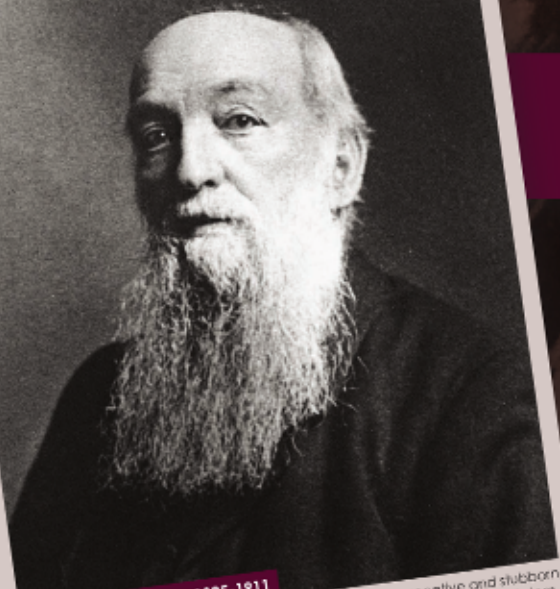


# John Robert Mortimer and Driffield



John Robert Mortimer 1825-1911

Though sometimes difficult and contrary, contentious, provocative and stubborn, Mortimer was a figure of humane grace, wide generosity and extensive wisdom. He was also a rather shy and humble man, though always brave-hearted and forceful in speaking up for the things he believed in.

## John Robert Mortimer, a founding father of British Archaeology.

From corn merchant to one of the founding fathers of modern-day British archaeology. That is the remarkable journey taken by John Robert Mortimer. Born in 1825 at Fimber, Mortimer moved to Driffield in 1869, becoming one of town's most important historical figures. He devoted much of his life to the excavation of prehistoric burial mounds and other archaeological features on the Yorkshire Wolds, eventually become a nationally recognised authority on the subject.

Mortimer was born into a world in which archaeology was not a recognised subject and had yet to capture the public imagination, but by the time of his death it had become so. Through his high standards and meticulous excavations, he helped to lay the foundations on which the subject came to be based.

Mortimer's archaeological work culminated in 1905 with the publication of *Forty Years' Researches in British and Saxon Burial Mounds of East Yorkshire*, with over 1000 illustrations by his eldest daughter Agnes.

Mortimer succeeded in preserving and documenting a vast amount of information about East Yorkshire's early history which, but for his work, would almost certainly have been lost to us.

"One of the founding fathers of modern-day British archaeology"



The grave of John Robert Mortimer, Bridlington Road cemetery

## Extract from Mortimer's Obituary by Thomas Sheppard, curator of Hull Municipal Museum.

There can be no question that in the death of Mr J.R. Mortimer, of Driffield, British archaeological science loses one of its leaders... Mr Mortimer's worth, however, was appreciated far beyond his own district, and it can safely be said that he held a leading place as an archaeologist, and was recognised as one of the greatest authorities on prehistoric antiquities... He probably did more towards unravelling the early history of the district in which he was born than has any other Englishman. Much as his work is appreciated to-day, it will unquestionably be more and more appreciated as time goes on. His loss is much greater than most people imagine.

The Eastern Morning News 22 August 1911



St John's Villa, St John's Road

Mortimer moved from Fimber to Driffield in April 1869, following his marriage to Matilda Mitchell. St John's Villa was the family home 1869-88.



The Mortimer Museum of Archaeology and Geology, Lockwood Street, c.1900

Built to design by the architect William Hawe, Mortimer commissioned this building in 1878 to house his collection of geological specimens, archaeological objects and ethnographic material. It was described at the time as containing a 'collection which can only be matched with that in the British Museum'.

The collection was bought in 1913 by Colonel G.H. Clarke and presented to Hull Museums, where it is now housed in the Hull and East Riding Museum. In 2011 a blue plaque was fixed to the Grade II listed building to mark the centenary of Mortimer's death.



Mortimer in the archaeological gallery of the Lockwood Street museum, c.1900



16 Middle Street South

The office premises of Mortimer's corn merchant business 1869-1920.



East Lodge, Eastgate South

The Mortimer family home 1901-11. It was here that John Robert Mortimer died on 19 August 1911. This house, which was demolished in the 1950s, stood in what is now Parkwell Gardens.



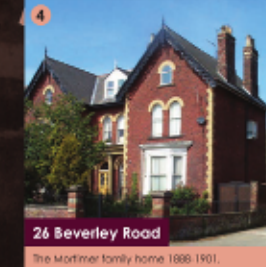
River Head

The warehouse alongside the Driffield Navigation basin was first rented by Mortimer in the early 1870s and is still used by the company today. The offices next door were first occupied in the 1930s before that the business operated from 16 Middle Street South.



The Mallings, Skerne Road

Warehousing and mill kilns built by Mortimer in 1871 for his business activities. There was also a private railway siding linking into the Hull-Bridlington railway line.



26 Beverley Road

The Mortimer family home 1869-1901.



River Head by Agnes Mortimer



Driffield  
Capital of the Wolds

A brief Mortimer chronology

