

THE ORIGINS

- Charles Coats

The original County Land Agents Association was formed in 1908 at the same time as the enactment of the Smallholdings and Allotments Act. In those early days County Land Agents were people of standing in their communities. They usually enjoyed chief officer status to reflect the relative importance then of smallholdings to County Councils. Many County Land Agents were from a military background and the list of CLAVA presidents includes four captains, one major, two lieutenant-colonels and a colonel.

Meetings were, as now, spread around the country; usually two a year to enable members to visit each other's estates to see at first hand what was going on and to discuss matters of prevailing interest or concern. In those days, continuing right up to relatively recent times, meetings were two day affairs, often held in upmarket hotels. Wives would accompany their husbands, and the social dimension to these gatherings often assumed equal, if not greater, importance to the professional business of the day!



Charles Coats

The 1920s saw the boom in land acquisition by County Councils heeding the post-First World War election manifesto pledge by Lloyd George to provide "a land fit for heroes" so that ex-servicemen and their families could enjoy a subsistence living off the land. The 1920s when the majority of smallholdings estates were purchased were also a time of depression when land values were at rock bottom levels.

The Association also represented the interests of general practice valuers managing large portfolios of properties, but drawn largely from those working for County Councils, hence the change to the longer name of the County Land Agents and Valuers Association.

In 1986 when ACES itself was formed CLAVA re-emerged as the Counties Branch, again to represent the specific interests of land agents and valuers working in the upper tier of local government. As the regional branches of ACES established themselves, the distinction between the professional work done by the various tiers within local government became increasingly blurred to the extent that in 2003 a hard core of only three members attended a branch meeting in Portsmouth and resolved that "something had to be done". The following year the Rural Practice Branch emerged to represent the interests of those managing council farms, a.k.a. smallholdings. The wheel had thus turned full circle, and now the Branch thrives as the Association's only specialist one with a thriving membership, a burgeoning reputation within the agricultural industry and an influential voice in government circles.

Charles Coats
Gloucestershire County Council
President of ACES, 1998/99

1983

- Kenwyn Brown

It all started with Edward Heath, Joe Gormley and the three day week. What followed was an income and rent freeze, coupled with a hike in interest rates, one of the earlier examples of governmental economic illiteracy, which led to a collapse in the commercial property market. From a personal point of view it left me looking for a job which, after a spell with Coal Industry Nominees Pension Fund, led me to apply for and be



Kenwyn Brown

appointed to the post of County Valuer with Cheshire County Council.

The local government reorganisation of 1974 had seen a change in the character of Cheshire from a wealthy rural/suburban area to one with a more industrialised urban character. The County lost the Wirral and south-east Manchester suburbs in exchange for the old south Lancashire towns of Widnes and Warrington, together with the latter's burgeoning new town, all of these areas requiring significant service and infrastructure investment.

On the retirement of their existing County Land Agent and Valuer, John Lord, the County Council decided that the role needed to change and focus more on the urban property portfolio, its management and the services' occupational needs.

John Lord, who stayed on to provide an overlap to help show me the ropes, very quickly ensured my introduction to CLAVA. All of the members were very welcoming and kindness itself but their gravitas, experience and knowledge were, at first, just a little overwhelming. Attending meetings was always a pleasure: not only were they to be enjoyed but they were also extremely informative, supportive and a source of reassurance when needed.

The year in which my Presidency took place was a challenging time for some of the membership and in the event was also "interesting" on a personal level.

Departmental mergers were becoming a major issue and in too many cases little thought was given to the logic, cost or

real benefits of such proposals causing much uncertainty for the existing departments, their staff and chief officers. When I joined CLAVA most of the members expected and were happy to stay until they reached 65 and then to be happily waved off with grateful thanks by their authorities into well earned retirement. Times were suddenly changing and how remarkably quickly. In addition the advent of CoPROP was causing some concern.

Professionally much heat and some light was being generated by discussions over whether market rents could or should be produced and charged for all county council operational properties in order to both rationalise and use the portfolios more efficiently, effectively and economically.

Personally the year, whilst much enjoyed, did on reflection have its odd moments not the least of which was my own Presidential meeting in Chester. On the weekend before the conference, in getting ready to do some gardening, I managed to partially slip a disc and was, in accordance with the practice at the time, told to lie still in bed for a week. So for the Chairman of the County Council's reception for the CLAVA members I was driven to County Hall, propped up at the entrance to the dining room, where I introduced each member and his wife to the Chairman, then I was taken home. For the Association's formal dinner when we entertained the official invited guests, a bedroom was made available for me to lie down, I was then collected, taken to the function room, made my speech and was driven home without food or drink - what a great way to do it! I was extremely grateful to my Vice-President, Dick Wheeler, for taking the whole of the conference for me.

Whilst much has changed since I joined both CLAVA and ALAVES, their friendship, shared experiences, supportiveness and professionalism happily live on in ACES.

Kenwyn Brown
Cheshire County Council
President of CLAVA, 1983

1986 - John Cook

First became involved with CLAVA in 1968 after being appointed Land Agent to Birmingham City Council where previous Land Agents had been members of CLAVA. Unfortunately due to amalgamations my post was no longer a chief officer post and my application to become a member of CLAVA was turned down. However, subsequently in 1974, after being appointed County Land Agent and Valuer to Durham County Council, I was able to join the association and very much enjoyed my membership until I retired in 1988. During that period I was



John Cook

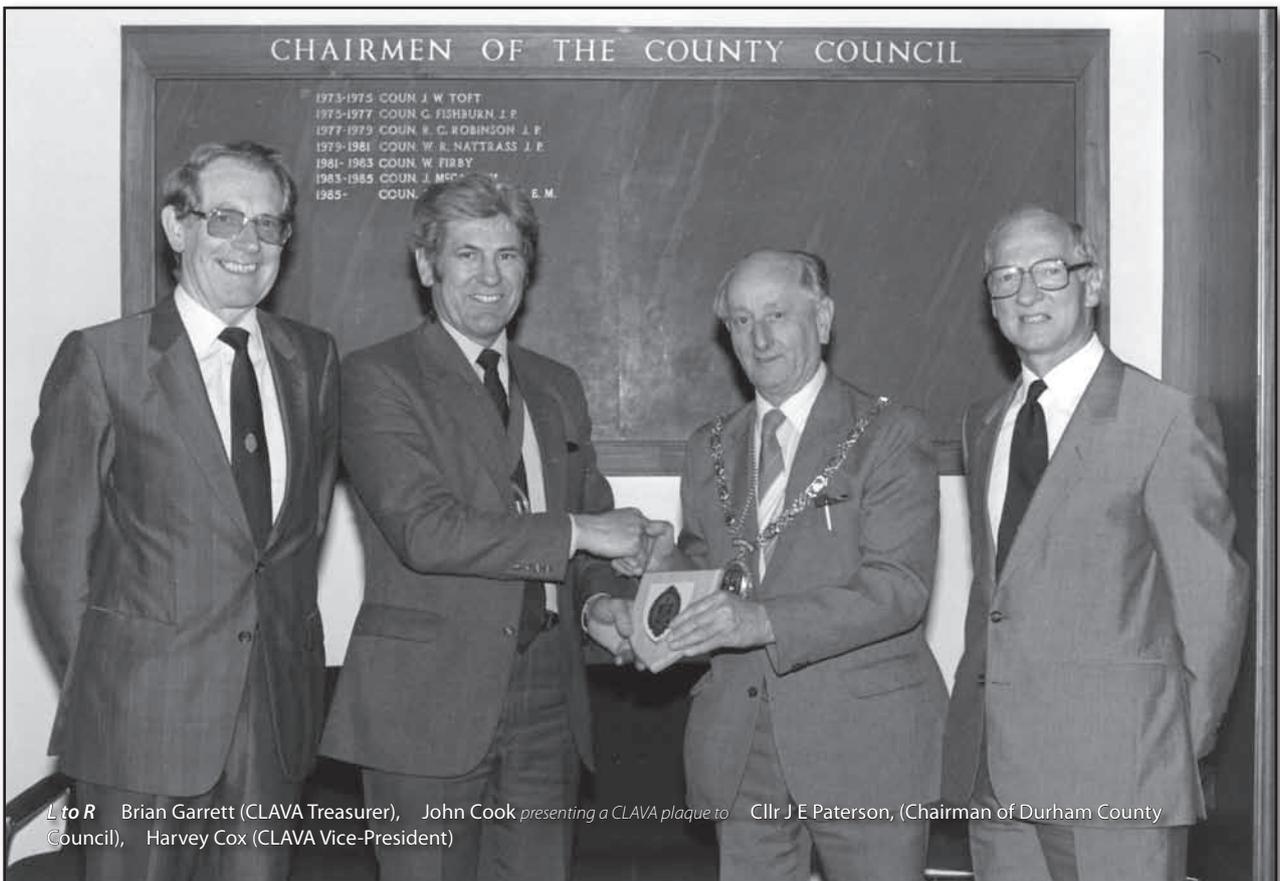
for several years the Public Relation Officer getting as much publicity as possible for the association including articles in the County Councils Association Gazette. I was also an adviser to the Land and Buildings Committee of the County Councils Association

I was elected Vice-President of CLAVA in 1985 and President in 1986. My home county presidential meeting was held in Durham city in May 1986 and I am sure was enjoyed by all those who attended. During the period of their stay in Durham the members and their wives took the opportunity to visit Durham Cathedral and Castle together with a trip to the Beamish Open Air Museum.

Up to my year as President there had been several proposals to amalgamate CLAVA and ALAVES and I and Gordon Smith, City Estates Officer for Leicester City Council, President of ALAVES were asked to put forward proposals to amalgamate the two associations. These were eventually accepted and the new LAVA was formed. This then meant that local government estates officers and valuers could speak with one voice and have more influence upon central government.

I must say I not only found CLAVA a most enjoyable association to be involved with but also a very useful tool to use when formulating policies and making decisions in the office on professional matters. I appreciated the direct telephone access to other members and the benefits of their expertise

The Association also was continually being consulted, through the Association of County Councils, by Government



L to R Brian Garrett (CLAVA Treasurer), John Cook presenting a CLAVA plaque to Cllr J E Paterson, (Chairman of Durham County Council), Harvey Cox (CLAVA Vice-President)

departments when formulating new Government policies. This resulted in many interesting meetings with the Inland Revenue and Environment Department.

Presidents were invited to various functions associated with the profession during their year in office and one of my highlights was to be invited by Donald Troup, President of the RICS to his presidential meeting in the Great George Street offices for the day which included viewing London from his official flat on the top of the building late at night. Such events made my year of office very enjoyable.

Now that the various Associations together have been active for 100 years, I would like to wish them well in the future which I expect will be just as fraught with problems as the previous 100 years but this is the name of the game. I was honoured to be elected President of CLAVA and will always be proud to have been a member.

John F Cook
Durham County Council
President of CLAVA, 1986

FROM CLAVA TO LAVA TO ACES - Bert Marshall

This article by retired member, William Marshall (aka Bert Marshall or "The Suffolk Scribbler") appeared in the summer 2008 edition of The Terrier.

TIME GENTLEMEN PLEASE

The inside story of the Counties Branch

When CLAVA was founded in 1908 every county's property officer was called County Land Agent and Valuer, hence the Association's full title of County Land Agent and Valuers' Association. Looking back through the list of presidents in Per Annum I see four Captains, a Major and a Lieutenant Colonel (TG Ellis MBE TD from Norfolk who was President from 1939 to 1944). It was that sort of association. And Colonel C R Bennett TD DL of Cambridgeshire, President in 1928, was President again in 1953 as Lieutenant Colonel CR Bennett TD DL still at Cambridgeshire.

I knew, vaguely, the 1970 President, DJD (Dennis) Shepherd of West Suffolk. We met once or twice in the run-up to the "Grand Reorganisation" of 1974 and I inherited, and got to know well, all his properties and files. The 1980 President was AL (Tony) Bennett of Buckinghamshire who reappears about five paragraphs below. The next president was Hamish Anderson of Suffolk who was succeeded by Eric Vessey from neighbouring Norfolk. In the following year, 1983, the tone of the organisation increased markedly when young Kenwyn Brown of Cheshire became President.

I was so keen to join CLAVA that my application for membership was approved on 27 November 1984 just before I became County Land Agent and Valuer at Suffolk County Council on 1 April 1985. The then Secretary of CLAVA was Brian Garrett. I shared an office with Brian for a year after joining East Suffolk County Council as a humble valuer on 18 May 1970. Happy days. Of those present at that fateful meeting only Tim Foster is still around. He has a lot to answer for.

Way back in 1984, there were still four County Land Agent and Valuers in post, Chris Rowley in Cumbria, John Cook in Durham, Henry Cave at Powys and me. Of course Cornwall had both a County Land Agent and a County Valuer in separate departments.

Full of anticipation, I arrived at my first meeting at the Lords Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury, on Wednesday 5 June 1985. Meetings then took two days, there was no professional presentation content, but we did talk a lot about milk quota. Strolling nervously into the bar that evening, as a complete new boy, I was warmly welcomed by Tony Bennett of Buckinghamshire, whom I had never met before, with the words "You must be the new member from Suffolk".

At the meeting my first impression was that most of the members seemed very old, very confident, very articulate and very affluent (I cannot believe that new members see us older members in the same light today). On the agenda were membership applications from the young Alun Jones of Gwynedd who later became ACES President in 2000/2001 and the not quite so young Dick Miller from Norfolk who was ACES President in 1988/89.

Missing out on autumn at Shanklin on the Isle of Wight I did attend my first AGM on 9 December 1985 at the ACC offices. The timing and location were, I suspect, fixed so as to be ideal for a spot of early Christmas shopping.

The election of John Cook as President in 1986 meant that the spring meeting took place at the Royal County Hotel, Durham. Also in 1986 a special meeting was held to discuss the establishment of a single new association for valuers and estates surveyors employed in local government. This was carried by a large majority even though it would mean the imminent dissolution of CLAVA. Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire was the venue in the autumn and Trevor Hopkins, the Lincolnshire Director of Property Services, hosted the meeting. (By coincidence Knight Frank advertised the hotel for sale in the Estates Gazette of 10th May 2008.)

The last meeting of CLAVA took place, somewhat appropriately, at the then County Hall, London on 27 November 1986 and

the last item on the Agenda was the formal dissolution of the County Land Agents and Valuers' Association. There was much wailing and gnashing of teeth even though it had been agreed that CLAVA would continue, thinly disguised as the County Branch of the new association called the Local Authority Valuers Association, i.e. LAVA.

To digress for a moment, and if memory serves me right, the Hon. Treasurer of CLAVA was Harvey Cox, the Land Agent at Somerset and he volunteered to be the first Hon. Treasurer of LAVA but for only one year as he planned to retire and move to warmer climes. I should say the silver-tongued Harvey Cox because he identified me as a potential Hon. Treasurer and he invested 6 months of earnest pleading before persuading me to take over the role. We met on neutral territory i.e. Chieveley Services on the M4 where Harvey handed over two boxes of account books and records and, gentleman that he was, bought me lunch. He left smiling and headed off to Somerset, retirement and Lanzarote. It took many years before I realised why he was smiling but by then I had supped deep from the poisoned chalice he had handed me.

The first meeting of the County Branch of the Local Authority Valuers Association, LAVA, took place at the Swan's Nest Hotel, Stratford Upon Avon, on 7 & 8 April 1987. There we were asked to approve an application for associate membership from a nice young chap called Charles Coats of Gloucestershire. I often wonder what ever happened to him.

Early in June 1987, we journeyed to Taunton and had the pleasure of sharing the hotel with the touring New Zealand cricket team. At the meeting Mark Trinder drew attention to two major problems hitherto unforeseen on milk quota. One was the problem of the relationship between butter fats and quota level and the second was the difficulties which could arise if an outgoing tenant used up the whole of the quota in part of the year prior to quitting the holding. In the autumn we met up at the Hotel Metropole, Llandrindod Wells. This meeting was noteworthy on two counts. It rained heavily for three solid days and breakfast in the hotel was such a shambles that we thought the headwaiter, a little Austrian with slicked down black hair and toothbrush moustache, was going to invade Poland.

Spring 1988 was the South Lodge Hotel Chelmsford, a meeting organised by Alan Duchars of Essex County Council. Mark Trinder was now well established with his regular milk quotas item and Charles Coats presented a paper on smallholdings policy review. How many times since has that paper been recycled? In the autumn the County Branch hard

core journeyed down to the Hotel St Michael's in Falmouth, Cornwall, one of the best venues on the circuit.

The first meeting of 1989 took place at the RICS headquarters on 27 January to consider participating in an event called "Celebration of British Food & Farming" which was to take place in Hyde Park later in the year. Henry Cave was looking

for volunteers. The spring meeting was at Chichester and the autumn meeting was at York where we shared the hotel with the visiting Australian Rugby League team "The Wallabies". These were far more boisterous and far more well built than the gentlemen cricketers from New Zealand. The minutes allege that I presented a paper on property management but I don't remember much about it.

At about this time Henry Cave of Powys made the very good point that as more than one county was involved in the branch it ought to be called the Counties Branch rather than the County Branch. Why had nobody thought of this before?

Spring 1990 saw us all at the Stakis Inn on The Avenue, Cardiff and the question on everybody's lips each morning was "Has your car been stolen today?" The autumn meeting of the now Counties Branch was at the Midland Hotel, Morecambe. This is a fine 1930s art deco property, which, at the time, was undergoing a substantial re-fit and refurbishment.

Unfortunately at the time of our meeting, the work had still a long way to go to completion. Morecambe itself was a deserted and desperately depressing place, particularly for someone who knew the resort in its heyday in the 1950s.

Spring 1991 saw most of us sloping off, somewhat shamefacedly, back to the Hotel St Michael's, Falmouth where a new item appeared on the Agenda. Local government reorganisation – again! For most members, the journey down to Cornwall represents substantial investment in time and distance travelled, a chore not to be undertaken too frequently. But it does make us all appreciate the effort that people like Mark Trinder, Brian Reeve-Fowkes and now Bob Perry put into their contributions to the Association. In October 1991 the meeting was organised by Alun Jones at the Seiont Manor Hotel, Llanrug, Caernarfon. I arrived at the rather nicely refurbished and renovated rural hotel at 7.30 on Wednesday evening 9 October only to leave at 7.30am on Thursday. My shortest Counties Branch meeting ever.



Bert Marshall

The Spring meeting of 1992 was at the Clifftops Hotel, Shanklin, Isle of Wight, and again, for some reason or other, I did not get there. The October meeting was at the Moat House Hotel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. At the AGM I was elected chairman of the Branch for 1992/93.

This meant that the next spring meeting would be in Suffolk and after many months of hectic preparations, the event took place in Felixstowe on 22 & 23 April 1993. Although the organisation of such events is a lot of hard work, you can, if you play your cards right, as I did, invite the political leadership to impress them and get them on your side. This I duly did and the Chairman and Leader were impressed both with the Association and with my involvement with it. A few days later, on 5 May 1993, they lost power in Suffolk for the first time in over 100 years.

From the Association's point of view, the main importance of Felixstowe was that the Branch began to consider its future arrangements more seriously and this led the way for, amongst other things, an increase in professional content and a tighter organisation at future meetings. Our autumn meeting was at the Hatton Court Hotel, Upton St Leonards, Gloucester which, in time, most of us were able to find.

In April 1994 we met at Aylesbury, and October saw us at the Wessex Hotel, Bournemouth. I remember that meeting well. Pulling into the car park at mid-morning on 21 October in my motor caravan, I realised that all my conference clothes and stuff was carefully hung up in a carrying case on the door of my bedroom, back in Suffolk, and that my motor caravan leisure gear might not be adequate. I just had time to walk down the hill into Bournemouth and get kitted out at Marks & Spencer. I didn't have time to find my usual tailor, Man at Oxfam.

In April 1995 we were back at the Forte Post House Hotel, York and greatly honoured by an official visit from the then President, down from Tayside Regional Council in Dundee, a genial Geordie who nowadays occupies himself as the ACES Editor. October 1995 meant that we were due to meet at the Palace Hotel, Torquay, a rather superb venue, at which my brand new motor caravan with less than 500 miles on the clock was broken into overnight whilst parked just outside the main door of the hotel. That was annoying enough, but it took from 8am until about 1.30pm to get the local police station to answer the telephone so that I could report what had happened.

Tony Schrier organised a wonderful conference at the Talbot Hotel, Oundle in October 1996. Oundle is a wonderful stone-built town and the hotel was an excellently refurbished property with a huge roaring log fire in the dining room. Very picturesque unless you have to sit about four feet away from it for an evening dinner!

The first of the newly combined national and Counties Branch meetings was at Harrogate in the spring of 1997 and the branch met again in the autumn at Shaftesbury.

In May 1998 the meeting was at the Abbotswell Hotel, Chester. I suspect that very few Counties Branch members have much memory at what took place at that meeting as all were keenly

anticipating the major presentation, in the afternoon, on Best Value, from the Suffolk Partnership^[1]. The autumn meeting took place in Mortonhampsted, Devon.

In March 1999 the braver members of the Counties Branch, or at least those with time on their hands, made the long journey north to the Marine Highland Hotel, Troon to another national/Counties ACES meeting superbly organised by Malcolm MacAskill. The lunchtime fire alarm, which had us all stood in the car park for half an hour, in shirtsleeves, enjoying the bracing westerly wind was a masterstroke. Autumn 1999 was Salisbury and having engaged the branch's interest in Best Value at the Chester meeting, the Suffolk Partnership was invited along to give a further presentation and update on the Suffolk Partnership and Best Value generally.

During the presentation I had a quick look at my notes to remind myself as to what was coming next and when I looked up most of the audience were on their feet heading towards the exit. Not a very inspiring sight when in mid-flow but the Chairman, Richard Lander, helpfully explained that a car alarm had just gone off outside and people were off to investigate. The Chairman quickly put matters into perspective.

"You only need get worried, Bert, if the audience is on its feet and walking towards you".

To sum up this odyssey rather neatly, the most recent meeting of the Counties Branch took place at Bury St Edmunds as part of the superlatively organised and very well received Suffolk 2000 conference.

My somewhat tenuous link with CLAVA, via the Counties Branch, came to an end at about that time. One by one the other three County Land Agent and Valuers of 1984, Chris Rowley in Cumbria, John Cook in Durham and Henry Cave at Powys had been restructured out of existence or had retired, leaving just me as the last County Land Agent and Valuer of all time until the axe fell on me too on the last day of December 2000.

Many people, over the years, have suggested that the Counties Branch, and its predecessors, is little more than a very comfortable gentlemen's social and travel club. This is, of course, absolutely correct and I have to say that I have enjoyed every minute of my fifteen-year journey around the nicest parts of England, Wales and Scotland.

Along the way, of course, some serious business has been done and I have always found that meetings are very time-consuming, stressful and need a high level of intellectual input.

But then again, if you believe that you'll believe anything.

Bert Marshall

¹ *An interesting historical note for members under fifty-five; the Suffolk Partnership was Betty Albon FRICS and Bert Marshall FRICS, the Dynamic Duo, who trod the boards for a few years only to disappear without trace and then re-emerge a few years later as President, Scribbler and PRO.*

PLUS FOURS AND TRILBY HATS

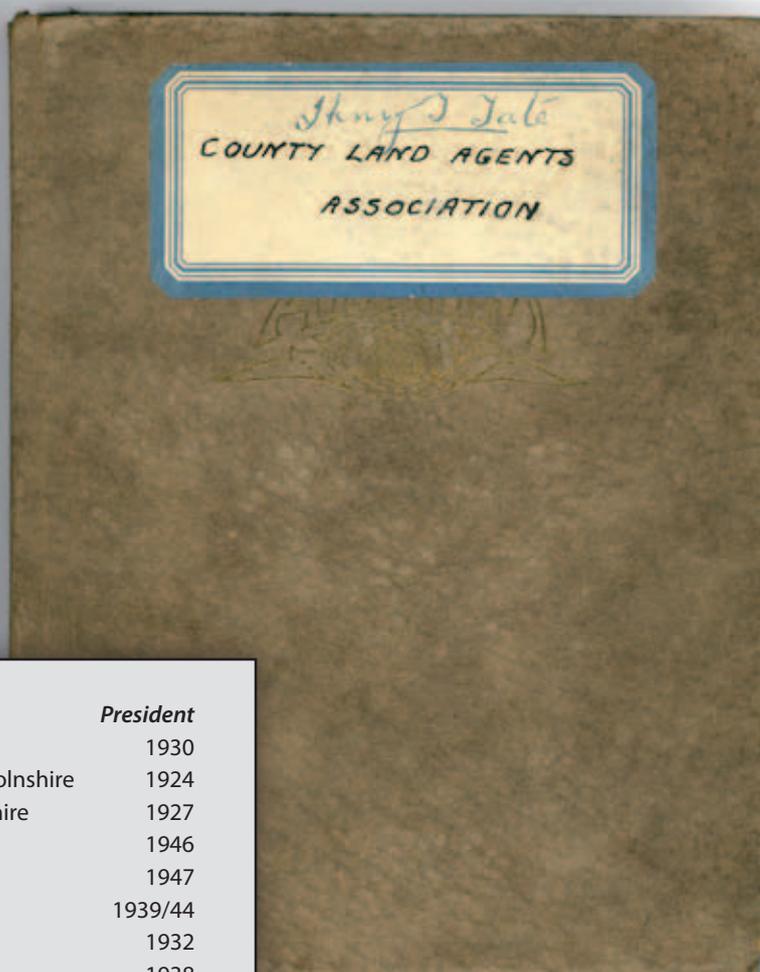
- Henry Tate

The history of CLAVA in pictures

Tate's Scrapbook

In 1911 Henry T Tate, County Land Agent for the East Riding of Yorkshire, was the third President of the new County Land Agents Association. By good fortune an album of photographs, taken some years after Tate's presidency, has survived to the present day. It contains wonderful photographs of CLAVA events from 1929 to 1947 and many of these are reproduced in the next few pages to give a flavour of CLAVA life before and after the Second World War.

Annotations in the album give names to some of the faces and, by cross-referencing to the list of CLAVA Presidents, we can identify their roles when President. Among the faces which appear on a regular basis and over many years are those of the people listed below.



<i>Key</i>	<i>Member</i>	<i>Council</i>	<i>President</i>
Bn	J BROUGHTON	Lancashire	1930
Ce	E J A CHRISTIE	Holland-Lincolnshire	1924
Cn	R A Every CLAYTON	Monmouthshire	1927
Cs	S H COLLINS	Berkshire	1946
DI	S DOUGILL	North Riding	1947
Es	Lieut Col T G ELLIS MBE	Norfolk	1939/44
Hg	Major C R HARDING	Surrey	1932
Hy	M T HEDLEY	Cheshire	1938
HI	E W HILL	Worcester	1922
Js	E R Puleston JONES	Montgomeryshire	1935
Kr	A P KER	Northumberland	1913
Om	Capt G M ODAM	Buckinghamshire	1925
Nn	J NICHOLSON	Middlesex	1937
Pd	Capt W J PULFORD	Shropshire	1931
Pn	Capt G L PAIN	Warwickshire	1929
Rn	W P RICHARDSON OBE	West Riding	1933
SI	A L SMALL	Kesteven, Lincolnshire	1945
Te	H T TATE	East Riding	1911
Wt	R Douglas WRIGHT	Cheshire	1926

1929: Malham



1934: *Felixstowe*



1935: *Aysgarth*



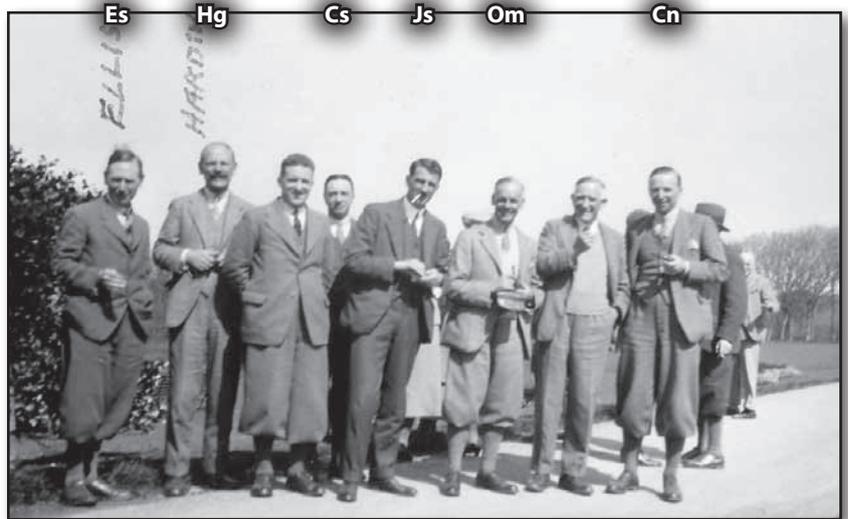
1935: *Aysgarth (Continued)*



1935: *St Ives*
(1935 is a guess from the position in the album.)



1935: *St Ives (Continued)*



1936: *Cheltenham*



1936: *Cheltenham* (Continued)

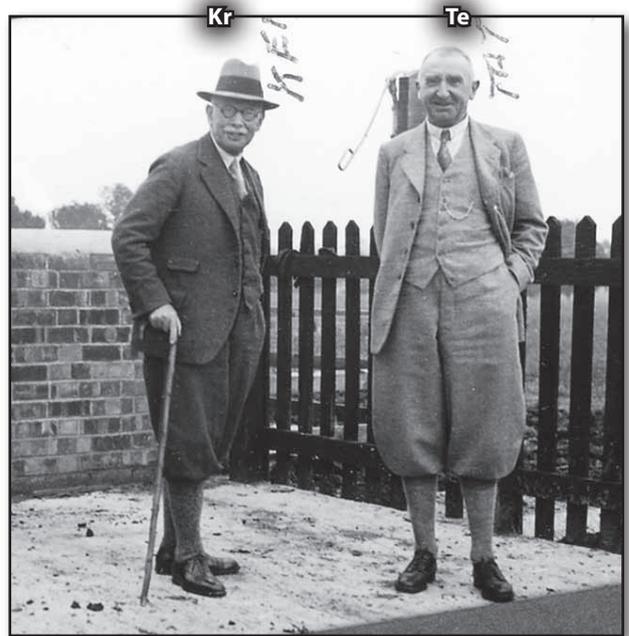


1936: *Gloucester*





In Tate's album the photograph above is titled **"Three Ridings and Captain Pain"**.



1939: *Spalding*

If you've looked closely at the earlier photographs you should by now be able to distinguish the features of Collins, Harding, Nicholson, Odam, Pain, Puleston Jones etc. in these photographs of Spalding and Litchfield



1937: *Litchfield*



1938: *Symonds Yat*



1938: *Tintern*



1939: *Norfolk*



1946: *Weymouth*



1947: *Spalding*

Right: Two old pals, Odam and Tate



194?: *Leyburn*

Year not specified but probably late 1940s.



HENRY TATE

Henry (or Harry) Tate's involvement with CLAVA seems to have lasted nearly forty years from 1911 when he was the third ever President to, at least, the late forties.

The photograph to the right shows Tate in his Plus Fours at the centre of a CLAVA group on a visit to Market Weighton in Tate's East Yorkshire.

In 1967 Harry Tate, one of the original members in 1908 (though not present at the inaugural meeting), initially County Land Agent for Hereford and later for the East Riding of Yorkshire, presented a cheque to the County Council to plant trees and possibly place additional seats at a well known beauty spot in Hereford. Harry Tate, who was then eighty five years of age, formally planted one of the trees which he had presented, as shown in the photograph below. Harry Tate, then 85, is third from the right.



Former LAVA secretary, Chris Rowley, identifies the man on the right as Bill Edwards (W H Edwards, Hereford & Worcester, CLAVA President 1976) and Bob Hearn at second from the right.

