

'Larger than life' character was great supporter of civic activities

The April photograph in the Reepham Life 2021 Calendar shows Sidney Parker Eglington (below, second from right) in his role as captain of Reepham Fire Brigade on the site of a fire in Salle.



Sidney was a well-known character in the town with an agricultural machinery business at the bottom of Ollands Road. Sidney's mother Jane had died in 1873 when he was a barely a year old and he was sent to live with his maternal grandparents.

His brother Mark, aged about two and a half, went to his paternal grandfather Mark Eglington, who at that time farmed land in Whitwell, near Hackford Hall.

As a young man Sidney worked with his grandfather Robert Parker Gooch, a veterinary surgeon and farrier, who also ran a beer house known as the Farrier's Arms. Robert's yard, pub and residence and yard were situated on the site of the present Spar shop and the new houses next to it. Robert originally came from Corpusty, where his father was also a vet, and moved to Reepham in the 1850s.

Sidney (below seated on tractor) was a "larger than life" character – in girth as well, judging by the photographs of him. As well as running the agricultural machinery business and being fire chief, he also ran an undertaking concern.



Around the corner from Eglinton & Gooch's premises was a bakery, followed by the house of John Frankland, a tinsmith, and in 1902 Sidney married John's daughter Blanche.

Sidney died in 1948 having been involved in almost every aspect of life in Reepham: he was a parish councillor, vice-captain and captain of the fire brigade, and a member of the local Oddfellows lodge. He also played the part of Tambo in Reepham's own minstrel troupe, The Black Diamonds, and was a great supporter of many town activities, including the bowls team and the primary school.

Information from Reepham Society publications: Fifteen Locals by Joyce Cox and My Town by Wesley Piercy.
Janet Archer