

HOLT & DISTRICT FARMERS' CLUB

FOUNDED 1948

President: Peter Perry-Warnes

Chairman: Martin Jensen

Vice-Chairman: Andrew Ross

www.holtfarmers.club

CLUB MATTERS MIDDLE MARCH 2026

It was Deputy Lieutenant and former soldier Thomas Coutauld, J.P. and Squire of Barningham, who corrected me on Major General Gedney O.B.E.'s rank. Felix ended his career in the regular army in 2024 and, by continuing as a reservist, he has now completed 40 years in the service. Two of his sons are following him into the military and one of Pat Cubitt's sons has also joined up. It is good to know that the youth of today are prepared to do this when the world situation is so uncertain. With his pineapple hairstyle and short back & sides Felix 'appeared the very model of a modern major general' and he came across as an articulate and impressive leader whom we can be proud of. The Gilbert & Sullivan song from their operetta *The Pirates of Penzance* was a gently mocking and sarcastic caricature of the 'top brass' in 1879 when the British Empire was at its zenith. After the disaster of *The Charge of the Light Brigade* in 1854 and the short-comings of generals like Lord Raglan in that Crimean War there was a growing perception among the British public that our troops were 'lions led by donkeys'. His lordship had been aide de camp to the Duke of Wellington at Waterloo where he had his arm blown off, which led to the naming of Raglan sweaters or sleeves, before being promoted to Major General in 1825. He was memorably played by John Gielgud in the 1968 film as the elderly and confused Commander-in-Chief. By the time G & S were composing their comic opera another Crimean veteran Sir Garnet Wolseley had been promoted to the substantive rank of Major General and, with his handlebar moustache, he is another who may well have inspired the role of Major-General Stanley in the G & S production. This was perhaps rather unfair since Sir Garnet had a remarkable, sometimes heroic, career in almost every part of the empire becoming a household name after his exploits in the Anglo-Ashanti Wars of the 1870s. This would have been why the pub in Norwich Market Place is named after him when I can find nothing in particular to associate him with Norfolk. Although he may have appeared physically 'a chinless wonder' Sir Garnet survived a bullet in the leg in Burma, being wounded in 'The Quarries' (sounds painful) and in the Crimea (also painful) when he lost an eye to complete a Nelsonian treble. He was in fact an army reformer and was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in 1895; there is an equestrian statue of him on Horse Guards Parade. Having served as Gold Stick in Waiting at Queen Victoria's funeral and Edward VII's coronation he died in 1913. Perhaps by the end of their careers there will be another Major General Gedney and a Major General Cubitt.

I am the very model of a modern Major-General,
I've information vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I know the kings of England, and I quote the fights historical
From Marathon to Waterloo, in order categorical;
I'm very well acquainted, too, with matters mathematical,
I understand equations, both the simple and quadratical,
About binomial theorem I'm teeming with a lot o' news,
With many cheerful facts about the square of the hypotenuse.

I'm very good at integral and differential calculus;
I know the scientific names of beings animalculous:
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.
I know our mythic history, King Arthur's and Sir Caradoc's;
I answer hard acrostics, I've a pretty taste for paradox,
I quote in elegiacs all the crimes of Heliogabalus,
In conics I can floor peculiarities parabolous;
I can tell undoubted Raphaels from Gerard Dows and Zoffanies,
I know the croaking chorus from *The Frogs* of Aristophanes!
Then I can hum a fugue of which I've heard the music's din afore,
And whistle all the airs from that infernal nonsense Pinafore.



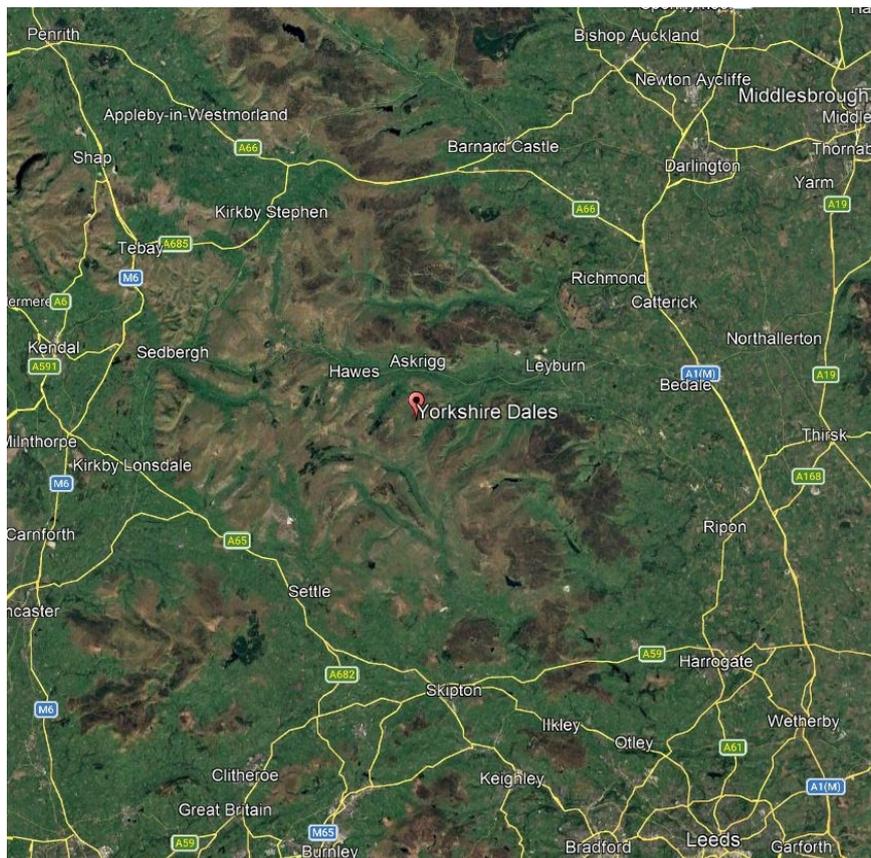
SIR GARNET WOLSELEY.

Then I can write a washing bill in Babylonian cuneiform,
And tell you ev'ry detail of Caractacus's uniform:
In short, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.

In fact, when I know what is meant by "mamelon" and "ravelin",
When I can tell at sight a Mauser rifle from a javelin,
When such affairs as sorties and surprises I'm more wary at,
And when I know precisely what is meant by "commissariat",
When I have learnt what progress has been made in modern gunnery,
When I know more of tactics than a novice in a nunnery –
In short, when I've a smattering of elemental strategy –
You'll say a better Major-General has never sat a gee.
For my military knowledge, though I'm plucky and adventury,
Has only been brought down to the beginning of the century;
But still, in matters vegetable, animal, and mineral,
I am the very model of a modern Major-General.



After his Presidential Tour of New Zealand **Peter Perry-Warnes** is getting the details sorted for our tour around the northern end of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. **We shall make** an early start from Norfolk on **Tuesday, 2nd June** up The Great North Road (A1M) to Scotch Corner from where we make for Croft-on-Tees where Scottish drovers would cross the river in days gone by. Chater Farms have a big grain operation here and there is a large Christmas tree farm nearby as well as the Croft Circuit racetrack. Afterwards we cross into County Durham via Cockerton, a suburb of Darlington, to Redworth Hall which is a 4 star hotel a short distance to the north-west. 'Darlo' is famous for being the birthplace of Vic Reeves and a seedbed of the Industrial Revolution as they celebrated the 200th anniversary of the Darlington to Stockton Railway only last autumn. Metcalfe Farms are another large outfit known to Peter, not least for their haulage business based at Leyburn, and whom we shall visit on the Wednesday. Weather permitting Peter has plans for a scenic tour by tractor and trailer across the moorland watershed between Wensleydale and Swaledale. He is keen to educate us about Buttertubs which we will Pass on our return to the hotel near Heighington. If it is wet there are local attractions such as the Theakstons Brewery at Masham and the rope factory at Hawes. On our return journey Peter is looking at several options for breaking our journey back down the A1 on the Thursday, 4th with a Lincolnshire cut flower business being one or a power station another.



We are hoping that most of the younger cadre of members who came on our Leics. trip last year will join us again along with one or two new faces perhaps. The cost of sharing a twin room is £160 for the two nights and for a single room £280 for the two nights. Peter hopes that the overall cost can be kept below £500. There has already been a good uptake and you are invited to let me know sooner rather than later that you would like to come.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tim', with a horizontal line above it.

Hon. Secretary: T. P. S. Nicholson 6 Great Yard The Street, Saxthorpe Norwich NR117AH 07464 991741
tim_nicholson@ymail.com

Hon. Treasurer: L. A. J. P. Hill Summerhill House 1 Sculthorpe Road Fakenham NR21 9HA 07811 034215
laurie.hill@larking-gowen.co.uk