



## Lombe Athill Durrant

74569 Second Lieutenant, General List, 65 Squadron, Royal Air Force

He died on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1918 in France, aged 25

Lombe is buried at Vignacourt British Cemetery, Somme, France

Lombe Athill Durrant was one of George Durrant Jnr.s two children who appeared, aged 19 and 18, in 1911, in Folkestone Kent. Lombe's older sister had no profession, his father, George Jnr, aged only 42, claimed to be a retired Auctioneer originally from South Elmham. Lombe was however an Auctioneers clerk and the siblings had both been born in Redenhall with Harleston. So, how does this family link to the well-known family of Auctioneers that still operate in Harleston?

Going back to 1900 we find a very fulsome report of the death of George Durrant Snr, resident at the White House on Mendham Lane. The report goes on to state

The deceased gentleman, who was 71 years of age, and who had been ailing for some considerable time ... was a well-known and highly esteemed personality in the Waveney Valley district and his career as a business man was marked with considerable ability and success and the training, he gave his two sons to assist him was of so sterling a character that when illness overtook him ... its importance in one of the finest agricultural districts of the Kingdom is more than ever apparent.

The activities of 'George Durrant and Sons' continue to be advertised long after the death of the principal, George Durrant Snr. The two sons mentioned in his obituary were George Jnr and Charles. George Snr's own two sons went on to continue his business, George Jnr. living at the start of the Bungay Road in 1901 was running the sale yards in Harleston, Charles H, the ones in Beccles.

George Snr had been born in Earsham, the son of Humphrey Durrant, the estate manager at St Peter's Hall (now the Brewery near Bungay), and his wife Mary. There are a lot of George Durrants in this tale; also, in the area was Humphrey's assumed brother, Flixton George, as we will call him who was living in South Elmham Hall, in 1841. A very nice property with a deal of history, one source claims his his wife had been the daughter of previous occupants.<sup>1</sup> During his residence, Flixton George excavated part of the Hall grounds around where the minster once stood; a project only remarkable for how little of archaeological interest was found! There is some suggestion from the current owners of the Hall that he may have been determined not to find anything, it being in the best interests of the then owners to fend off the activities of disruptive antiquarians!

George Snr, one of the younger of at least 4 sons of Humphrey and Mary Durrant, was educated at Beccles<sup>2</sup> and then learnt his trade at Howlett & Lenny Auctioneers, the head of the firm, Jonathan Howlett, being his Uncle. Jonathan Howlett never married, instead we find Howlett's household in 1851 consisted of himself, his widowed mother, a niece, Harriet Howlett, who was also his

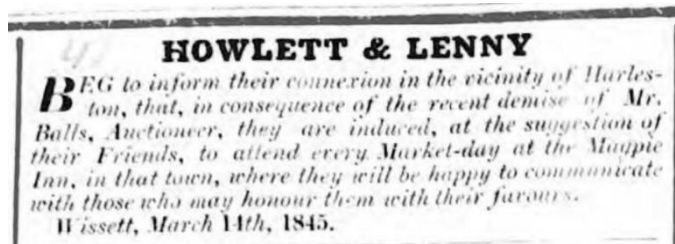
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<sup>1</sup> In 1841 George Durrant's wife is named as Esther – the only matching marriage I can find is between George Durrant and Esther Dible (Dyball) in 1831.

<sup>2</sup> Appearing in 1841 as a 13 year old at a middling sized boarding school In North Street Beccles.

housekeeper, and his nephew, 22 years old George Durrant Snr an 'Assistant to an Auctioneer', said auctioneer doubtless being uncle Jonathan. Uncle Jonathan as well as being auctioneer etc etc, was also farming 500 acres and employing 20 labourers, looking at George Snr's subsequent achievements, I think perhaps George Snr went on to model himself on his uncle.

At age 30, in 1853, Durrant snr launched his independent career with a monthly sale at Halesworth combined a few months later by another sale at the Falcon Ditchingham. This did not really take-off, so he tried Redenhall, by the Yew Tree to be precise! He would already have been familiar with the town; his uncle having seized an opportunity to fill a business gap in the town back in 1845.



Durrant's Redenhall business thrived to the extent he had to move on to a larger sale yard at the Cap in Harleston, site of large cattle sales since at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> C. His first sale at the Cap took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> December 1857 and continued fortnightly. In addition, annual lamb, sheep and stock sales also took place under his aegis. Family legend has it that it was lobbying from George Snr that led to Redenhall having its own railway stop, giving access to the London Markets for Cattle traded at Durrant's auctions.



1861 saw George Durrant Snr. living back at home living at The Hall, St Peter's South Elmham with his widowed mother and unmarried sister. The widowed mother, running a farm of 175 acres employing 8 men and a boy, was doubtless glad of her son's expertise. By '71, his mother had given up the farm and was living in a more modest establishment, with her still unmarried daughter and namesake – Mary Durrant.

*St Peter's, now a Brewery and Restaurant but then part of the Flixton Estate.*

Late the following year, George Snr married Jane Pizzey Hammond. In 1861 she had been living in Bridge Street, Bungay with her unmarried brother, a veterinarian surgeon. Tracking back another census I was surprised to find her in the Shipmeadow Workhouse. It transpired it was not as an inmate but as the daughter of the Workhouse Master and Mistress. Another two of her siblings were staying with grand-parents.



Shipmeadow  
Workhouse<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps George Snr's marriage had provoked the relocation to the Grange Redenhall where, now a land-owner, auctioneer, valuer, land agent and farmer of 305 acres employing 12 men and 3 boys, he would be able to keep a closer eye on his Auctions at Redenhall. Also, in the house hold, for the 1871 census, was a 21 years old auctioneer pupil, John Boutell, a cook, a nursemaid and a 29-year-old groom rejoicing in the name 'Horatio Lord Nelson. As well as the two sons, George Jnr and Charles Humphrey, aged 6 and 5 respectively, a 3 years old daughter Emily Athill, was also in the household.

**Bouttell's Weekly Auction Mart,  
Beccles.**

**J**OHAN BOUTELL in thanking his numerous Friends and the Public generally for the encouraging support he has received since his establishment of the above Sale, has the pleasure of informing them that for the future MR. GEO. DURRANT, of Redenhall Grange, will be associated with him as a Partner in the business of the above Auction Mart, which will now be carried on under the title of

**BOUTTELL AND DURRANT'S BECCLES  
AUCTION MART,**

And the working of the business being thus extended, the Firm respectfully solicit an increase of favours, and all who may be pleased to patronise them may rest assured that their interests will be faithfully studied.

Beccles, 16th April, 1879.

(3702

\* \* To ensure due publicity entries should be sent to the Auctioneers' Office, Station Road, Beccles, not later than Nine a.m. on Wednesdays.

By 1876, the Durrant's 'Auctioneer pupil', Boutell, had gone on to start a Sale yard in Beccles, conveniently near the Railway station. It seems that by 1879 Durrants had a fairly big finger in that pie whilst, following Boutell's death in 1886, Durrant Snr completely took over this sale yard 'at that important railway junction on the G.E.R.'

*Norwich Mercury Norfolk, England*  
19 Apr 1879

As a side note, in 1881, John Boutell and his wife, Mendham born Charlotte nee Everson, had 4 children, aged 4,3,2 and 5 months, another was to arrive the following year; 5 children in 5 years. And then no more! And yes, Charlotte was the daughter of Edgar Everson, Lemonade and Gingerbeer Manufacturer of Harleston.

George Durrant was a busy man; in September 1871 (a busy time every year due to the amount of tenancies that started or ended at Michaelmas) the August 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the Norfolk Chronicle details his upcoming auctions at various places in the region on:- Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> (two sales), 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> – not too surprisingly at the bottom of this list Durrant advertises 'a Vacancy for a Young Gentleman wishing to learn the Business'!

Moving on to 1881 and the family were still in the Grange although Durrant's land holdings had expanded to include 550 acres of farmland on which he employed 18 men and 5 boys. This time there was a 20-year-old auctioneer from Gloucestershire and a 20 year old pupil from Essex also in the household. There was a final child; 4 years old Lombe William featured in this census, sadly he died in 1887, aged only 11. Lombe's older brother, the then 15 years old Charles Humphrey, was

<sup>3</sup> © Copyright Believed to be my grandfather and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence.

away boarding at the Norfolk County School, although Charles' obituary<sup>4</sup> claims that he was educated at 'Redenhall Grammar School'.

By 1891, whilst his parents and unmarried sister Emily Athill remained at the Grange, George Jnr was living on Broad Street, setting up for married life in a modest establishment close to Candler's. George Jnr had married his Yorkshire born wife, Mary Kathleen Atkinson in London in the third quarter of 1890. Mary was the daughter of a Norwich born 'Professor of Music' who had, by the time of Mary's birth, wound up in Bradford; judging by his older children's birth places he did this via Shelton and Hackney! The 'Professor' was doing rather well judging by the family's 1881 home, indeed Lombe's mother, wife of George Jnr may have viewed the move to Norfolk rather a step down from her parent's grand, 10 room-house close to the buzzing metropolis of Bradford. In 1896 Lt George Durrant Jnr was, along with Lt William Hazard, commanding officer of the 4<sup>th</sup> Volunteer Brigade; local businessman Everson commanded the more glamorous Artillery Volunteers.



Lombe Athill Durrant's mother's home in 1881  
2 Mornington Villas, Bradford

George Jnr's brother, Charles Humphrey, appeared in the 1901 census at the New Market Place, Beccles with his Harleston born wife, Bessie nee Knights<sup>5</sup> and their two sons (George Humphrey and Wilfred Charles); in the 1911 census, unlike his retired brother George Jnr, he was still an auctioneer and was living in a substantial 13 room house in Kilbrack,

Beccles.

The boy's sister, Emily Athill Durrant, had also married, to a Robert Weddall Bond in 1892, when Durrant Snr was actually running two establishments, Redenhall Grange, the site of his original sales yards, and the White House to which he retired. The dates of the banns being read are given below. Unfortunately, Bond died in 1897, at the relatively young age of 37, there appearing to be no children from the union and Emily appeared living with her mother in the 1901 census, doubtless helping console the older grieving widow. Emily herself re-married to Gwilym Lloyd Lewis in 1905 – a very Welsh sounding name indeed!

**On Tuesday afternoon the marriage of Mr. Robert Weddall Bond, of the Hall, Pulham St. Mary, with Miss Emily Athill Durrant, only daughter of Mr. George Durrant, of Redenhall Grange and the White House, Harleston, was solemnized at the Parish Church, Redenhall, the ceremony being performed by the Rector, the Ven. Archdeacon Perowne. The town during the afternoon presented quite a festive appearance in honour of the event, numerous flags and banners being displayed. The bride was given away by her father, Major Bond acting as groomsman to his brother. Miss Gambrell presided at the organ, and the bells rang out merrily in honour of the event. After the wedding an "at home" was held at the White House, and was attended by a large and fashionable assembly. The wedding gifts were numerous and costly.**

*Robert Weddall Bond* bachelor of this parish and *Emily Athill Durrant*, daughter of the parish of Redenhall - with

Were published, as follows: - *H. C. Hibbard*

1st, on Sunday *June 26<sup>th</sup> 1892* by *F. C. Hibbard.*

2d, on Sunday *July 3<sup>rd</sup> 1892* by *H. C. Hibbard.*

3d, on Sunday *July 10<sup>th</sup> 1892* by *F. C. Hibbard.*

<sup>4</sup> Diss Express 21 Sep 1928

<sup>5</sup> Dtr of Robert Knights of the Harleston Foundary.



Three generations of Durrants, at a guess: front row; Kathleen, Wilfred, Lombe Athill, George Humphrey; Seated in Middle; George Snr, Jane nee Hammond, Back Row; Mary Kathleen nee Atkinson, George Jnr, Emily, Charles, Bessie Nee Knights. I would imagine this photo was taken at the White House, very shortly before George Snr's death at the age of 71 in 1900.

### MARRIAGE.

**BENEST—DURRANT.**—On Feb. 22nd, by licence, at All Souls' Church, Cheriton, by the Rev. F. W. Haden, M.A., vicar, Edward Ernest Benest, B.A. (Cantab) (Sub-Lieut., R.N.V.R.), youngest son of Edward B. S. Benest, Esq., A.M.I.C.E., F.R.G.S., etc. Tijuca, Bournemouth, to Kathleen, only daughter of Mr and Mrs. George Durrant, Hurst Villa, Folkestone, late of Harleston, Norfolk.

the young Lieut. was from a wealthy, educated, well-travelled family. His father had gone off to South America in the 1890's bringing back various trophies and was a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Kathleen Durrant's husband returned from the war and following his career as an Engineer also travelled the world: North Africa, Sri Lank and Singapore that I know of. He had some independent means and in later years translated his love of sailing into a series of books about the inland waterways of Europe.

Doubtless George Jnr's son, Lombe Athill Durrant expected to work with his cousins within 'George Durrant & Sons' after the war. It is interesting that Lombe registered both his parent's names as his next of kin, presumably this dated from his enlistment when his father was still alive. When the fee

As mentioned above, in 1911 George Jnr's family were in Folkestone where they remained more or less until George Jnr's death by which time George and his wife may have moved to London. Their daughter Kathleen was married from the Kent house in 1916 and seems to have made quite the match to Cambridge graduate, Naval officer Edward Benest! The

of 6s 8d was levied to have 'Rest In Peace' on his memorial (4d per character) it was his mother, and his mother only, who ordered and approved the epitaph. Lombe must have enlisted sometime between February 1915, when the Diss Express carried a report of his participation in the Waveney Valley Agricultural Association, and his father's death in 1916, although a little difficult to tell!

Checking on his medal card, it becomes apparent that he had actually enlisted on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May 1915, joining the Royal Engineers where he achieved the rank of Cpl. However, he must have been a capable and well-presented young man and became a temporary 2nd Lieut. in the RAF on the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1917, a job at the cutting edge of military technology.

Cadet John Jarvis Wilson, from R.F.C.  
11th Dec. 1917.

The undermentioned Cadets to be temp.  
2nd Lts. (on prob.). 17th Nov. 1917:—

Frank Ephraim Ball.  
Albert Arthur Bartram.  
Albert Christie Blackwell.  
Sydney Bowden.  
Reginald Avent Boxhall.  
Victor George Brindley.  
Reginald Ernest Britton.  
Charles Henry Budd.  
William Henry Bundock.  
Frank Cabburn.  
Roy Oswald Campbell.  
Albert Arthur Charlesworth.  
Edwin Clark.  
Neville Victor Clarke.  
Charles Frank Cogswell.  
Charles Frank Collins.  
Albert Edward Colwell.  
Thomas Conlan.  
Philip Brentnall Cooke.  
Charles John Craft.  
Robert Stewart Craig.  
Horace John Cramphorn.  
Reginald Cyril Creamer.  
Stanley Burton Croyden.  
Eric Irwin Dallinger.  
Harry Frederick David Delves.  
Sidney Maurice Desmond.  
Robert Cecil Dickinson.  
Oscar Charles Dinorman.  
Joseph Eldon Doe.  
Herbert Douthwaite.  
Alexander Drysdale.  
George Burn Dunlop.  
Lombe Atthill Durrant.  
Edward Llewelyn Edwards.  
Alfred Worsley Elliott.  
Frederick William Elliott.  
Herbert William Evans.  
Elmar Stuart Farrand.  
Bernard Fletcher.  
Robert Arthur Foggin.  
Harold Clifton Foley.  
Cuthbert Foster.  
Harold John Fuller

As was the case for so many young men, his career was very short. He was died 7 months after being commissioned whilst flying Camel, B9298 of No 65 Sqn during a practice flight and is buried in Vignacourt British Cemetery.



*Sopwith Camel as flown by Lombe Durrant*

I am sure his already widowed mother would have been proud to read of her son's promotion in the London Gazette. Lombe's father George Snr did not live to hear of his son's death which occurred two years after his own. Lombe's mother had taken up residence at No3 Turle Mansions Finsbury Park by the time of her son's death. George Jnr's early death gives a clue as to he was retired and living at Folkestone when only aged 42.

George died in 1916, aged only 47; chronic ill health may well have brought about his premature demise and early retirement. Family rumour has it that George Jnr was not quite cut from the same cloth as his father and brother and chose to gamble away his share of the inheritance left by his father.

## Obituary.

### MR. CHARLES DURRANT.

THE news of the passing of Mr. Charles Durrant, head of the well-known firm of Messrs. George Durrant and Sons, auctioneers, of Harleston and Beccles, on Saturday last, was received with regret by a large circle of friends and acquaintances. The deceased gentleman, who was 63 years of age, in the conduct of the business of the firm established by his late father had the active help of his two sons, and they have had the considerable support of a large body of agriculturists in Suffolk and Norfolk in connection with their weekly stock and other sales at Beccles and Harleston.

Mr. Charles Durrant had been in failing health for some months, and had undergone a serious operation. His death involves the loss of one who was keenly interested in the agriculture of the Waveney Valley district.

*Durrants – the third generation  
Diss Express 26 Jul 1929*

Charles himself died aged only 63, it being suggested that following the death of his wife, Bessie, to whom he was greatly devoted, his own health broke down. In the same way that George Durrant Snr's sons continued the business, so Charles's son(s) continued to the next generation and it is this branch of the Durrant family who continue to be actively involved in the business today. With the death of Lombe Atthill Durrant, the male line of George Jnr ended without issue.

*Diss Express  
21 Sep 1928*

Before commencing the sale Mr. Durrant thanked those present for their continued support. Unfortunately, he said, they missed a few friends every year, and this year he very much deplored the loss of his father, Mr. Charles Durrant, who personally conducted the sale in previous years. The consignments were well up to the standard for which that sale was noted, and the

Charles' sons followed on and kept the business running through the difficult interwar period; Durrants remained a family business as it entered the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, maintaining a presence in Harleston even today!

*Abstract of Lombe's will; all left to his mother.*

**DURRANT** Lombe Atthill of 3 Turle-mansions Tollington Park Middlesex second-lieutenant R.A.F. died 6 June 1918 in France Administration London 28 August to Mary Kathleen Durrant widow. Effects £307 7s. 6d.

For the recollections of a man who worked at Durrants Beccles Auction House for over 5 decades, check out this link:-  
<https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/bruce-80-shares-five-decades-of-memories-at-beccles-auction-950134>

Name.	Corps.	Rank	Regt. No.
DURRANT	R.E.	<del>Cpl</del> 2/Lt	445-69
	+ Gen List.		
	+ R.A.F.		

L.A. *single*

Killed 6.6.18

Medal.	Roll.	Page.	RE/101 <sup>B</sup> 38/1831
VICTORY			Comm. 16-11-17
BRITISH			Issued by A/M Min 9 NW/5/22882
15 STAR	RE/5-B 3	2446	14 397/0 at 5.12.22 NW/5/22882
Theatre of War first served in	Rank for Star amended then 16. NW/5/22882		
Date of entry therein	15-5-15 N.W./5/22882 -		

E. J. H. 445  
K. 1780  
Emb