

## 20. The survivor (1911-1940)

The story of Lynn's Victorian and Edwardian studios is effectively over, but 1911 is, of course, an arbitrary breaking-off point. There are still some loose ends to be tidied up, and there is, in particular, the later part of Jasper Wright's career to be noted.

In giving its snapshot of the studio sector, the 1911 census, like those of the past, showed that new photographers had arrived in the town.

Rachel O'Hanlon, the widow of William Palliser O'Hanlon, an Irish physician and surgeon<sup>1</sup>, had set up a business at 108 Norfolk Street. After her husband's death in 1898<sup>2</sup> she had tried running a boarding house in her native Staffordshire.<sup>3</sup> Now she had come to Lynn to practice photography and she had brought her family with her.<sup>4</sup> Esther, her 18-year-old daughter, worked with her in the studio, but the household also included her widowed sister, and her married daughter with husband and two children. (The son-in-law, Charles Taylor, was a 'cinematograph proprietor'.) The studio may not have lasted long, for its only trade directory entry was in 1912.<sup>5</sup>

The other new photographer appearing in the census was to enjoy a much longer career, though in 1911 he was still some years away from running his own Lynn studio. Percival Macdonald Goodchild had been born in Leamington, Warwickshire, at the end of the 1870s, but the family soon moved back to London,<sup>6</sup> where his father, John had started his career as a warehouse boy.<sup>7</sup> There were further moves as John worked his way up, via draper's assistant<sup>8</sup> and shop walker (drapery),<sup>9</sup> until the 1901 census found the Goodchilds back in Leamington, with John in a managerial position and Percival, aged 23 and still living at home, working as a photographer.<sup>10</sup> Later that year Percival married in Coventry,<sup>11</sup> but it was in Leamington that his career progressed, for a 1908 trade directory showed him running his own studio, Goodchild & Co., at Victoria Terrace.<sup>12</sup> By 1911 the couple had moved to Lynn where, in 1911, they and their first three children were living in Park Avenue,<sup>13</sup> in a recently-developed area a little out of the town centre. His work, however, was in the High Street, for he had become the assistant of Amy Purdy.<sup>14</sup>

Walter Sothern Dexter had retired and left Lynn, and John Smith's business was on the verge of collapse, but there were other established professionals in the town whose careers still had a way to run.

William Reynolds had married Sophia Bloomfield, a carrier's daughter,<sup>15</sup> in 1902<sup>16</sup> and they were now living at 102 High Street. His path to independence had been long, with years spent as Smith's assistant and more years as manager of the Boughton business; but the 1911 census showed him installed at the old Boughton address,<sup>17</sup> and directory information collected that year<sup>18</sup> confirmed that he was at last trading in his own right. A number of photographs survive from this period,<sup>19</sup> but – as will shortly be seen – some of his most memorable images relate to the First World War.

In 1912, however, Reynolds did join William Lock and Frederick Wright on the select list of Lynn photographers whose response to signs of fire had averted a potentially serious blaze.<sup>20</sup> One night in November, a little after one o'clock, he and Sophia 'were

awakened by a suffocating smell of fumes from burning wood.<sup>21</sup> A stream of smoke was rising from an oak-panelled wall that backed onto the building next door. Reynolds went down into the street, where he met two patrolling policemen, and it was quickly agreed that the source of the smoke was in the International Stores, which adjoined the studio. The police forced an entrance and quickly found that fire had broken out in one of the storage rooms. 'The fusing of an electric wire had melted a leaden gas pipe running alongside it. The escaping gas became ignited, and a large flame was issuing from the pipe. The wall, which consisted of lath and plaster, was also well alight'. By the time the firemen arrived, prompt action by the policemen had already contained the fire and dealt with the gas escape. The press report considered that the fire 'undoubtedly would have had disastrous results, had it not been located in its early stages,' and went on to say that 'Mr. and Mrs. Reynolds rendered valuable assistance.'

Whilst Reynolds' last directory entry was for 1916,<sup>22</sup> he continued to operate until at least 1919<sup>23</sup> and possibly until the early 1920s (when the studio passed briefly into the hands of Frederick Drew).<sup>24</sup>

The Wrights of Broad Street were still there in 1911. Despite the business having been listed in directories first under Naomi's name<sup>25</sup> and later under Percival's,<sup>26</sup> only Frederick, the head of the family, was identified in the census as a photographer. No occupation was given for Naomi, while the two oldest children, Percival and George, were working as a carman and a mill hand.<sup>27</sup> Postcard scenes, often of the villages around Lynn, survive as examples of their work, which is sometime ascribed to 'The Don' and sometimes identifiable only by the distinctive handwriting of the captions. Their final directory listing, at last in Frederick's name, dates from 1916.<sup>28</sup>

The most enduring of the town's more recent studios was that of Amy Purdy. By 1911 her father had retired, she had reached the age of 40, and she and her parents were living together at 84 High Street. She was recorded (by a census enumerator with a leaden turn of phrase) as 'photographer and photographer dealer'.<sup>29</sup>

Assisted by Percival Goodchild, she continued at this studio for another 20 years, becoming Jasper Wright's main competitor in the portrait market. A formal study of Lynn's 1923 mayor, Major Stephen Coxon,<sup>30</sup> is evidence that she attracted some of the distinguished clients who in earlier years might have favoured John Smith. So, too, is the fact that she claimed royal patronage.<sup>31</sup>

In 1924 she supplied a number of illustrations for Holcombe Ingleby's *The Treasures of Lynn*,<sup>32</sup> showing a range of the town's historic buildings and sometimes recording the kind of architectural detail that rarely caught the eye of the conventional postcard publisher. Two pictures in particular show her ability to deal with difficult lighting conditions: in the vault of Clifton House, in gloom described by Ingleby as 'dark as Erebus', she used flash powder to give a well-lit image of the vaulting; and, in a picture taken at St Nicholas' chapel, she contrived to do justice to the shadowed wooden carving of the open porch door without losing all detail of the sunlit interior beyond.

An advertisement in Ingleby's book gives a fair idea of the range of work she was undertaking in the 1920s:

Under Royal Patronage. Amy Purdy, Photographic Artist, The Studio, 84 High Street, King's Lynn. Photographs of Lynn and its Antiquities including King John Cup and Regalia. Every branch of Outdoor Photography. Studio Portraiture. At Home Portraiture. Amateurs' Films Developed, Printed and Enlarged. Best Results obtained.<sup>33</sup>

The working relationship with Ingleby continued into the next year, when she provided illustrations for his sequel publications, *The Heart of Lynn*<sup>34</sup> and *Lynn, its Myths and Traditions*.<sup>35</sup> These pictures show something of the variety of her work, ranging from standard topographical photographs to reproductions of early documents, drawings and paintings. Her advertisement in *The Heart of Lynn*, whilst almost exactly a repeat of her notice in the earlier book, revealed one new aspect of her activities: 'Demonstrations with the Ciné Kodak and Baby Ciné given free.' She had expanded her target market to include the amateur devotee of the moving picture.

In the mid-1920s Purdy also, briefly, expanded her operations into a second town-centre studio, taking over the premises at 102 High Street where Boughton, Reynolds and Drew had all previously traded.<sup>36</sup> But as her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday approached, she was ready to think of retirement and to go abroad. She put the business up for auction in June 1929, and it was bought by her assistant, Percival Goodchild.<sup>37</sup> It would in due course pass on to the next generation of his family and continue to flourish, at a series of addresses, for well over half a century.<sup>38</sup>

Another career with some way to run in 1911 was that of commercial photographer Alfred Jewson, whose output over the years covered a wide range of images. There were, inevitably, pictures of local buildings including the town's churches, the Greenland Fishery,<sup>39</sup> the Town Hall,<sup>40</sup> and, from a little further afield, such sites as Castle Rising castle<sup>41</sup> and Ingoldisthorpe Manor.<sup>42</sup> The incidence of detail studies and interior shots would indicate an interest in architectural photography beyond that needed to supply routine scenes to the postcard market. There was also good coverage of local events as varied as a Watlington garden fete,<sup>43</sup> a Remembrance Day service,<sup>44</sup> the demolition of a Tuesday Market gas lamp standard,<sup>45</sup> and festivities to mark the coronation of King George VI.<sup>46</sup> It was Jewson, too, who kept up the tradition of Mart proclamation postcards well into the 1920s.<sup>47</sup>

He also saw a potential market in the field of magic lantern entertainments, and his 1917 advertisements in *The Bioscope* offered would-be lecturers a way of building up their library of images for projection:

Brilliant Lantern Slides please Operator and Audience. Photographic Slides carefully made from negatives, 1s. each; reproduced from photo, 2s. each. – Jewson's Photographic Works, King's Lynn.<sup>48</sup>

Around 1930 Jewson opened a shop at 118 High Street,<sup>49</sup> and it may just be that he intended to run it as a conventional portrait business, since two Jewson indoor pictures have been found showing young women in clothes of that period.<sup>50</sup> If this was his plan, the venture seems to have been short-lived. His Photographic Works, however, continued in King Street until at least the late 1930s.<sup>51</sup> One piece of anecdotal evidence, passed down from this latter period, tells of employees being

terrorised by Jewson's fearsome cat, which exuded malevolence and allergens in generous and equal measure.

Henry Logsdail, the postcard photographer and publisher, was also still in Lynn in 1911.<sup>52</sup> He would continue to run his chemist's shop into the 1930s,<sup>53</sup> and he kept up the photographic side of his business for most if not all of this time.

The census record of one out-of-town photographer also needs to be noticed. In the late 1890s Lewis Reeve had been identified in James Speight's diary as Jasper Wright's junior assistant.<sup>54</sup> In 1901 he was described as an apprentice photographer, boarding in Lynn's Blackfriars Street. Now, in 1911, he was listed as a photographer, living with his parents in nearby Tilney All Saints.<sup>55</sup> No evidence has yet been found of a portrait studio in his name, but dated photographs of new steam-pipe ovens at the Marshland Bakery Company and a flood at Walpole St Andrew show that he was still operating independently in 1913 and 1918.<sup>56</sup>

It might be expected that, by the time George V was on the throne, the photographic studio market should be in some difficulties. Cheap cameras for amateurs had, after all, been available since the beginning of the century. Some demand for high quality pictures to mark special occasions might continue, and there were opportunities, as shown by Amy Purdy's 1924 advertisement, for professionals to process the exposed films of amateurs. Yet the professional market held up for a surprisingly long time. Clearly the demand for postcards of places and events meant that photographers did not have to rely for their income on portrait work alone. Nevertheless, portrait studios could hardly flourish indefinitely, and it is perhaps not surprising that a few professionals (perhaps more for goodwill than profit) became involved in a new – and predominantly amateur – project when it was launched county-wide in 1913.

The Norfolk Photographic Survey Record<sup>57</sup> was part of a national movement that had been born in the 1880s, and that sought to create systematic archives of local images for the current and future education and enjoyment of the public. A Norwich-based survey was launched in 1913, but Lynn's Library Committee and Camera Club were 'not inclined to let Norwich people have the entire say in county affairs',<sup>58</sup> and a parallel project was very quickly established in the west of Norfolk. Photographers were asked to provide two prints from each negative, one of which was to be mounted and stored in Lynn, while the other was to be sent to Norwich.<sup>59</sup> (Norwich photographers were also to provide duplicate prints of their negatives.) Amy Purdy and William Reynolds were both moved to join with the West Norfolk amateurs – scholars, clergy and gentry among them – to record notable buildings, local wildlife and human representatives of varied classes and occupations. It may be that they donated their services, but it appears that the Lynn librarian did plan to purchase some photographs from library funds on the grounds that they were 'specimens of art and science'.<sup>60</sup> By the time the Library Annual Report for 1913-14 was drawn up, 367 prints had already been collected and exhibited. Already, too, the archive's value as witness to a changing world was being recognised, and the report observed that some pictures were especially interesting, 'owing to the subjects having since entirely disappeared or undergone important change'.

Reynolds and Purdy may, possibly, have felt less threatened by the amateurs with whom they were cooperating than would professionals from some other towns. Using

the number of photographers who advertised in Kelly's directories as a guide, it becomes evident that in Norfolk, as a whole, the market began to dwindle between 1912, when 73 photographers were listed, and 1916, when the total was 23.<sup>61</sup> In King's Lynn, however, the studio sector held up. Five studio photographers advertised in 1908, and this total continued unchanged until 1929. (Alfred Jewson has been omitted from the totals, since, though studio photographers often operated in his market, he rarely competed in theirs.) Then the figure dropped to three, where it remained throughout the 1930s. The people of Lynn stayed surprisingly loyal to the professional studio and, more specifically perhaps, to Amy Purdy, Percival Goodchild and Jasper Wright.

The First World War even brought an unlooked-for increase in the demand for studio portraits. In Lynn, as elsewhere, families wanted pictures of the sons, fathers and brothers who were about to leave their homes to fight overseas. When some of the men returned, either on leave or at the end of hostilities, the camera was again required to mark the occasion. The men also, of course, wanted pictures of their loved ones to take with them to war. In all, therefore, the portrait market was stimulated, albeit in a way that none would have wished for.

The production of such consoling images was a major studio activity during these years, and pictures of First World War soldiers by Amy Purdy, Jasper Wright, George Whitfield Cosser and Leopold Vilenkin have all survived. On the basis of surviving evidence, however, it was William Reynolds who was at hand to capture those moments when hostilities had a direct impact on the life of the town.

In September 1914 three British cruisers, the *Aboukir*, the *Hogue* and the *Cressy*, were torpedoed and sunk in the North Sea.<sup>62</sup> When, a fortnight later, a group of Lynn survivors reached home, Reynolds was there to photograph them (alongside – rather improbably – members of the Lynn Bowling Club) and to supply the *Lynn Advertiser* with a copy of the picture.<sup>63</sup> Later, at the end of hostilities, when returned prisoners of war came home, it was Reynolds again who was present to picture the group in front of the Town Hall.<sup>64</sup> The most dramatic home-front event, though, occurred on the night of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> January 1915. In the first air attack of the war, German naval airships dropped bombs on King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth, killing four and injuring 16. The raid on Lynn was responsible for the deaths of Mrs Gazely (whose husband had recently been killed in action) and Percy Goate (aged 14), and there was extensive damage in and around Albert Street.

It is unclear how many photographers visited the scene, since images were evidently acquired by organisations who could distribute them on a national basis. Air raids were a new and disturbing occurrence, and they aroused interest far beyond Norfolk: the Rotary Photo Company issued a whole series of views of the destruction, and some postcard scenes of wrecked Lynn buildings were published in France by the Imprimeries Réunies de Nancy.<sup>65</sup> Few surviving photographs of the damage are attributed to individual photographers, but some of them at least, were the work of William Reynolds.<sup>66</sup>

The *Lynn Advertiser* recorded the community's sense of shock:

German methods have advanced – or retrograded – to the point where it is considered proper to drop bombs on a town that is separated by two counties from a fortress and by leagues of the King’s highway from a field gun. ... So sudden was the raid that to most people – including, we believe, the military in our midst – the first intimation that anything was amiss was given by the sound of bursting bombs.<sup>67</sup>

The report was given dramatic support by Reynolds’ images of shattered houses in Bentinck Street and East Street. (The *Lynn News*, incidentally, did without photographs altogether, but instead reproduced a *Punch* cartoon showing a German aviator being refused the Iron Cross because his bombs had failed to kill any children.<sup>68</sup>)

Photographers’ families were also, of course, directly involved in the war. Jasper Wright’s son, Robert William Handel, served successively in the King’s Liverpool Regiment<sup>69</sup> and the Monmouthshire Regiment,<sup>70</sup> while George Wright, son of Broad Street’s Frederick and Naomi Wright, was a member of the Household Cavalry Composite Regiment.<sup>71</sup> Both came home.

The Dexters, now dispersed from Lynn, were less fortunate. Irving, a gunner in the Royal Field Artillery, went to France in 1917, survived the hostilities, but died of pneumonia and was buried at Denain.<sup>72</sup> His commanding officer described him as ‘one of the most conscientious and best-liked men in the battery’.<sup>73</sup> Irving’s sister, Ida, had married Captain Frederick Parker, who was gassed, wounded three times, and taken prisoner. He lived until 1921 but never recovered his health.<sup>74</sup>

As manager of Brenner’s Bazaar – which was part-retailer and part-publisher of postcards – Ernest Chaplin was perhaps on the periphery of Lynn’s photographic sector. There was nothing peripheral, however, about his war experiences in the Norfolk Regiment and the Lincolnshire Regiment. He enlisted in 1916, saw three periods of action in France, suffered from frostbite and pleurisy, died from shrapnel wounds in 1918,<sup>75</sup> and was buried in the British Cemetery at Manancourt.<sup>76</sup> He left a young wife and a son whom he had never seen.<sup>77</sup> The Bazaar where he had worked continued to sell and, perhaps, publish postcards into the 1920s.

There was one Lynn photographer who felt the impact of war in a different way. Leopold Vilenkin had arrived in the country from Russia in about 1905;<sup>78</sup> by 1911 he was working as a photographer in Wolverhampton<sup>79</sup> and within a few years he was in Lynn and running a studio under his own name in John Smith’s old premises at 60 High Street.

It was not a good time for a foreigner to open a business. Anti-German feeling extended to anyone with a German-sounding name, and popular imagination was indiscriminating in its interpretation of what sounded German. Many families changed their surname to something more recognisably English during the war, and by 1917 even George V felt driven to alter the royal name from Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor. Vilenkin was therefore vulnerable.

One evening in May 1915 he was working in his darkroom when he heard a crash.<sup>80</sup> His first thought was of a Zeppelin attack, but when he went out into the street, he

found a group of people staring at his shop front. He asked whether anything had happened in the town, and one of the bystanders replied, in what must have been a mocking or challenging tone, 'Something has happened to your window.' He then saw three panes of glass were broken. Fortunately, before the confrontation could become more menacing, a policeman arrived on the scene and quickly arrested two of the group, fishermen Charles Hornigold and James Ward. The reason for this prompt action became clear when the two men appeared in court the next day.

A police constable stated that he heard Ward shout: "Present arms! Are you ready? Fire!" This was followed by the smashing of glass. Running to the spot he saw Hornigold pulling his stick out of one pane of glass and Ward withdrawing his leg from another.

It was quickly established that Vilenkin was not a German. He had worked in local government in 'Nimsk' (perhaps Minsk?) before serving in the Russian military. Having deserted from the army, he had no passport to show the court, but he was able to provide letters from Russian relatives to prove his nationality. Faced with such documents and the policeman's evidence, Ward and Hornigold could hardly plead innocence. Their lawyer, offering mitigating circumstances,

... spoke of the strong feeling entertained in this country against enemy aliens, which was accentuated in the case of Hornigold by the fact that he had three sons in the army, one of whom was wounded at Mons. The other defendant had a brother-in-law who was a prisoner at Antwerp. Both defendants now realised they had made a mistake and were prepared to pay for the damage.

The offer was accepted, and the bench expressed its sympathy with Vilenkin. Indeed, one of the magistrates, Mr F. Miles, was so overcome with fellow-feeling for an allied national that he burst out, 'As a Russian I am proud, as an Englishman, to shake you by the hand'. He then did precisely that. The Chairman, less caught up by the emotion of the moment, observed, 'But he ought to be fighting.'

Vilenkin remained in Lynn, married in 1917, and was still in the town in 1918, when his son was born.

Although hostilities ended in November 1918, it was not until the following July, and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, that the nation indulged in official peace celebrations. In Lynn, as elsewhere, photographers were at hand to record the festivities. The *Lynn Advertiser* published a special supplement to mark the occasion, and pictures figured prominently: Alfred Jewson supplied pictures of a children's 'demonstration' in the Tuesday Market Place; Jasper Wright attended the children's tea party in the Walks; and William Reynolds covered both the tea party and the official procession in the High Street.<sup>81</sup>

Later still came the building of a memorial to those who had died. Located in the gardens of the Greyfriars' Tower and designed by Oswald Milne, it was unveiled by Princess Mary, King George's only daughter, on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1921.<sup>82</sup> Jasper Wright had, however, foreseen the demand for photographs of the memorial and had them on sale in advance, as shown by the message on the back of one posted to a Mr and Mrs Laws in York:

Dear Ethel & Joe. This is the new Monument for the soldiers of Lynn who have fallen in the war which is to be unveiled by Princess Mary it is erected in the centre of the Tower Gardens. Hope you are all well. Lily.<sup>83</sup>

Mention of Wright brings attention back to the last of Lynn's prominent Victorian photographers, and his post-Edwardian career forms the last strand of this narrative. In 1881, at the age of 19, he had been judged sufficiently experienced to run the studio in his father's absence.<sup>84</sup> He must, therefore, have been working in the business for some time before that. If he started in the shop at or before the age of 16 (the age by which his son George was assisting him),<sup>85</sup> then he almost certainly learnt the cumbersome wet collodion process, whereby photographers coated their own glass plates and processed them quickly before they dried. Pre-coated dry plates, though theoretically available for some years, had not come into widespread use until 1878, when a more light-sensitive recipe for the coating was introduced. So Jasper Wright probably embarked on photography using techniques and skills familiar to the likes of Henry Brame Bullock and William Taylor back in the early 1850s. He was the town's last link with its photographic pioneers, and yet his career had decades still to run.

By 1911 he and Emma, now 25 years married, had moved the family out of the shop and a little way out of town.<sup>86</sup> Eight of their children were still at home, and three of them – Robert William Handel, Eliza and George – were listed as photographer's assistants.

A family photograph from about this time shows the Wrights assembled on the lawn of a large detached house.<sup>87</sup> Jasper is slightly-built and darkly-bearded, just as he had been in the Town Band photograph of 1894, and Emma, his wife, looks just a little anxious. Levina is evidently home on a visit. The two youngest girls (Dorothy on a horse) seem rather solemn, but the others are cheerful and relaxed. One of the boys – perhaps George – is missing, and it is presumably he who is behind the camera. It is a picture of a comfortable middle-class family in which the formality of a professional photograph is tempered by the smiles of the snapshot age.

Wright's satellite studios had by now all been given up, but the business at London Road continued as usual. His continuing popularity with local organisations is indicated by pictures of such groups as St John's church choir (taken in the early 1920s) and the Girls' Brigade (1929), while a photograph of a wedding at 'the Big House, Tilney St Lawrence (1919), suggests that he found some customers in the upper segment of the market.

One curious piece of evidence perhaps raises a question about his photographic practice during the pre-war years, but it may be misleading. In September 1912 a small ad appeared in the *Lynn Advertiser*:

10/- Reward. – Lost, from East Anglia, West Winch Road, Small Tame Monkey – Finder reporting to police, or Jasper J. Wright, Photographer, Lynn, will receive above reward.<sup>88</sup>

The near-juxtaposition of 'monkey' and 'photographer' prompts remembrance of the now outlawed, but once popular, practice of seaside promenade photographers using



monkeys (and other creatures) as picturesque posing companions for passing customers. Could Wright's missing animal have been such a living accessory? It is, on balance, unlikely. Photographers' monkeys seem to have been largely a seaside phenomenon, and Wright is believed to have given up his Hunstanton practice by 1912. Moreover, whilst the subject is under-researched, it appears probable that posing people with animals (other than the traditional donkey) was predominantly a later practice, belonging especially to the decades after the Second World War. Wright's monkey was lost from 'East Anglia', the house, rather than from the studio, and the odds are in favour of it having been an exotic family pet.<sup>89</sup>

Wright continued in business until 1932,<sup>90</sup> operating briefly in the late 20s as J. J. Wright & Son. (The son in question can only have been George.)<sup>91</sup> By this time there had been changes in the family. His wife, Emma, died in 1914, just when their youngest child had reached the age of 12 and there was a prospect of some rest after the years of child-rearing.<sup>92</sup> Three years later came the death, at the age of 28, of their son Jasper, who had worked for an engineering firm in Chelmsford, Essex, but who had shown himself his father's son by becoming a founder member of the Works' Band.<sup>93</sup>

Robert, the eldest son, now routinely known as Handel, also moved to Chelmsford, where he contributed flute and piccolo solos to concerts,<sup>94</sup> gave lessons in piano, flute and cello, and ran his own orchestra.<sup>95</sup> A 1930 advertisement in the *Essex Chronicle* gave some indication of his enthusiasm and his flexibility:

Handel Wright, Musician 'Cello, Flute & Pianoforte, has vacancies for pupils on the above instruments. ... Tuition 2/6 for 30 minutes, terms cash at time of lesson. Start when you like; finish when you like. Lessons at any time; anywhere. Handel Wright's Orchestra is open for engagements; any number of musicians supplied.

In 1935 Handel was back in Lynn, though possibly only visiting, to perform a flute solo in a 'Grand Concert' marking the 45<sup>th</sup> season of the King's Lynn Musical Society.<sup>96</sup> Wright must surely have felt vindicated in the prophetic naming of his son.

Wright had passed his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday when he retired, and he moved back into the central part of town, taking up residence at 5 London Road,<sup>97</sup> opposite the building that had housed his studio for so many years. He remained there for the rest of his life, and though his health was failing by the end of the decade, his death on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1940 was unexpected.<sup>98</sup>

The obituary in the *Lynn Advertiser* described Wright as 'a man of independent thought and character' and made reference to his photographic career. It assured readers, quite wrongly, that 'He was the son of the first photographer to set up business in the town,' but it was more accurate about Jasper's own practice: 'He followed his father in the business, setting up branch studios at Hunstanton, Sutton Bridge, Fakenham, Swaffham and Wisbech.' (The only reservation about this statement is that trade directory evidence places the Lincolnshire branch at Long Sutton rather than Sutton Bridge.<sup>99</sup>)

More space, however, was devoted to his musical activities and, given his obvious talents, this may have been appropriate.

The outstanding quality of his life was his knowledge of music; his enthusiasm was known all over West Norfolk. He was for many years organist and choirmaster at the St. James's Methodist Chapel, and he had conducted oratorios and choral works at many churches and chapels in the town and district. He played the double-bass and composed hymn tunes and anthems. He would read a full musical score as another man would read a book. He frequently visited London and other cities to attend concerts by the world's greatest musicians. He was Deputy Conductor of the Lynn Musical Society. As a young man he was conductor of the Lynn Town Band, and for many years he conducted his own dance orchestra at the principal balls in the district.

Four days later the *Lynn News* printed exactly the same obituary, but, the funeral having taken place in the interim, it was able to add that one of the hymns, 'Abide with me', had been sung to Wright's own setting.<sup>100</sup>

Dear though his music had been to Wright's heart, his 50-year photographic career should not be underrated. In his will he left property to the value of £2128 8s 3d.<sup>101</sup> Historical comparisons of the value of money are always difficult to make, and prices for 1939-1945 were affected by abnormal conditions, but it can be said that on the eve of the Second World War, the average house price (according to the Office for National Statistics) was £545.<sup>102</sup> If Wright's estate was worth about four houses, it is fair to conclude that he had run a very sound business.

Already, as Wright's obituary demonstrated, the community's memory of its studio past had faded and become unreliable. With Wright's death, Lynn's last connection with its earliest photographers was broken.

There was a postscript. After housing a studio for some 60 years, Wright's old London Road premises had changed hands and changed purpose, but they did not long survive their former occupant. On the night of 13<sup>th</sup> November 1940, a German aircraft, caught in the beams of searchlights, hurriedly dropped 19 bombs on the town and hurried home. The first of those bombs fell on Bullen's Café at 125 London Road, causing no loss of life, but devastating the building and damaging others close by.<sup>103</sup>

The last thing on the pilot's mind, of course, was King's Lynn's early photographic history.

Nevertheless, he did provide a poignant footnote.

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<sup>1</sup> 1881 census: RG11, piece 2703, folio 70, page 17.

<sup>2</sup> Wolstanton, Staffordshire. England & Wales death index 1898.

<sup>3</sup> 1901 census: RG13.

<sup>4</sup> 1911 census: RG14, piece 11643, schedule 196, RD236 ED5.

<sup>5</sup> *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1912.

<sup>6</sup> 1881 census: RG11, piece 3094, folio 42, page 28.

<sup>7</sup> 1861 census: RG09, piece 231, folio 143, page 42

8 1871 census: RG10, piece 3193, folio 7, page 6. 1881 census: as above.  
9 1891 census: RG12, piece 2473, folio 41, page 21  
10 1901 census: RG13, schedule 114, page 32.  
11 Civil marriage registrations index: Dec 1901, Coventry, volume 6D, page 1035.  
12 Kelly's *Directory of Warwickshire*, 1908.  
13 1911 census: RG14, piece 11645, schedule 163.  
14 Richard M Goodchild, interviewed in West Norfolk Community Newspaper (*Your Local Paper*), 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013.  
15 1881 census: RG11, piece 1990, folio 19, page 5 (Docking, Norfolk).  
16 Civil registration marriage index: June 1902, Docking, volume 4b, page 590.  
17 1911 census: RG14 PN11644 RG78 PN642 RD236 SD1 ED6 SN259.  
18 *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1912.  
19 e.g. (in Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service Collection) Hampton Court, 1911, KILLM: 2008.274; Tower Gardens, 1912, (KILLM: 2008.281; Photo of Henry Baines' painting of Kettlewell Lane Waterworks, 1912, (KILLM: 2008.312.)  
20 ... and perhaps James Speight, too, if you count the burning fat-pan (p.179).  
21 (and subsequently) *Lynn Advertiser*, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 1912.  
22 *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1916, and *Aubrey's Directory of Norfolk*, 1916.  
23 See account of 1919 Peace Celebrations, below.  
24 Frederick Drew was in the studio by 1922 (*Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1922).  
25 *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1904.  
26 *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1908 & 1912.  
27 1911 census: RG14 PN11647, RG78 PN642 RD236 SD1 ED9 SN66.  
28 *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1916, and *Aubrey's Directory of Norfolk*, 1916.  
29 1911 census: RG14, piece 11640, schedule 129, registration district 236, schedule 129.  
30 True's Yard Museum, accession number KLNTY2020.433.  
31 Holcombe Ingleby, *The Treasures of Lynn*, p103, (London: Clement Ingleby, 1924).  
32 Holcombe Ingleby, *The Treasures of Lynn*, (London: Clement Ingleby, 1924).  
33 Ibid, p103.  
34 Holcombe Ingleby, *The Heart of Lynn*, (London: Clement Ingleby, 1925).  
35 Holcombe Ingleby, *Lynn, its Myths and Traditions*, (Lynn: West Norfolk & King's Lynn Newspaper Co. Ltd., 1925).  
36 *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1925.  
37 Information drawn from transcription by Christopher Wilkinson of a Lynn News report (exact date unknown).  
38 *Lynn News*, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 (obituary of Richard Goodchild).  
39 Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: KILLM: 2008.343.  
40 True's Yard Museum, accession numbers KLNTY2020.666 & KLNTY2020.267.  
41 Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: KILLM: 2005.63.1.  
42 Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: KILLM: 1979.248.9/10.  
43 Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: KILLM: 1974.9.4.  
44 Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: KILLM: 1995.1271.2.  
45 Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: KILLM: 1976.14, KILLM: 1995.1270.1-3, KILLM: 2007.282.  
46 Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: KILLM: 2007.936. NWHRM:3906.6/7  
47 Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service: KILLM: 1984.114.4, KILLM: 1984.181.21, KILLM: 1999.122/123.  
48 *The Bioscope*, 1<sup>st</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> November 1917.  
49 *Kelly's Directory of King's Lynn*, 1930-31.  
50 ... one of which is : True's Yard Museum, accession number KLNTY2020.676.  
51 Last directory entry: *Kelly's Directory of King's Lynn*, 1938-39.  
52 1911 census: RG14 PN11655 RD236 SD2 ED6 SN26.  
53 Last evidence: *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1933.  
54 James Speight's diary, volumes 2 to 6, transcribed by John Frearson.  
55 Cambridgeshire Photographers, *Fading Images*, <http://www.fadingimages.uk>.  
56 True's Yard Museum, accession numbers KLNTY2020.696 and KLNTY2020.733.  
57 *Norfolk Photographic Survey* information (unless otherwise indicated) drawn from: Clare Everitt, *Norfolk Through a Lens*, Norfolk Library and Information Service, 2016. <https://www.norfolk.gov.uk/.../norfolk-through-a-lens.pdf>.

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58 Norfolk Survey, Miscellaneous Library Papers, quoted in: Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian, Amateur Photography and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918*, (London: Duke University Press, 2012).

59 *Lincolnshire Echo*, 16<sup>th</sup> April 1913.

60 Elizabeth Edwards, *The Camera as Historian, Amateur Photography and Historical Imagination, 1885-1918*, (London: Duke University Press, 2012).

61 *Kelly's Directory of Norfolk*, 1912 and 1916.

62 *Yorkshire Telegraph & Star*, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1914.

63 *Lynn Advertiser*, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1914.

64 Postcard reproduced on *Lynn News* website, 9<sup>th</sup> June 2014.

65 E.g. La Rue Albert, True's Yard Museum, accession number KLNTY2020.708.

66 E.g. True's Yard Museum, accession numbers KLNTY2020.277 to KLNTY2020.281.

67 *Lynn Advertiser*, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1915.

68 *Lynn News*, 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1915.

69 United Kingdom, World War I Service Records, 1914-1920: WO363 007283481 00623.

70 United Kingdom, World War I Service Records, 1914-1920: WO363 007283481 00619.

71 United Kingdom, World War I Service Records, 1914-1920: WO363 007273887 01285.

72 Records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

73 King's Lynn World War I Book of Remembrance (Museum transcript).

74 *A Portrait of Walter Dexter*, Charlotte Paton, pp83-85 (Dereham: Larks Press, 2014).

75 King's Lynn World War I Book of Remembrance.

76 Records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

77 King's Lynn World War I Book of Remembrance.

78 *Lincolnshire Echo*, 8<sup>th</sup> May 1918.

79 1911 census: RG14, PN17035, RD369, ED26. SN204.

80 Details and quotations throughout the account (unless otherwise indicated): *Lincolnshire Echo*, 18<sup>th</sup> May 1915.

81 *Lynn Advertiser*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 1919.

82 War Memorials Register: <https://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials>

83 True's Yard Museum, accession number KLNTY2020.598.

84 1881 census: RG11, piece 2000, folio 46, page 15.

85 1911 census: RG14, PN11634, RD235, SD2, ED13, SN19.

86 Ibid

87 True's Yard Museum, accession number KLNTY2020.598.

88 *Lynn Advertiser*, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1912.

89 I am grateful to Paul Godfrey for providing the information on seaside photographic practise that helped me reach this conclusion.

90 *Lynn Advertiser*, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1940.

91 Handel and Jasper being otherwise accounted for (see subsequent text).

92 Civil registration death index: Dec 1914, Freebridge Lynn, volume 4b, page 348.

93 *The Essex Newsmen*, 1<sup>st</sup> September 1917.

94 *Essex Chronicle*, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1925 & 1<sup>st</sup> August 1830.

95 *Essex Chronicle*, 13<sup>th</sup> June 1930 & 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1930.

96 Theatre programme, King's Lynn Musical Society, 27<sup>th</sup> November 1935.

97 *Kelly's Directory of King's Lynn*, 1932-3.

98 *Lynn Advertiser*, 1<sup>st</sup> March 1940. (Also the source of the obituary that follows.)

99 *Lynn News Diary and Almanack*, 1889.

100 *Lynn News*, 5<sup>th</sup> March 1940.

101 National Probate Calendar, 1940, p475.

102 Office for National Statistics, at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

103 Ray Wilson, *Red Alert, The Bombing of King's Lynn 1939-1942*, (Lowestoft: Panda Books, 1985).