

FIMBER IN THE TIME OF MORTIMER

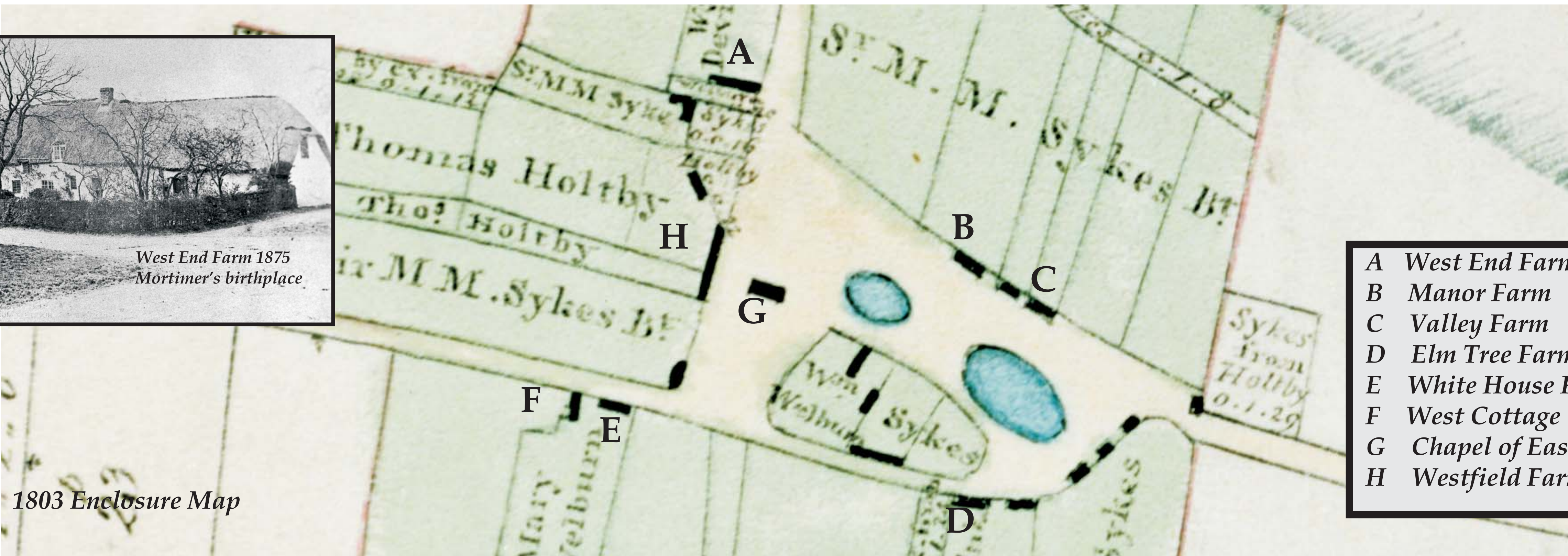
'I was born at Fimber on 15th June 1825..... in front of the old house where I first saw light of day stood a large walnut tree which sprang from a nut my father planted at the time of my birth as a memento of this event'.

The village of Fimber is not greatly different from the place it was in 1825. In Mortimer's time there stood seven old thatched- roofed longhouses located around the village green.

In the nineteenth century, Fimber was a small, self contained and largely self-sufficient agricultural village, whose character had not changed much in centuries. Its position, deep in the East Yorkshire countryside, ensured its relative isolation until the coming of the Malton to Driffield railway in 1853.



West End Farm 1875
Mortimer's birthplace.



1803 Enclosure Map

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| A | West End Farm |
| B | Manor Farm |
| C | Valley Farm |
| D | Elm Tree Farm |
| E | White House Farm |
| F | West Cottage |
| G | Chapel of Ease |
| H | Westfield Farm |

Today, there is much that John would find familiar including his birthplace at West End Farm, a small part of which remains as a cottage attached to the newer house, The Gables on Burdale Lane opposite the Village Hall; the old West Cottage belonging to Jane Medd where he began his schooling; the village green and meres; St Mary's church and even a descendant of the old walnut tree on the village green.



EDUCATION IN FIMBER

When he was about five years old, John attended a small school kept by a labourer's daughter known as 'Auntie Jane'. She was probably Jane Medd who taught about half a dozen very small children in her father's house at West Cottage. The first public school was opened in 1865, endowed by Sir Tatton Sykes of Sledmere. The school closed in 1948 and is now the Village Hall.

THE CHURCHES AND CHAPELS OF MORTIMER'S TIME

St Mary's Church, completed in 1873, replaced the old Chapel of Ease which was probably of 11th or 12th century origin. John was present in June 1869, during its demolition in search of archaeological evidence. He briefly states : *'traces of an earlier and larger church than the one taken down were visible. The debris of this early church.... contained numerous small pieces of burnt wood, pieces of stained glass and a considerable quantity of melted lead. Evidently this early church had suffered from fire.'* The Chapels were constructed early in the 19th century following the religious revival in Fimber. The Primitive Methodist Chapel stood next to Elm Tree Farm and the Wesleyan Chapel was located at the west end of what is now the block of Council Houses on the main road.



THE FIMBER MERES

The two meres gave rise to the name of the village in Anglo Saxon times and probably date back to prehistoric times. It is speculated that they were formed by a geological feature created during the last Ice Age. Known as High Mere and Low Mere, they existed together until about 1953 when High Mere was filled in.

