

*Cultivating in the City*

the growth of York's  
allotment gardens





Allotments were a feature of cities such as Nottingham, Newcastle and Birmingham from the seventeenth-century.

The idea of allotments as a form of welfare for poorer citizens began to emerge from the middle of the nineteenth-century as concern regarding the living conditions of slums in industrial towns and cities grew.

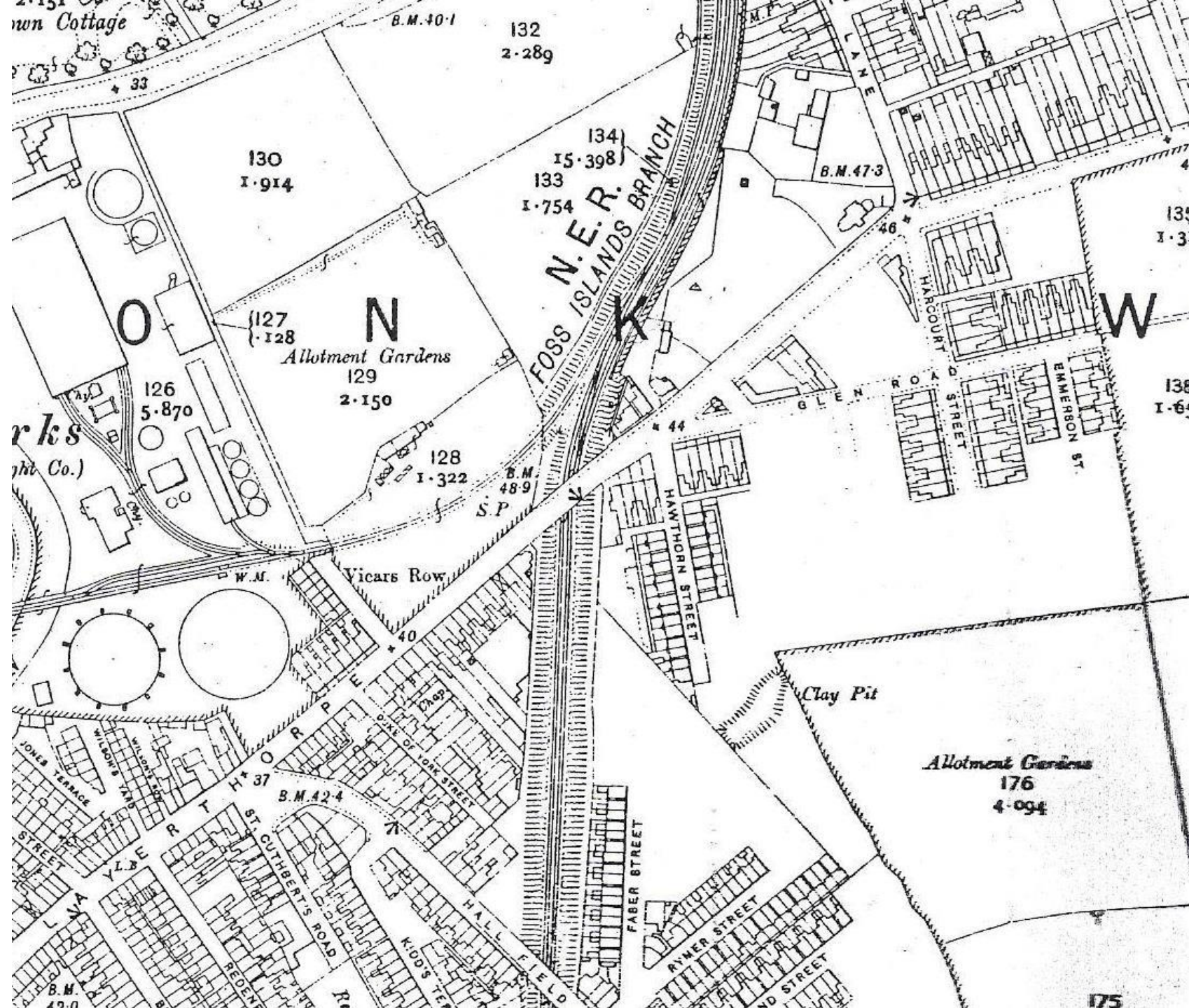


["Harrogate End or Hill Top", Harrogate](#)

# 1887 Allotments Act

<b>District</b>	<b>Landlord</b>	<b>No. of allotments</b>	<b>Size of allotments</b>
Haxby Road	Rowntree and Co.	104	345 sq. yds.
Poppleton Road	Leeman Road Adult School	94	345 sq. yds.
Poppleton Road	Acomb Adult School	76	345 sq. yds.
Burton Lane	Mr. Hornby	30 (approx)	0.3-2 acres
Layerthorpe	Mr. Mansfield	32	0.4 of an acre
South Bank	Mr. De Bing	60	180 – 720 sq. yds.
Nunthorpe	Mr. De Bing	30	180 – 720 sq. yds.
Clementhorpe	Mr. Waddington	30	100 – 400 sq. yds.





Mr. Mansfield's  
 allotments in  
 Layerthorpe, 1909  
 (copyright  
 Ordnance Survey)



THE YORK  
COCOA WORKS

HORTICULTURAL  
SOCIETY.

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MR. T. H. APPLETON.

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Chairman—MR. H. PIERCY,

MESSRS. J. ARCHER, J. T. CRUMBIE,

F. H. HOPE, J. SANGER, R. FISHWICK,

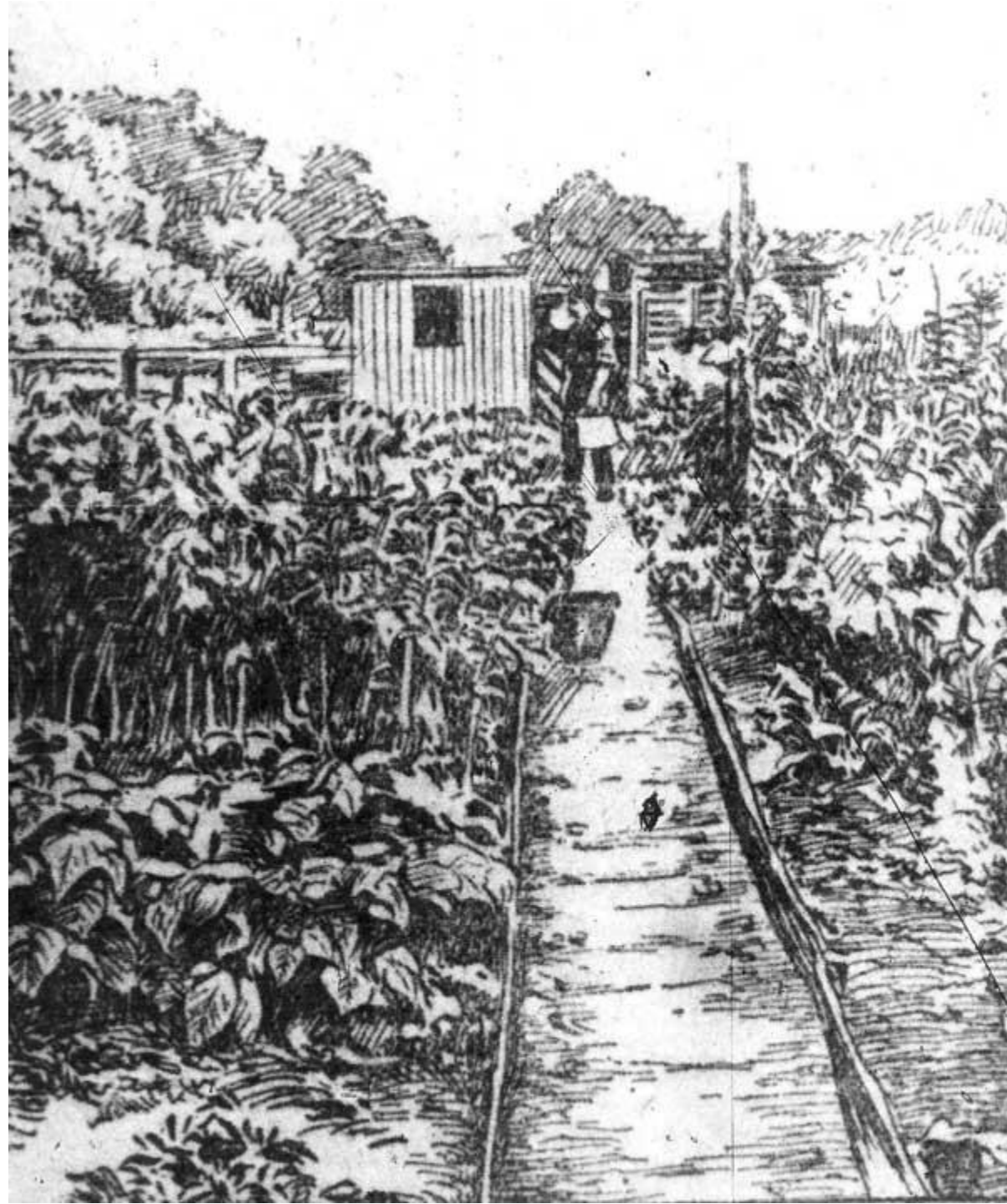
E. MITCHELL, T. WINN, T. LISLE,

W. THOMAS, G. W. R. WRIGHT,

T. D. RANGLES.

*Hare, Printer, York.*



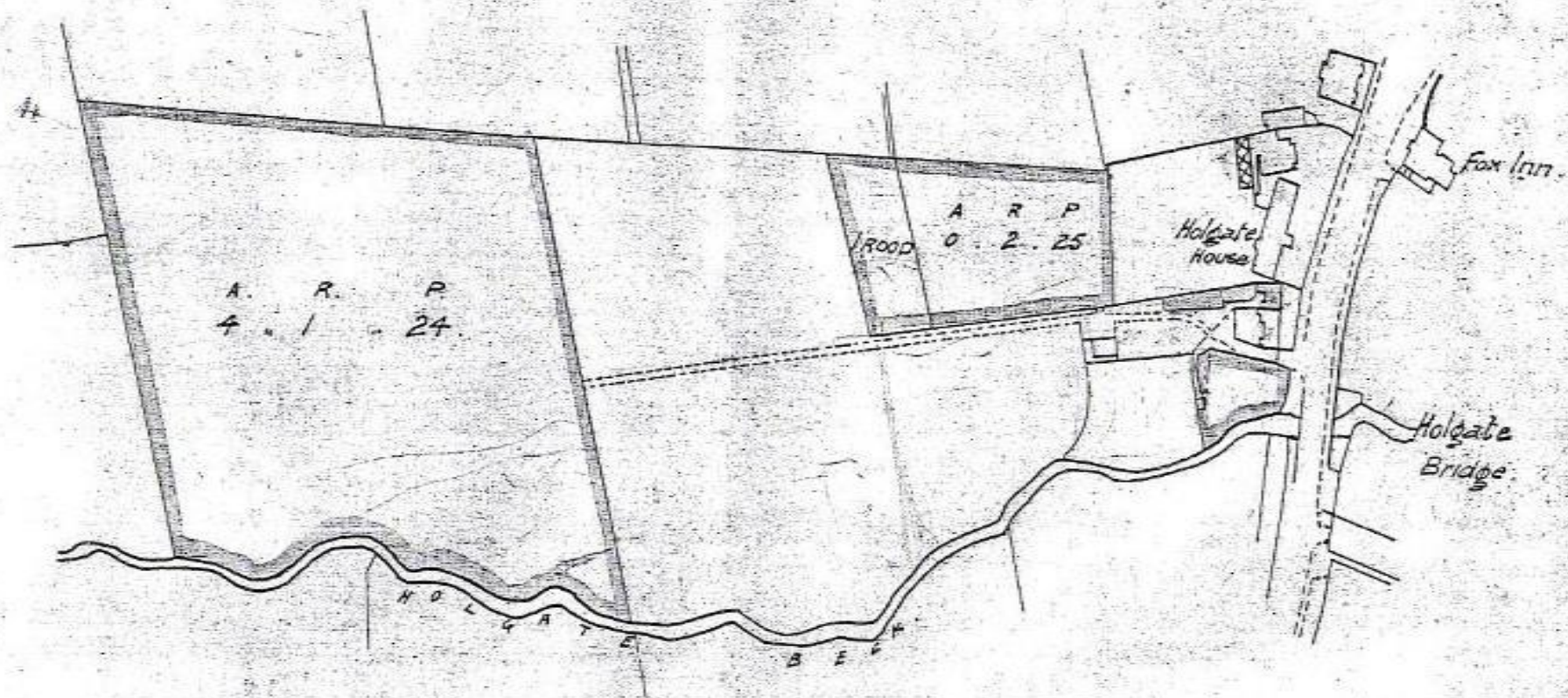




# Holgate Allotments

The residents showed their frustration in a letter to the Town Clerk in January 1905 written by Mr. Andrew Moody of 64 Murray Street, York, on behalf of the residents of Holgate asking what had been done and to push the matter of allotments further.

An area of land near the Holgate Beck had been identified by the beginning of 1905 held by Reverend J. Topham and Mrs. Roberta Grant Lawson from the Corporation.



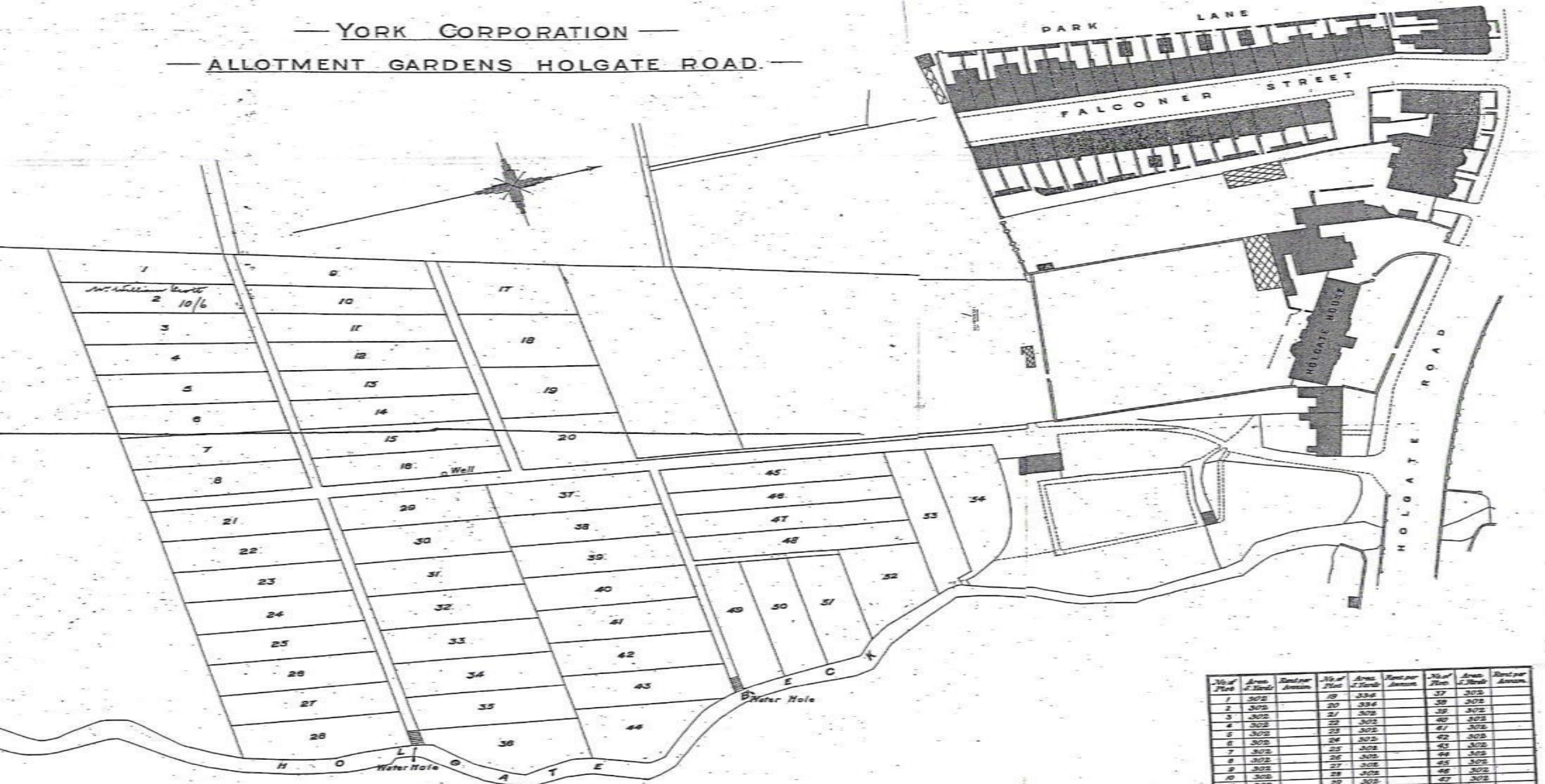
Scale: 20833 feet to an Inch.

City Engineers Office.

York, November 23<sup>rd</sup> 1905.



— YORK CORPORATION —  
 — ALLOTMENT GARDENS HOLGATE ROAD. —



No of Plots	Area of Plots	Rent per Annum	No of Plots	Area of Plots	Rent per Annum	No of Plots	Area of Plots	Rent per Annum
1	302		19	334		37	302	
2	302		20	334		38	302	
3	302		21	302		39	302	
4	302		22	302		40	302	
5	302		23	302		41	302	
6	302		24	302		42	302	
7	302		25	302		43	302	
8	302		26	302		44	302	
9	302		27	302		45	302	
10	302		28	302		46	302	
11	302		29	302		47	302	
12	302		30	302		48	302	
13	302		31	302		49	302	
14	302		32	302		50	302	
15	302		33	302		51	302	
16	302		34	302		52	302	
17	334		35	302		53	302	
18	334		36	302		54	334	

— SCALE 41'66 Feet to 1 Inch —

*A. Lewis*  
 City Surveyor  
 November 13<sup>th</sup> 1905.

17 H Mount Ephraim  
York  
1<sup>st</sup> Decr 1905

Sir

I am anxious to register  
my name for one of the Holgate  
Allotments, and am informed  
by applying to you by letter  
that object would receive your  
consideration. I may add

I am a householder in the locality  
with a family of 7 children  
and in the employment of  
Mr J Sharp, Riversleigh, Searcroft,  
who would give me a reference  
should you require, trusting  
this application will receive  
your kind consideration.

Your obedient servant  
Joseph Riches

Contracts for Holgate Allotments  
were issued in January 1906.

Occupations of the men are listed as  
Engine Driver, Seaman, Mechanic,  
Smith as well as a number of  
individuals classed as Labourers, such  
as Mr. J. Riches, who took possession  
of plot number 48 on the Holgate site.





HOLGATE ROAD (2) YORK.

Oscar Rowntree writing in the Yorkshire Gazette on the 25th of August 1906 stated;

‘There is no doubt as to the popularity of allotment gardens, and if land is available the Corporation should have no difficulty in widely extending them in different districts in York... A glance at the map of York would lead one to believe that in the Haxby Road, Layerthorpe, Bishopthorpe Road and Heslington Road districts land could be acquired for the purpose of allotments if so desired.’



1) If a man puts labour into it he can add materially to his weekly wage from its produce.

2) He is always sure of a good supply of fresh vegetables.

3) The cultivation affords pleasure and healthy exercise to one who may have been cooped-up all day in some factory or other place of business. In addition his family will undoubtedly derive great benefit where they help its cultivation.

‘Gardens...bring the wives and children into the scheme of recreation and it is no mean blessing to bestow to associate the whole family with the husband’s and father’s use of his leisure hours. Nothing appeals more strongly to the man than the sight of the flowers and fruits that have grown up under his own loving care; many a mother wearied by the monotony and drudgery of household cares, finds renewed health strength, and brightness while spending the cool of the evening in the midst of such delightful surroundings; and children learn early to associate their happiest hours with the soil’

The amount of produce estimated that could be grown by one man in a year in 1906 on a privately owned allotment site measuring 345 square yards was considerable.

- **Vegetables:** 42lbs of brussels, 2 bunch of carrots, 24 celery sticks, 7 bunches of lettuce, 2 bunches of onions, 39lbs of peas, 8 bunches of radishes, 18 savoys, 50 cabbages, 96 cauliflowers, 12lbs of French beans, 8 bunches of mint, 14 bunches of parsley, 320lbs of potatoes, 9 bunches of rhubarb, 4 bunches of turnips.
- **Fruit:** 3lbs of gooseberries, 6 quarts and 2lbs of raspberries, 9lbs of red currants, 17lbs of strawberries.
- **Flowers:** 245 bunches of flowers, 60 iris blooms, 7 lily blooms, 2 bunches of polyanthus, 38 rose blooms, 16 tulip blooms, 2 bunches marguerites, 1 bunch of daffodils.



[8 EDW. 7.] *Small Holdings and Allotments Act, 1908.* [CH. 36.]



## CHAPTER 36.

An Act to consolidate the enactments with respect to Small A.D. 1908.  
Holdings and Allotments in England and Wales. —

[1st August 1908.]

**B**E it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :

The Small Holdings and Allotment Committee sat for the first time on January 6th 1908 and their role at this meeting was clearly defined;

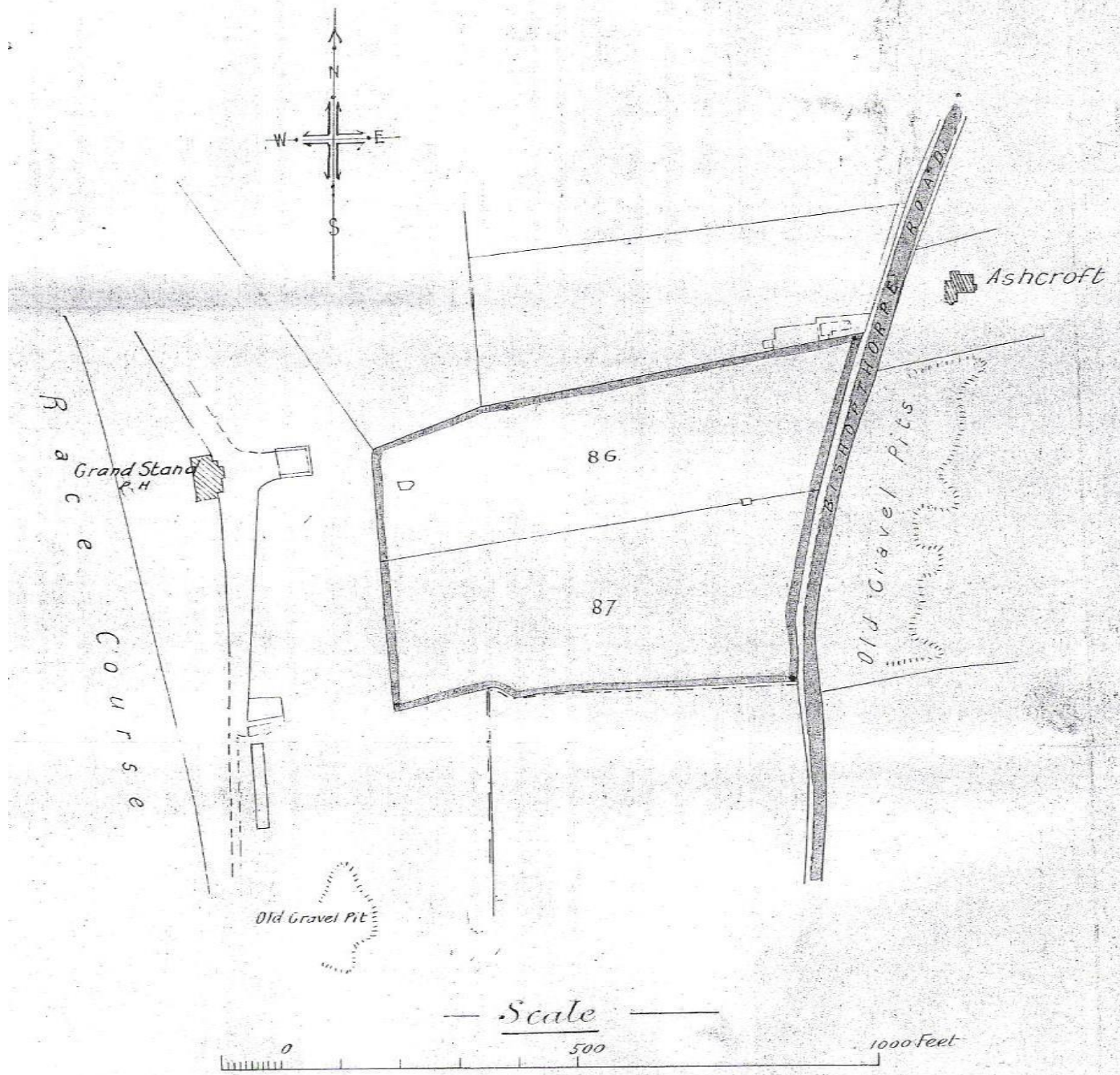
‘...the Committee report to this council as to the obligations and powers of the (1908) Act and other matters, with a view to this council delegating to the Committee such of its powers and duties as may be deemed expedient.’

# South Bank Allotment Holders' Association

On the 31st of August 1908 the City Engineer submitted his report.

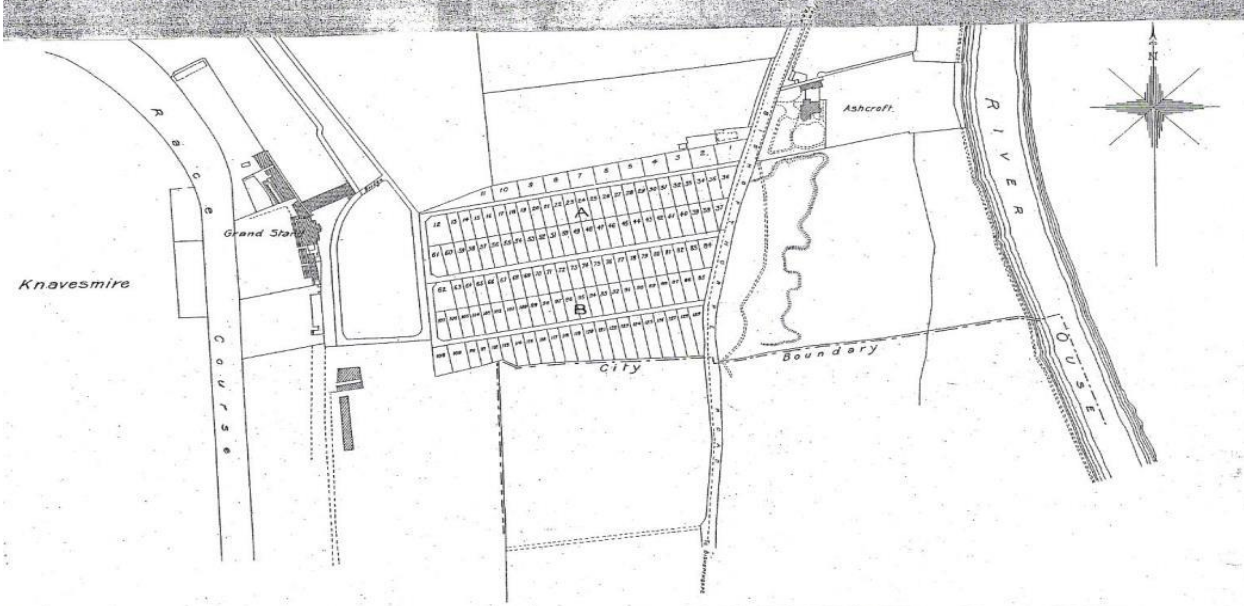
'The Bustardthorpe site provided 152 plots, the areas of which are for the most part  $\frac{1}{4}$  rood (approx. 300 sq. yds.) sections. Of the above number of plots 31 are larger than a  $\frac{1}{4}$  rood, varying from an area of 321 yards to 630 yards. Provision is made for 2 main roads 10 feet wide and 80 yards apart with five cross roads, 7 feet 6 inches wide and 40 yards apart. It is proposed to make these roads with ashes only...12 stand pipes fed from the Water company's main, with sunk tubs for the storage of water...Cost: £373-5-0.'





# YORK CORPORATION

## ALLOTMENT GARDENS, BISHOPTHORPE ROAD



Scale 1/2500



FIELD A										FIELD B									
No. of Plot	Area S. Yards	Perf. per Acre	No. of Plot	Area S. Yards	Perf. per Acre	No. of Plot	Area S. Yards	Perf. per Acre	No. of Plot	Area S. Yards	Perf. per Acre	No. of Plot	Area S. Yards	Perf. per Acre	No. of Plot	Area S. Yards	Perf. per Acre		
1	440	13.10	23	370	12.12	25	370	12.12	66	295	9.0	67	295	9.0	708	360	11.4		
2	508	16.20	24	370	12.12	26	370	12.12	67	295	9.0	68	295	9.0	709	361	11.4		
3	396	12.2	25	370	12.12	27	370	12.12	68	295	9.0	69	295	9.0	710	362	11.4		
4	377	11.6	26	370	12.12	28	370	12.12	69	295	9.0	70	295	9.0	711	363	11.4		
5	357	10.8	27	370	12.12	29	370	12.12	70	295	9.0	71	295	9.0	712	364	11.4		
6	313	9.4	28	370	12.12	30	370	12.12	71	295	9.0	72	295	9.0	713	365	11.4		
7	326	10.0	29	370	12.12	31	370	12.12	72	295	9.0	73	295	9.0	714	366	11.4		
8	308	9.4	30	370	12.12	32	370	12.12	73	295	9.0	74	295	9.0	715	367	11.4		
9	292	8.8	31	370	12.12	33	370	12.12	74	295	9.0	75	295	9.0	716	368	11.4		
10	279	8.4	32	370	12.12	34	370	12.12	75	295	9.0	76	295	9.0	717	369	11.4		
11	245	7.4	33	370	12.12	35	370	12.12	76	295	9.0	77	295	9.0	718	370	11.4		
12	235	7.1	34	370	12.12	36	370	12.12	77	295	9.0	78	295	9.0	719	371	11.4		
13	310	9.4	35	370	12.12	37	370	12.12	78	295	9.0	79	295	9.0	720	372	11.4		
14	370	11.4	36	370	12.12	38	370	12.12	79	295	9.0	80	295	9.0	721	373	11.4		
15	370	11.4	37	370	12.12	39	370	12.12	80	295	9.0	81	295	9.0	722	374	11.4		
16	370	11.4	38	370	12.12	40	370	12.12	81	295	9.0	82	295	9.0	723	375	11.4		
17	370	11.4	39	370	12.12	41	370	12.12	82	295	9.0	83	295	9.0	724	376	11.4		
18	370	11.4	40	370	12.12	42	370	12.12	83	295	9.0	84	295	9.0	725	377	11.4		
19	370	11.4	41	370	12.12	43	370	12.12	84	295	9.0	85	295	9.0	726	378	11.4		
20	370	11.4	42	370	12.12	44	370	12.12	85	295	9.0	86	295	9.0	727	379	11.4		
21	370	11.4	43	370	12.12	45	370	12.12	86	295	9.0	87	295	9.0	728	380	11.4		
22	370	11.4	44	370	12.12	46	370	12.12	87	295	9.0	88	295	9.0	729	381	11.4		

PERMANENT  
 PLAN FILING NUMBER  
 5153  
 DEPT. 1909-2111

City Engineer's Office,  
York, Oct. 1909.



BISHOPTHORPE ROAD

# Allotment Holders' Association

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Schedule of 4th Annual Show, 29th July, 1914.

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## LIST OF OFFICERS.

*President* :—The Rt. Hon. The Lord Mayor of York  
(Councillor H. Rhodes Brown.)

*Vice-President* :—The Sheriff of York (R. Newbald Kay, Esq.)

### *Patrons* :—

His Grace the Archbishop of York; Arnold S. Rowntree, Esq., M.P.; J. G. Butcher, Esq., K.C., M.P.; Viscount Helmsley, M.P.; Urban H. Broughton, Esq.; Jos. Rowntree, Esq.; Ald. S. W. Meyer, J.P.; Ald. Norman Green; Ald. Sir J. Sykes Rymer; Councillors J. B. Morrell, O. F. Rowntree, S. H. Davies, G. Sharp, and G. H. Menell; W. Reginald De Burgh, Esq.; Harold C. De Burgh, Esq.; J. W. Procter, Esq., J.P.; W. F. H. Thomson, Esq., J.P.; B. S. Rowntree, Esq., J.P.; Rev. Canon Argles; Col. Meysey-Thompson; Dr. Raimes; R. Thompson, Esq.; L. C. Paget, Esq.; Sir N. Kaye Butterworth; Col. Wilkinson, D.S.O.; Major C. E. Wood; W. Northall, Esq., and C. E. Scott, Esq.

*Chairman* :—Mr. J. P. Gent.

*Vice-Chairman* :—Mr. S. Cram.

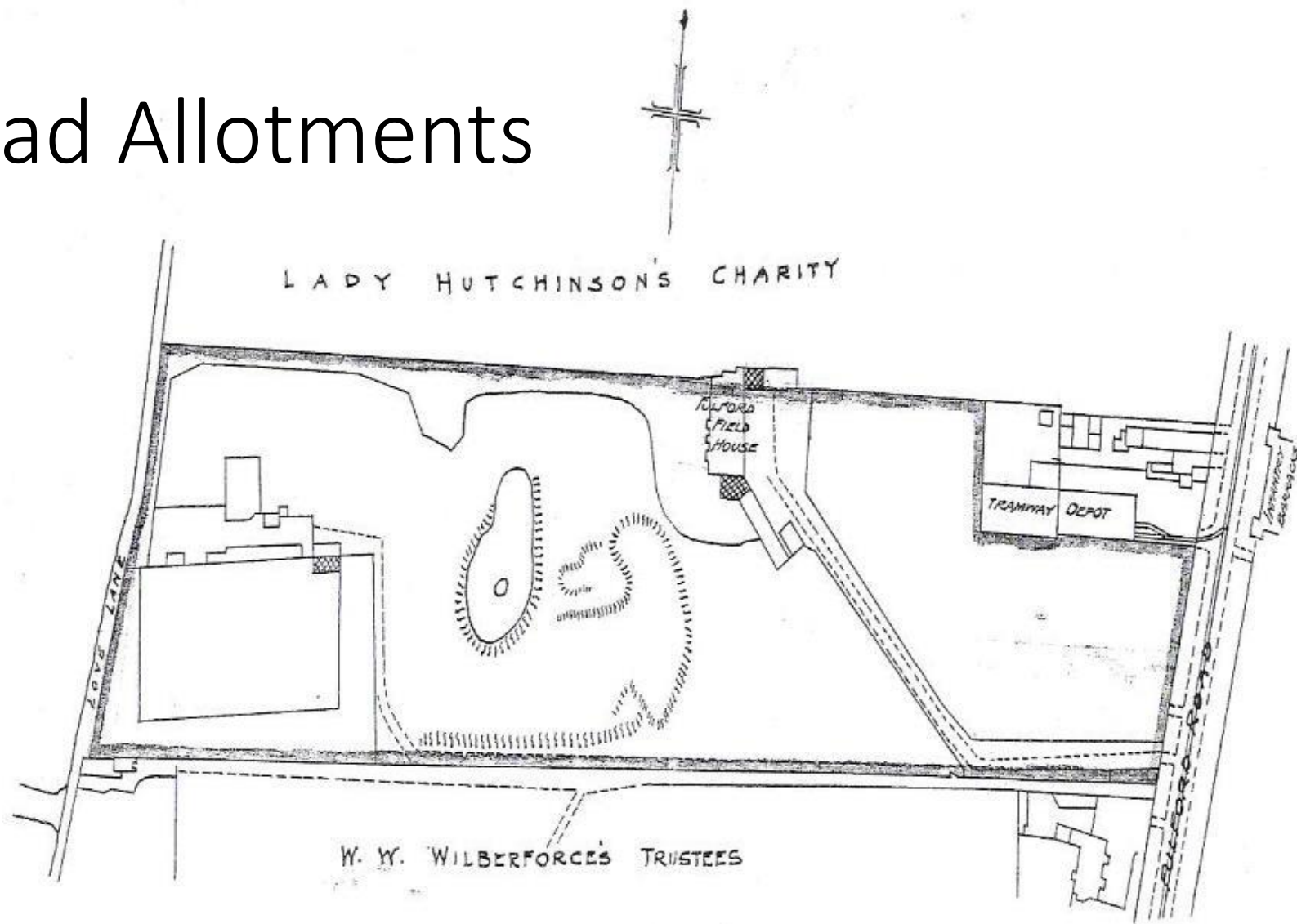
### *Committee* :—

Messrs. E. Warrington, J. W. Collins, T. Acomb, I. Bowland,  
F. Birkett, W. Dwyer, N. Pratt, W. H. Barker,  
J. Ashcroft and G. H. Cooper.





# Fulford Road Allotments



SCALE 1/2500

# Allotments and the First World War

Alma Terrace, Fulford.

Beresford Terrace, South Bank.

Bull Lane, Heworth.

Glen Gardens, Heworth.

Poplar Street, Clifton.

Hob Moor.

Scarcroft Hill.

Albermarle Road, South Bank

Birch's Field, Hull Road.

Millfield Lane.

Carr Field.

Hempland Lane, Heworth.

Field View, Burton Stone Lane, Wiggington Road.

Upper Cromer Street and Cromer Street.

Chapel Flat, Hull Road.

Green Lane, Acomb.

Friend Retreat, Heslington Road.

Campleshon Lane, South Bank

South Bank Avenue and Thompson's Field.

Water End, Clifton.

Knavesmire Crescent.

Howe Hill, Poppleton Road.

Gas Works Field, Layerthorpe.

Abbey Street, Clifton.

Bootham Stray on the Wiggington Road.

Sturdy's Field, Hull Road.

Briar Lane, Fulford Road.

Murray Street, Holgate.

New Lane, Holgate.

Low Moor, Walmgate Stray.

Asylum Lane, Bootham Stray.

Leeman Road.

Huntingdon Road.

Bishopthorpe Road.



After the war

Councillor A.G. Watson who sat on the Allotment Committee for many years, wrote in the *Yorkshire Gazette* on the 25th August 1926, that the war 'had revived the demand for land, and given permanence to a movement which is one of the good things that the war gave us.'

1919

Hempland Lane

1921

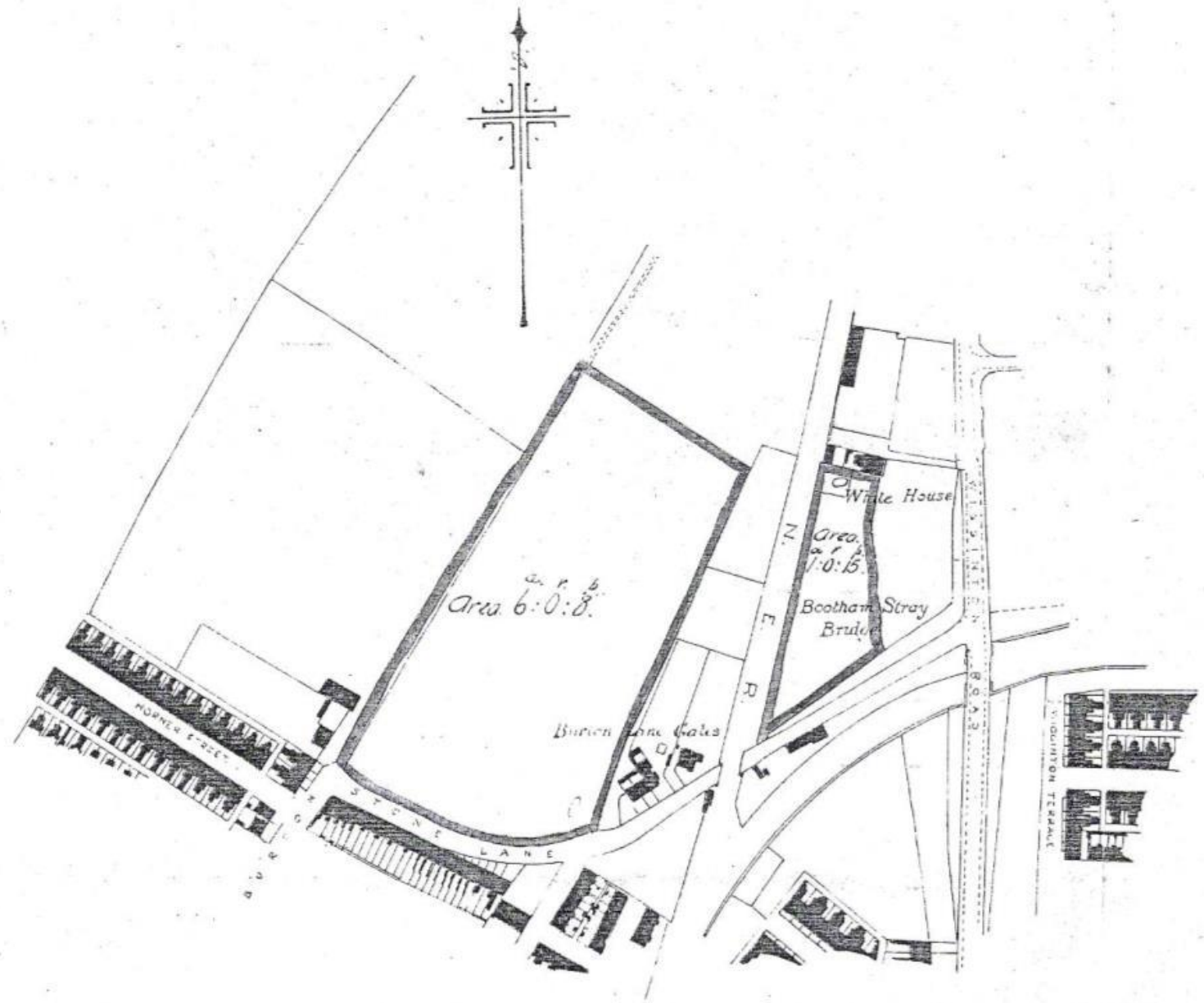
Burton Stone Lane

1923

Low Moor

1925

Glen Gardens



Scale 1/2500

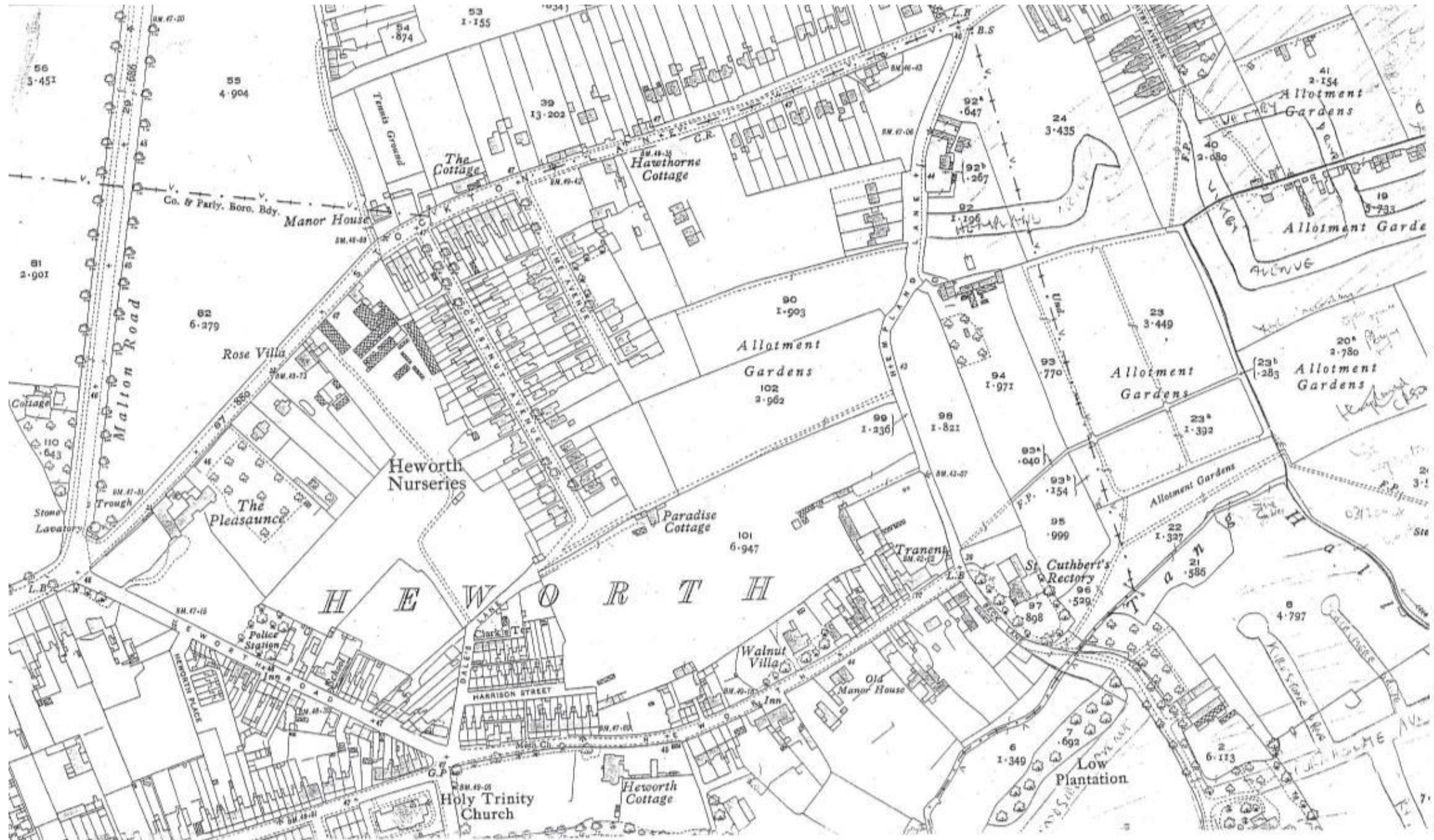
CITY ENGINEERS OFFICE

YORK March 1920.





By 1926 the Corporation  
owned or leased 173  
acres, constituting 2393  
allotment plots.



# 13th SUMMER SHOW

To be held in the PAVILION and GROUNDS on  
SATURDAY, AUGUST 12th 1939.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC 4-30 p.m.  
ADMISSION — ADULTS 2d. CHILDREN 1d.

## MEMBERS ONLY.

- | Class.  | Class.   |
|---|--|
| 1—6 POTATOES, round.  | 15—Vase of SWEET PEAS, 6 stems,<br>named, one variety. |
| 2—6 POTATOES, kidney.   | 16—Vase of SWEET PEAS, 16 stems<br>no foliage.         |
| 3—2 CAULIFLOWERS.   | 17—6 ASTERS, annual.                                   |
| 4—2 CABBAGES.   | 18—6 GLADIOLI.   |
| 5—6 TOMATOES.   | 19—3 GLADIOLI.   |
| 6—3 BEETROOTS, round.   | 20—6 CARNATIONS.                                       |
| 7—12 PODS OF PEAS.  | 21—6 DAHLIAS, decorative.                              |
| 8—12 KIDNEY BEANS.  | 22—6 DAHLIAS, Pompone.                                 |
| 9—6 ONIONS, dressed.  | 23—6 Stems of STOCKS.                                  |
| 10—6 ONIONS, spring sown,<br>undressed.   | 24—6 ROSES.  |
| 11—12 RUNNER BEANS.   | 25—12 PANSIES or VIOLAS.                               |
| 12—12 SHALLOTS, not seedlings   | 26—6 SPRAYS of ANNUALS 3 var-                          |
| 13—2 CUCUMBERS.   | 27—3 BUTTON-HOLES. [eties.                             |
| 14—3 vases of SWEET PEAS,<br>9 stems per vase, named,<br>no foliage.  | 28—1 LADY'S SPRAY.                                     |
|   | 29—Vase of CUT FLOWERS,<br>arranged for effect.        |
| 30—GARDEN BOUQUET, not to exceed 16 inches across.  |  |
| 31—FLORAL DISPLAY, not table, space allowed 3ft. x 3ft.   |  |
| 32—BOUQUET of SWEET PEAS, not more than 16 inches across.   |  |
| 33—FRONT GARDEN COMPETITION, for "Horsman Bowl".<br>Portion of Garden facing front window, Corporation tenants only | <b>Entry Fee 6d.</b>                                   |
| 34—BEST CULTIVATED GARDEN. The whole of the Garden to be<br>judged. Open to all Members.                            | <b>Entry Fee 6d.</b>                                   |
| 35 GIFT CLASS, one Pot Plant. FREE ENTRY.   |  |

## **MEMBERS' WIVES ONLY. Entry Fee 3d. each Entry.**

- 36—1 WHITE LOAF, 12 hours old.  
37—3 TEACAKES, 12 hours old, fruited with Currants only.  
38—1lb. JAR OF NEW SEASON JAM, homemade. Rasp. or Strawberry  
39—NEEDLEWORK, any Garment made by Exhibitor. [only  
40—KNITTING, best Knitted Article.  
41—EMBROIDERY, best Fancy Worked Article.  
42—Member's Children only. BUNCH OF WILD FLOWERS,  
no ferns, arranged by Entrant. **Entry Fee 1d.**

Tang Hall  
allotment show  
programme,  
1939.





ELEVENTH ANNUAL SHOW  
- of -  
**Flowers & Vegetables**

to be held on  
**Saturday, August 20th, 1932**

in the  
**Adult School, Falsgrave Crescent**  
ADMISSION FREE

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**PATRONS :—**

The Lord Mayor of York (Ald. R. H. Vernon Wragge.)  
Coun. A. D. Naish ; Coun. G. W. Halliday ; Ald. J. B. Morrell ;  
Coun. E. Temple ; Coun. E. J. L. Rymer ; Coun. Mrs. Crichton  
Coun. Lucas ; Coun. Dodsworth ; Mr. H. E. Bloor.  
Mr. A. S. Rowntree ; Mr. B. S. Rowntree ; Mr. J. W. Dow ;  
Arthur T. Hattee, Esq.

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ENTRIES CLOSE THURSDAY, AUGUST 18th,

and should be sent to the Honorary Secretary:

ERNEST E. TEE,

238, Burton Stone Lane, York.

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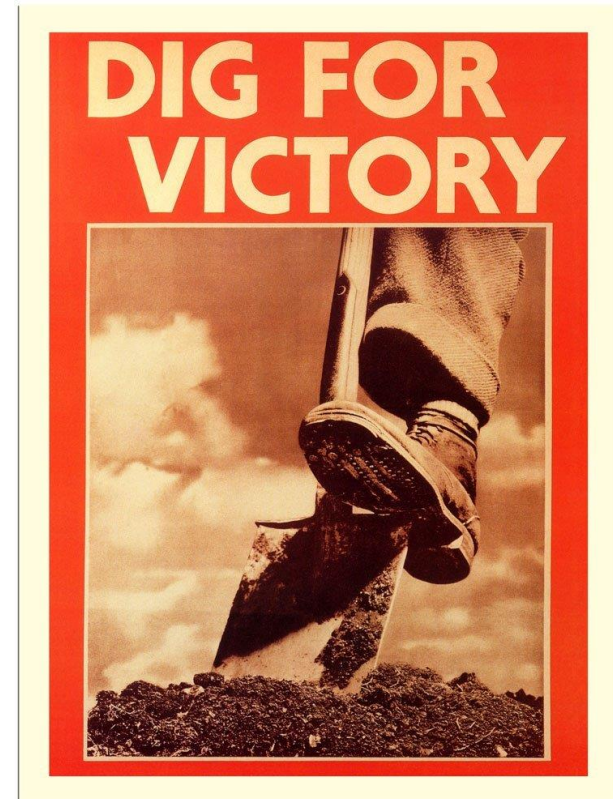
Burton Stone Lane  
Allotment Association  
programme, 1932.

“But there was a real atmosphere with the allotment assoc. I can remember going to the ones in Acomb called Green Lane. But in those days, the early days, they were all working men, and one fellow would always be there and at half past ten he’d ring a bell and in his little hut he had a primus stove and everyone sat down and had a brew and there was a real spirit about it.”



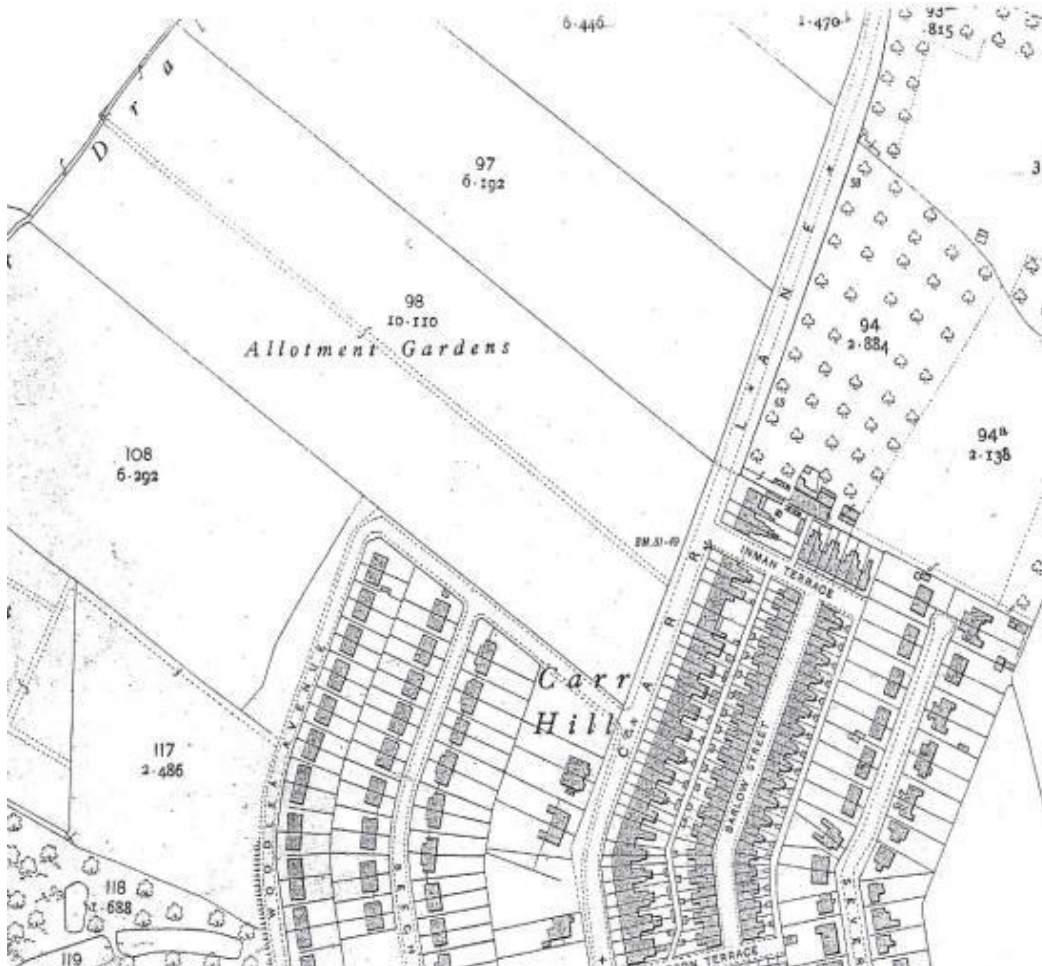


<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Plots</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
1939	814,917	95,700
1940	1,044,829	116,877
1941	1,365,740	138,096
1942	1,451,888	142,808
1943	1,399,935	136,820



Carr allotments, the map on the left is from the 1930s, the map on the right is from the 1950s (copyright Ordnance Survey).

# After 1945









# Thorpe Report, 1969

62% of allotment holders were aged 40 or over, typically male, retired manual workers and that over 50% of allotment holders had held them since 1945.

‘The men were very wary, and they used to mutter, ‘give her three weeks’, but I stayed at it, and then they’d say , ‘give her a few months’, but I stayed at it, then they said, ‘give her a year’, but then after that I was accepted on the site.’ I think they used to be suspicious about me because I grew flowers. They would grow chrysanthemums but not cottage garden flowers like me. There were some who were patronising. But the man next to me, he was wonderful: he used to give me all sorts of advice.’

