and while Norfolk is notoriously not especially hilly, Paul said those undulations which do exist were probably worth noting and people became known for living beside them.

Paul, a retired actuary, and his wife and two sons, now live in America, but every summer Paul returns to his native Norfolk to go sailing.

Speaking from his house in Horning, near Wroxham, Paul said: "I suppose I got hooked on the project because I was working away from home at the time and it helped fill my evenings."

"Once I got interested, I realised there were no resources out there for people with my name, so I decided I would take it on and try to find out the origins, and how far it's spread around the world."

And it wasn't just the history, but the maths too, which inspired him. "I have a maths background and I like solving puzzles," he said, "And every day this involves solving puzzles."

Now retired, Paul is able to devote

“The very earliest person he has linked into the Howes family tree is Richard Howys who died in Besthorpe in 1457

even more time to the work and was, this year, elected chairman of the Guild of One-Name Studies, an organisation of many thousands of people researching their surnames all over the world.

"It's just an honour to be part of a society in which, every day, hundreds of members go out of their way to help other members," he said.

Despite the thousands of Howes identified and linked into the website, there is still plenty more to find out.

The biggest Howes family in America was descended from farmer Thomas Howes, who arrived in Massachusetts on the



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FEATURE

How do you do? Some notable Howes

■ The last soldier to emerge alive from the Valley of Death after the Charge of the Light Brigade was John Howes of Wymondham. Sergeant-Major John Howes was born in Wymondham in 1828 and enlisted at 18. In 1854 he was one of the soldiers, immortalised as "the six hundred" by Tennyson, who rode into the "valley of death" at Balaclava in Crimea. During the cavalry charge towards the Russian guns John Howes dismounted to cut the reins of enemy horses and capture a gun. In the melee he remounted a different horse and fought a Russian hussar before getting safely back, the last of the brigade to return from the battlefield. He became something of a celebrity, attending annual dinners for the survivors, and lived into the 20th century, dying on Christmas Day 1902.

■ Seth Benedict Howes was an American who set up a travelling circus, which he brought to London in the 1850s - returning home with an English bride. He later made a fortune by investing money in Chicago as the railways were growing. His mansion, near New York, is called Morningthorpe, and Paul believes this was to try and establish a connection with the Howes of Morningthorpe Manor, near Long Stratton. They included John Howse (they later changed the spelling of the name) who rebuilt much of the manor in the 1690s to please his heiress wife, and 19th-century MP Edward Howes. The manor was lived in by members of the Howes family until the early 20th century and is currently for sale, with a guide price of £1.5 million. At his own, American, Morningthorpe Seth recreated an English country estate complete with castle and church. When he died, in 1901, he left £2 million - then a phenomenal amount of money.

■ Sailor and artist Victor Tolubiev Howes was born in Great Yarmouth in 1822. The son of a Yarmouth mariner, he also had connections to the Russian royal family on his mother's side.

He became captain of clipper ships sailing to and from the Far East. His ship The Albert was built in Yarmouth, and another carried troops between London and Calcutta from 1867 to 1870.

After a lifetime at sea, Captain Victor retired to Thurlton in Norfolk, where he painted seafaring pictures, dying in 1907.

■ Arthur Frederick Howes, pictured, was born in Mulbarton, and was killed in the trenches in 1915 - 12 days before the birth of his son. That son, named Arthur to honour his father, this year marked the 100th anniversary of his father's death, and, 12 days later, celebrated his own 100th birthday.

■ Dr Henry William Howes, born in Norwich in 1896, was awarded an OBE for his work in education and colonial administration. There is a suggestion he might have worked for MI6 too. He was in the Royal Marines during the First World War and then trained as a teacher, becoming head of the Norwich art and technical college and then director of education in several countries around the world and an advisor to UNESCO.

■ In 1902 John William Howes was one of the founders of Norwich City Football Club. When the club wanted to honour John, more than 100 years later, they enlisted Paul Howes' help to track down the closest living relative. John was born in Earlham, just outside Norwich, in 1864, the son of a miller. He was honorary secretary of the club for more than 40 years, and also headmaster of the Alderman Norman school in Norwich, a churchwarden, founder of the Norfolk Referees Association and a long-term chairman of the Norfolk and Suffolk Football League.

In 2006 he was elected to the club's Hall of Fame - but there were no known relatives to receive the commemorative plaque. Through appeals in the Eastern Daily Press and Norwich Evening News, and painstaking searches through birth and death certificates, Paul helped find the daughter of his great-niece.



■ Paul Howes, who has done much research on his family history and has been elected the international chairman of a society for people who research surnames.

Pictures: SIMON FINLAY

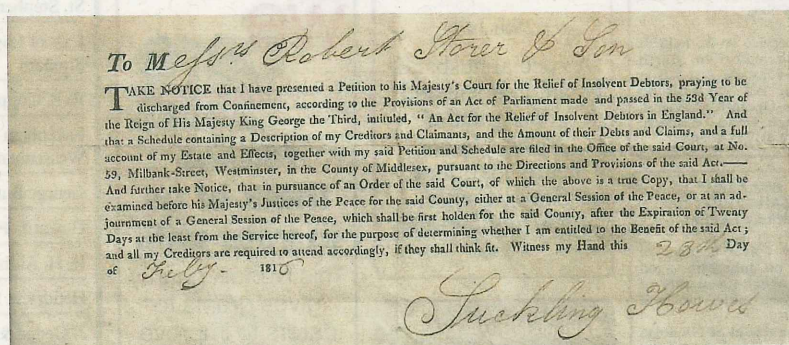
Mayflower III in 1637, with his wife Mary and their three young children.

But Paul has no information on where Thomas and Mary left from. "People in America always want to know where they came from!" he said.

He has traced his own family back 13 generations and the very earliest person he has linked into the Howes family tree is Richard Howys who died in the village of Besthorpe, near Attleborough, in 1457. "I don't know his occupation but reckon he was at least a landowner as he left a will," said Paul.

He also discovered a third cousin in West Runton, who is now one of several Norfolk Howes who helps with the website. Paul and Ian Howes began by entering data for more than 5,000 members of the clan and there are now more than 100,000 Howes, living all over the world, on the database.

Paul's own family ran a shoe business in Magdalen Street, Norwich, for several generations,



■ An 1816 petition from Suckling Howes, a watchmaker of Downham Market who was in Norwich Castle Gaol for non-payment of debts.

Picture: SUBMITTED

until selling it to StartRite in the 1960s.

The Guild of One-Name studies also has sites devoted to other Norfolk names including Ebbage, Stroulger and Harmer. And the site for the name Alabaster is run by another Norfolk researcher, Laraine Hake of Bunwell, near Attleborough.

She has been tracing her family history since she was a teenager, and now concentrates on her

paternal grandmother's maiden name of Alabaster.

It resulted in the formation of the Alabaster Society and extended family gatherings every three years.

"Unlike most 'one name studies,' those bearing the Alabaster name today all appear to be descendants of a single couple from Hadleigh in Suffolk," said Laraine, "So we are all cousins of one degree or another."

SOLDIER'S NAME AND DESCRIPTION OF ATTESTATION.		THE SOLDIER'S NEXT-OF-KIN NOW LIVING.*	
Name <i>Arthur Frederick Howes</i>		Note:—No entry on this page has any legal effect as a Will. (To be verified or corrected from time to time should the soldier wish it.)	
Enlisted at <i>Norwich</i>		Nearest degree of relationship	NAMES
in the County of <i>Norfolk</i>			Parish and Town
on the <i>13th June 1904</i>			County
at the age of <i>18</i> years <i>11</i> months		1st.	Wife.
for the <i>NORFOLK REGIMENT</i>			Children.
for <i>3</i> years in the Army and <i>9</i> years in the Reserve.		2nd.	Father.
Born in the Parish of <i>Mulbarton</i>			Mother. <i>Charlotte</i>
in or near the Town of <i>Norwich</i>			Brother and Sisters.
in the County of <i>Norfolk</i>		3rd.	Nephews and nieces, if children of deceased brothers or sisters.
Trade or calling <i>Shoemaker</i>			Other relations.
Last permanent residence <i>3</i> <i>Acches</i>		4th.	Signature of Soldier, <i>Arthur Frederick Howes</i>
Height <i>5</i> feet <i>3</i> inches			Regimental number, <i>6928</i> Date of Signature, <i>20 July</i>
Complexion <i>Fair</i>			Signature of O.C., <i>W. J. Harrison</i>
Eyes <i>Brown</i> Hair <i>Brown</i>			Signature of O.C., <i>W. J. Harrison</i>
Marks			Signature of O.C., <i>W. J. Harrison</i>
Religion <i>Anglican</i>			Signature of O.C., <i>W. J. Harrison</i>
Signature of Soldier, <i>Arthur Frederick Howes</i>			Signature of O.C., <i>W. J. Harrison</i>

■ The main page of the Army service logbook of Arthur Frederick Howes of Mulbarton who died in the trenches in 1915, 12 days before his son was born. That son recently marked the centenary of his father's death and then his own 100th birthday.