

HAZELDOWN'S MYSTERIOUS GRAVES

I am sure many of us have driven, or even walked past the tiny isolated graveyard on our way to Hazeldown Farm. Only a few feet square and containing two headstones depicting the final resting places of two Longstock characters, namely the East Brothers.



I say mysterious because I am sure that many of us are unaware of the history of this tiny burial ground.

For any new settlers in Longstock, or if anyone is uncertain of the whereabouts of these graves, they can be found on the right hand side of the road on the summit of the last hill as you approach Hazeldown Farm from Longstock.

I have gleaned the following information from the Test Valley and Border Anthology No. 8 Printed in 1976. A gentleman called Jack Davis, who is no longer with us, had visited the site and written about it for the Andover Local Archive Committee. I have purposely shortened his piece to fit the newsletter.

The men referred to are Alfred Ernest East and Arthur Havelock East, sons of Joshua East, who was the wealthy owner of Longstock House. The two boys had grown to love the area so much that they asked to be buried in a spot overlooking the beautiful scenery that they had enjoyed throughout their lives.

The two gentlemen who lay buried were both large and powerful men in the physical sense. They were also credited with a lively sense of humour and were kind and considerate to all and sundry. May they rest in peace.

Many a story has been told about them. It is said that when he was at college Arthur would suspend a 3 gallon bucket on his little finger and with the same hand would write his name on the college wall.

A sense of humour is evident. When one of the brothers said to Mr Burnfield senior (who incidentally came to farm at Hazeldown in 1907) "We would like a burial site where we can look down on our beloved valley", Mr Burnfield replied, "You will only be disturbed by rabbits here". He received the quick answer, "Rabbits will never worry me, I am a good shot".

Their attitude to life may perhaps be judged from the inscriptions on their respective headstones:

Alfred Ernest East
Born October 11th 1867
Died August 5th 1920
Came Home August 7th 1920

Arthur Havelock East
Born 3rd November 1857
Died 10th September 1927
And So To Bed

Both brothers were officers of the 13th (Andover) Rifle Volunteer Corps and each took more than an active part in his duties. Apart from privately purchasing a Maxim

machine-gun, which made the 13th the only volunteer unit in Hampshire to have one, they also built a rifle range on Charity Down. Arthur was gazetted (published in a gazette) on 18th September 1875, his brother Alfred on 15th November 1884.

The members of the 13th used to enjoy their march from Andover to Longstock House, to be royally entertained by the East family. The annual sports were held here on many occasions, but even reviews and manoeuvres were welcomed because of the generosity of their hosts.

Jack Davis writes, "Brief details of their lives were supplied by the Andover Advertiser in an obituary. The issue for 13th August 1920 mentions Alfred's provision of a shooting range in Longstock Park after the old one at Picket Piece had been abandoned, and his continual keenness to help forward the youth of the district.

As part of the national reserve, Alfred was called up in 1914, but finding his services were not required in an active capacity, he proceeded to London and enrolled as a Special Constable. He was placed on duty at Buckingham Palace and later moved to the Observation Rooms in Spring Gardens as a Sergeant, and was given the MBE for his work in connection with air raids.

A touching note is struck in the account of his funeral. "On Saturday his body was laid to rest in a field at Longstock, by the request of the deceased, who also asked that none but wild flowers should be near his resting place".

At the time of his death after a long illness, Alfred East was living at 5 The Avenue where he had moved from Harley House.

Arthur East's obituary 16th September 1927 dwelt particularly upon his education. "Educated at Harrow and St John's College, Cambridge. In those days he was of remarkably strong physic and he won the "putting the weight" in the inter university sports against Oxford in three successive years. His distance, 38' 6" was a record for some time. He also won "throwing the hammer", 117' in the same event for two years.

On leaving Cambridge, where he took the degrees of MA and LLB, he was called to the Bar at the Inner Temple and joined the Western Circuit.

"He succeeded Major P H Poore in the command of the 13th, now named 'E' Company (Andover) Corps of the 1st Volunteer Battalion of the Hampshire Regiment. He was a good rifle and revolver shot and he was a regular at Wimbledon and Bisley. He was also a good game shot".

So the next time you have occasion to travel past this final resting place of the East Brothers, take a few moments to stop and perhaps ponder over a little piece of bygone Longstock history.