

Sledmere



Winter Reflections

“Sledmere Winter Reflections” – Estate Curator



More about the photograph: Taken by Christopher Sykes in the winter of 1978/9, showing Sledmere House, from a north-easterly viewpoint surrounded by snow.

It's that time of year again. What is it about winter that stirs our memories. Is it the festive meals, twinkly lights or does it run deeper into our experiences of Christmas past?

Here is a selection of wintertime photographs and winter memories shared by Sledmere and surrounding hamlet folk who all have personal tales to tell, now collected and archived to provide a social history.

As the Queen recently said, *recollections differ*, so if you have a different story to tell about these pictures or a winter's tale about Sledmere Estate, we would love to hear them.

Please enjoy!

More about Christopher Sykes:

Christopher Sykes is Sir Tatton Sykes', the 8th Baronet's, brother. Internationally renowned for his profession in Photography, including the photographing of The Rolling Stones; he is also an author, writing books such as *the Big House: the story of a country house and its family*, and *Hockney: The Biography Volume I & II*.

“When Sir Richard opened the Hall” - Nat



Nat, who once was Sledmere's local butcher, was reminded of a story about the lamps in Sledmere, as he looked at this picture of Gardeners Row, Sledmere in the winter of 1978/9.

“You see that lamp (right), this one here. They belong to Sledmere. When Sir Richard opened the Hall (1960), to let visitors around, we'd gather the money and...we got enough money to put street lighting in...It was special...They designed that (lamp) for Sledmere”

- Nat

More about the photograph:

Taken by Christopher Sykes in the winter of 1978/9, it is suggested the boy walking in the snow is his brother, Nicholas Sykes, with one of their family dogs. What became known as the Winter of Discontent, perhaps for the young Sykes' it was a winter of adventure.

John, one of Sledmere’s villagers, is reminded of community spirit at wintertime from his childhood, as he looked at this photograph of a Massey Ferguson tractor clearing a right of way, in the winter of 1978/9.



“...but that early one (1947) ...I can remember me mother saying about, how it was, how they used

to be going out, digging out, and next morning they were starting back down near the Village Hall again to go up hill, cause it had all blown back in again.”

- John

More about the photograph:

Taken by Christopher Sykes in the winter of 1978/9. On the left, you can see what was originally the corn and Dutch Barns and Cattle Yard, is now The Sykes Barn and derelict out-houses, following the B1253 road towards The Triton Inn. It is possible the driver of the Massey Ferguson tractor is William (Bill) Magee. Can you help us identify the other two men in this picture? One villager says it could be Ernest Nicholson and Charlie Sygrove. What do you think?

“...the school bus couldn't get through!” – Valerie



Valerie, who grew up in Sledmere, is reminded of her childhood experience of the winter of 1963/4. As a comparable reference, the picture above of the winter of 1962/3 shows the road from Cowlam to Bridlington roundabout, where a snow plough is making its way through the compact snow.

“The winter of 1963 will be remembered as a bad one in Sledmere, unless you were 5 years old like me and liked tobogganing and snowballing! As kids me and my brother were delighted to wake up to find snow as high as the front window ledge...children were a little bit jealous of other children from Cowlam, Fimber...and Duggleby who attended Sledmere School, they got lots of time off as the school bus couldn't get through!”

- Valerie

More about the photograph:

Taken by Tom Clappison in the winter of 1962/3, this shot was taken near Cowlam crossroads. You could compare the image of the snow plough with Valerie's description of her school bus fixed in the snow, although buses were usually red or grey and cream in colour.

“It was absolutely full of snow” – Christine



Christine, who was Head Steward of Sledmere House for 30 years, shared a memory of the winter in 1962/3 with this photograph of Cowlam crossroads near Sledmere.

“Yes, I remember that...the road down to Cowlam...It was a long time lasting, of course you had to wait for a snow blower. The road that passed the cottages on the way to Brid, was absolutely dense and solid. It wasn't just snow, as it drifted it froze. It was high and wasn't easy.”

- Christine

More about the photograph:

Taken by Tom Clappison, Christine's husband, of the winter of 1962/3. This was during the time when they lived on their farm in Cowlam. You can see a snow blower in the foreground, while an attentive audience of Cowlam folk look on from the background. Were you there and remember this event?

“One of the worst winters we’d had I think” – John



John is reminded of the difficult choice in considering the best route from one hamlet to the next within Sledmere Estate in the winter of 1962/3, when his eye was caught by something in this photograph of the winter in 1978/9.

“I can remember walking home...10-12 miles away...got snowed in...I says “if I go across fields I may be just won’t know where I am, but if I’m going up main road, I’ll start a will” ...as I was walking up the big monument (Sir Tatton) and there’s a dip, there was a car in there, and I walked on its bonnet before I saw it. It was covered with snow.”

More about the photograph:

- John

Taken by Christopher Sykes in the winter of 1978/9, The Triton Inn is on the right (foreground), and on the left is the Estate House and Office, and the Villa (background). The road is covered with snow, not unlike John’s description above, so much so that you may be able to spot the tracks in the snow leading to what sparked John’s memory?

“This is another time” – Madge

Madge, who was Nat’s wife, for many years looked after the Cardwell Family in Sledmere. She was amazed by this photograph of the winter in 1978/9. She thought of a childhood memory from an early winter, and the year of one of her children’s births, of the winter in 1947, known as The Big Freeze.



“I can remember when I was young. I must have been a teenager. It was snowing and we built a tunnel underneath, into the snow [like an igloo] ...and then I can remember, when our Barry was born, we had some Italian prisoners of war in Sledmere and they set off digging the road out to Driffield, and we met the other side coming back...and there were no telegraph poles then”

- Madge

More about the photograph:

Taken by Christopher Sykes in the winter of 1978/9, it is possible this is a snow scene of Pry Road, a road off the B1253 past Sir Tatton’s Monument. Full of snow, you can only just make out the telegraph poles on the right, trees lining the road, and in the far distance, as identified by John, one of our social contributors, a telephone box!

“...it were ground storming” – Nat



Nat also remembers what it was like to walk through the snow of 1962/3.

The curator has selected this picture as an aid to Nat’s description of what could happen when snow drifts freeze.

“...road was bad...I worked at Driffield then and set off in the butcher’s van to Sledmere [where one of the monuments are B1251 towards Fimber ...a mineral water wagon was stuck in the bottom of the dip in road, right in way...of course I couldn’t get passed. So, we walked and it were “ground storming”. It’s when it snowed, and then it freezes. It’s just a little pane of glass. The wind comes and gets underneath and it lifts it, making it slide across the fields.”

- Nat

More about the photograph:

Taken by Tom Clappison in the winter of 1962/3, this scene depicts what his wife, Christine, has called *snow drifts*. When was the last time you experienced this phenomenon on the Wolds?

“Our families have been friends for about 100 years” – Claire



One aspect of Sledmere’s and surrounding hamlet’s way of life which runs deep, was, and is today, community spirit and friendship. Christine is reminded of provision support and shopping, and Claire is reminded of a dear friendship between two families, when they looked at the photograph above.

“You were lucky if you got them [provisions], course you did have people come round in those days. Your grocery man came and would take your order...shopping was usually done in the afternoon in the Wolds. Main meal of the day would have been 12 O’clock dinner and High Tea in the evening.” - Christine

Claire’s reminisce in the continued friendship of her friend’s family -
“...[friend]’s family lived on the road down from our family. Our grandparents lived next to each other...my parents moved to Cowlam, her parents moved to Cowlam ...We go back a long way.” - Claire

More about the photograph:

Taken by Tom Clappison in the winter of 1962/3, the scene depicts highly dense snow along a road near Cowlam crossroads. Christine is shown on the left with her then much-loved sheepdog.



Sledmere Winter Reflections is a pop-up exhibition which will be available to see throughout the Winter season, within Sledmere station venues including the Ticket Office, the Farm Shop, the Pantry, the Coach House Café and the Woodyard. Archived, collated and created by Sledmere Estate Curator, Jessica Hyland, the Curatorial Department welcomes your feedback and enquiries:

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Text Credits:

Social contributors: Madge, Nat, John, Christine, Claire and Valerie

The late Queen, Elizabeth II

Photograph Credits:

Christopher Sykes

Tom Clappison

Many thanks to everyone who supported the development of

Sledmere Winter Reflections