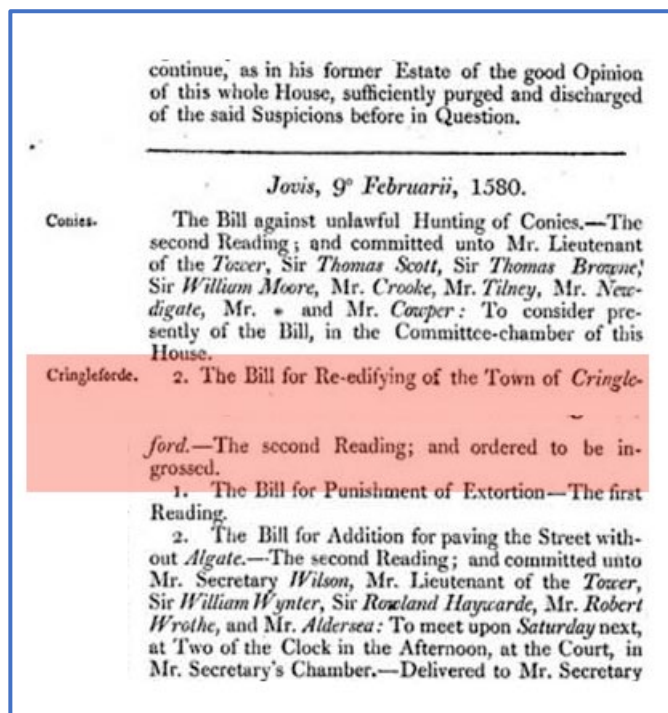


A brief history of Newfound, Cringleford, Norwich

Newfound and its farm are linked to the re-edification of Cringleford following the Great Fire of 1571. The fire destroyed most of the village and the area was henceforth viewed as largely worthless although some think the damage was exaggerated deliberately to lessen its value. The Great Hospital then acquired the land. The land had been seized by the Crown from the former owner George Redman who had been declared a traitor and executed after creating (with others, including the then Sheriff of Norwich, John Appleyard) a force to expel the Huguenots (known as 'Strangers') from Norwich who they accused of taking the jobs and livelihoods of the citizens of Norwich (Bellinger 2003).

A bill was tabled a few years later (1575) in Queen Elizabeth I's reign and the act passed in 1580 'impowered' the city of Norwich, as lords of Cringleford, to grant what lands they pleased to be held by copy of court roll of their manor, and to make it as ancient copyhold, in order to re-edify their village, which was totally burned down. John Balleston of St Giles in Norwich, a member of the Norwich Corporation, capitalized on this, bought the land from the Great Hospital, and built a house on it a few years later called Balleston Newfound. The records show that a dwelling house and melting house (kiln house) were present by 1584.



Extract from House of Commons Journal entry in February 1581 indicating the act to re-edify Cringleford (highlighted; <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/commons-jrnl/vol1/p124a>)

The name Newfound goes back to a 'new-found' band of a "remarkable sort of earth" that was discovered there and was probably the reason Balleston bought the land. Because of its quality, much of the 'earth' or clay was exported to Holland as 'Balleston Newfound'. The clay was used locally for making pottery, brick and tiles for many years, probably into the 18th century when the site was turned over to farming. It was reported as disused by the time of Blomefield's history (written in 1736, cited by Clarke and Collie, 2022). Archaeological investigations by Oxford Archaeology (Clarke and Collie, 2022) undertaken prior to the development of the site for housing, uncovered five kilns of updraught design one



Kiln 21, Newfound: left – looking east with Newfound Farmhouse in background; top – detail of the arches looking west; bottom – west end looking north (from Clarke and Collie, 2022)

of which, a 16th/17th century kiln, found under our orchard and allotments was the most intact. Debris from the site included pottery (vessels, plates and bowls), bricks and tiles.

William Faden's 1797 map of Norfolk is the first entry showing the existence of Newfound as an entity.

Thereafter there is little change and Newfound appears as Newfound Farm on Ordnance Survey maps of the 19th century. The farm was inherited by John Balleston's grandson, Thomas, although Thomas' father had been in residence for many years and remained so when his son inherited.

In the early 18th century the property was sold to John Mackerell, a merchant from Holland. He did not live there, and the property was leased out. It was passed down the family until transferring to William Crowe, a Lord Mayor of Norwich, who was married to Mary (née Mackerell). It stayed in the Crowe family until the early 19th century



Part of Faden's map of Norfolk published in 1797 showing Cringleford and Newfound with its adjacent orchard

<http://www.fadensmapofnorfolk.co.uk/>

before passing to Margaret Trafford Southwell (née Crowe) whose husband, Sigismund, was High Sheriff of Norfolk in 1818. It remained in the Trafford Southwell family until being sold to Hugh Gurney Barclay (of the prominent banking family and of Colney Hall), late in the 19th century. The various owners did not all reside in the property and from the Mackerells onwards through the 18th and 19th centuries, there were numerous tenants identified in a number of censuses: Thomas Bond, James Martin; Robert Carter; Edmund Barnes, Robert Bures, John Culling; John Freeman; William Drain; Robert Primrose (Williamson, 2009).

The property remained with the Gurney Barclays until they sold the Colney Hall estate, including Newfound Farm in 1957, to Ronald George Lawrence a local property developer. He put the farm and buildings up for auction in 1975 whereupon the farmland (ca. 140 acres) was sold to the John Innes Foundation to support the research of the John Innes Institute.

The buildings were sold to Smith of Honingham who obtained planning permission to convert the farm buildings to domestic housing, splitting the main residence into two and the

outbuildings into five dwellings. The farm was used in part as the John Innes Centre's farm for trialling new crop varieties and for housing their fruit tree collection, and in part for crop production by The Morley Agricultural Foundation. In 2008, The John Innes Foundation entered into an agreement with Barratt Homes to promote the land for housing and in 2016 the developers obtained planning permission for 650 houses on the northern part of the site. Consequently, that part of the farmland was sold to Barratt Homes in 2018. Building started the following year and, subsequently, the development was

named Cringleford Heights. The farmland to the south of Cringleford Heights remains with the John Innes Foundation and is farmed by Morley. It is anticipated, however, that the southern parcel will also be turned over to housing in the near future.



Top - Newfound farm buildings; bottom - preparing land at the Farm for pea variety trials, circa 1975. (Courtesy John Innes Archives.)

Sources

The information here has been taken from the cited references below plus the following sources: an unpublished article researched by Mrs Anne Williamson of Newfound Farmhouse; the Norfolk Record Office online; Norfolk Heritage Explorer online. We thank also Sarah Wilmot, Archivist, the John Innes Centre and John Smith of Smith of Honingham for additional information. Kiln photographs are taken from Clarke and Collie (2022) under their Creative Commons Licence.

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Cringleford Parish Council, April 2024