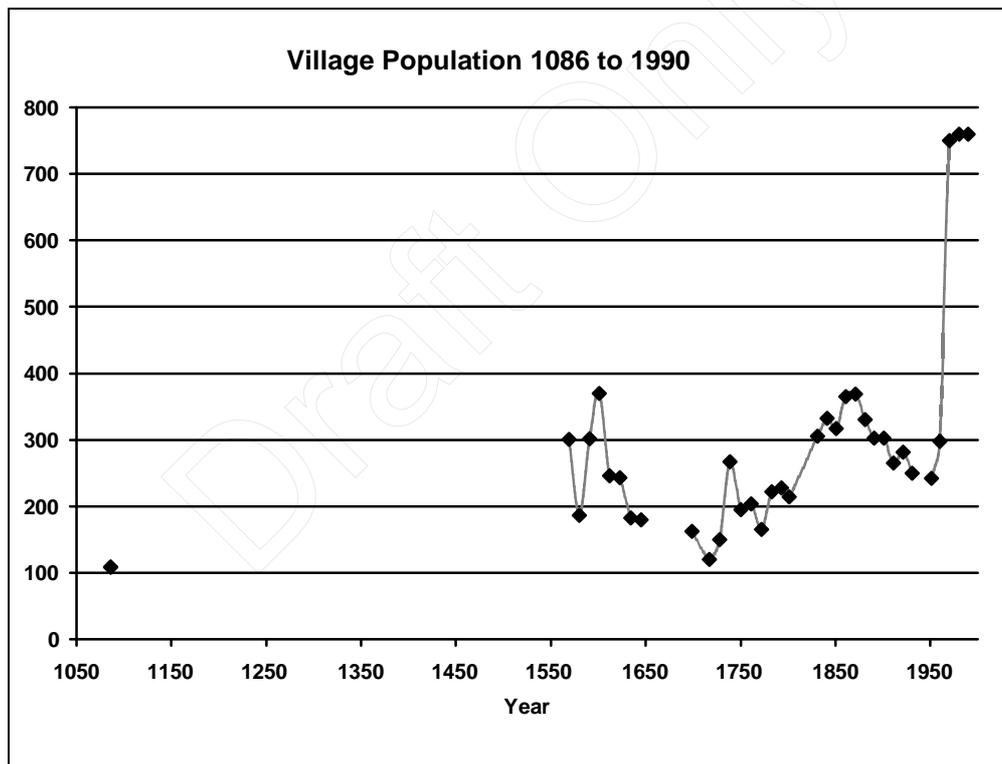


# The People of Great Houghton

## Village Population

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The population records of the village are reasonably complete and are shown on the graph below. With occasional interruptions the statistics have been well maintained, but some of the unusual dips on the graph can be explained by poor record keeping. For example, the dip in population around 1580 was probably due to a lack of diligence on the part of the local priest. In the 1700s the area was very strongly parliamentarian and non-conformist. As a result the parish register was not a complete record of village inhabitants.



**Figure 1 - Graph showing village population taken from parish registers and official census (first official census was 1801).**

The population of the village remained between 200 to 300 people until most recent times when new housing development took place within the village. The last two points on the graph were predictions which have not materialised

as no further large scale building has occurred within the village during the last ten years or so leaving the population steady at around 760 people.

Around the turn of the century the population declined for two main reasons:

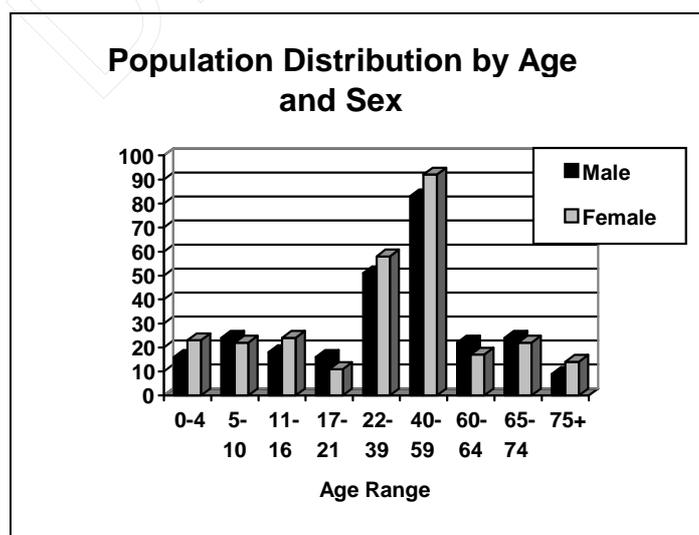
- (i) Forty plus cottages were demolished but only twenty replacements were built;
- (ii) The development of Northampton caused people to move in to the town.

This second point is quite the reverse of current trends - we await the reversal which will no doubt happen.

The population of the village soared with the significant building programme that took place in the 1970s to 1990. The willingness of people to travel more than ten miles to work (a situation mainly brought about by motor car ownership and good roads) was a boon for developers who exploited people's desire to live in the country. Villages were developed and re-developed, although Great Houghton maintained its village identity with somewhat controlled expansion.

### *Population Survey Results*

The survey carried out in 1993 helps us to understand the current demographic make up of the village. Because the questionnaires were not returned by everybody the total numbers shown are not accurate, but the result can be assumed to be representative.



This graph shows the age distribution of the village population. The appearance of the graph is deceptive because the age bands used by the survey computer program are of differing durations. It is clear though that most of the population appear in the 22-39 and 40-59 age bands and that there are relatively few retired people or people close to retirement age. There are also relatively few young people. These factors are consistent with the influx of new property owners over the last ten to twenty years. In fact 73% of the population have lived in the village less than fifteen years. In twenty years time the number of retired people in the village can be expected to be double that of today. Even if allowance is made for people moving away from the village, there is bound to be a significant rise in the average age of the village population. We will need to plan ahead - for example there will probably be an increased demand for local services and for public transportation.

## Occupations - Past and Present.

Until relatively recently the occupations of the village people will have largely been associated with the local needs of providing a basic living for the family and the inhabitants will have followed the trades and professions necessary to sustain rural life. If the clock is turned back far enough the basic need of the villagers was for survival and centred on food, clothing and keeping warm.

The manorial records of 1341 infer that there were two millers in the village but the first records of occupations in the register of Deaths occur in 1692, recording a labourer, a yeoman, a mason and a tailor. Between 1613 and 1646 the record of baptisms gives a good cross section of occupations adding Husbandmen, Milliner, Gentlemen, Carpenters, Clerks, Labourers, Shepherds and a Schoolmaster to those above. The schoolmaster mentioned was John Willonbed who was also a churchwarden and the Village Constable. He apparently continued to make records for the succeeding Village Constables who were illiterate. The shepherds would have been working the newly enclosed areas created in 1612 by the Enclosure Act and the labourers outnumbered other trades by about three to one.

In the eighteenth century the registers make reference to the 'Woad People' who were believed to be itinerant workers although they were in the village from 1707 to 1755. Mention is also made of Mill-rights, Graziers, Woolmakers, Weavers and Shoemakers all suggesting a rural industry of limited agriculture and animal husbandry, leading to the production of handmade dyed cloth, clothes and shoes which may have been taken to the famed Scarletwell where merchants took their cloths.

The early nineteenth century records begin to show an extension of the various trades to include Farmers, Carpenters, Cooper, Grocer, Lace Dealer, Wheelwright, Butcher, Shopkeepers, Publican and Gardener. This would suggest that an element of trading from fixed shops was becoming established to support the village and vice-versa.

The latter part of the nineteenth century brings even more trades and reflects the developing industries such as shoe making requiring Closers, Blackers, Finishers, Cordwainers and Makers which accounted for up to 30 people. Most shoemakers worked independently or in small groups and were known as the 'outdoor men' until the shoe sewing machines were invented taking workers into factories. They would carry their unfinished shoes to be 'closed' in large baskets to Northampton before returning to finish them for sale. The coming of the railway saw the number of associated workers rise from none to 28 in 1871 when the railway was being built, and subsequently falling again when the work was completed, although many must have been 'lodgers' for the duration of the construction. The Rushmills paper mill employed up to 10 people, and within the village there were 23 Domestic Servants in 1871 with others being classed as Laundress, Charwoman, Coachman, Groom and Gardener, all supporting the local 'gentry'. The cloth trade was in decline but Lacemaker, Needlewoman, Dressmaker and Straw Bonnet Maker were all recorded. Agriculture employed the majority of people with Farmers, Labourers, Dairyman, Dairymaid, Shepherd, Grazier, Drover and Pig Dealer all being essential to the local industry employing almost 50 people at one time. Other trades included Plumber, Schoolteacher, Tollgate Keeper, Brewer, Publican, Brickmaker, Bricklayer, Mason, Carrier and Carter, Hammerman, Engine Driver, Fireman, Clergyman, Brushmaker, Cabinetmaker and Ratcatcher. Many people had at least two jobs such as the Tollgate Keeper who also was a boot maker and the Lacemaker who was also a scholar.

The coming of more mechanisation saw the decline of the local cottage industries in favour of the more industrialised factories concentrating labour in the towns and cities. Northampton was no exception and the boot and shoe industries flourished, as did the cloth trade to some extent employing people from the villages who were able to take full benefit of the cheap transport to get into the town. Agriculture in various forms still flourished as it depended upon the land and continued to employ village people although with increasing mechanisation, it required less people as time went on.

In the latter part of the 20th and the early 21st centuries the village has become essentially a dormitory village with very few employed within the village itself. The Prep School employs teachers, helpers and cleaners etc and is probably the largest employer. An Architects office is established in the High Street, and the Shop and Public Houses employ a few people. Gardening in its

various forms, from the supply of plants to grass cutting and weeding is an occupation taken up by others. A building company, Morris Brothers, was established in 1961 and grew to employ about 70 men at one time. It is slightly less than one third the size now and carries out building projects within the village but the main work is outside the village.

A significant proportion of the village has reached retirement age, which is indicative of the changes within the village over the past few decades. Unfortunately the questionnaire in 1993 didn't include an 'occupation' question as it was considered to be an intrusion of privacy so the complete picture of 'who does what' will have to wait until the census returns are made public

## *Farming*

No matter what industry and occupations have come and gone over the centuries in and around the village, farming has been maintained. From the days of strip farming, until enclosure in 1612 it has flourished and still flourishes.

Farming has of course changed dramatically from being labour intensive to being mechanically orientated. Farming moved from families having a bullock or a pig, certainly a limited amount of livestock, to being an organised business. The records show that there has been a continuing list of farmers within the parish. The range of crops and variety of breeds of livestock has grown considerably, particularly since the United Kingdom joined the European Community. This has meant that farmers have to be flexible with the ability to react to changing situations.

The parish supports both arable and livestock farming. It is an extremely good grazing area, the wider stretch being known as the golden valley. Livestock farming has however diminished. Once the pastures between Northampton and Olney supported twenty five dairy herds. Now there are none. Beef is still raised and fattens well, possibly due to the herbage, sorrel etc. in the grazing which promotes good health and a balanced diet. In centuries past cattle were walked from Wales to this area for fattening. This still happens today but the method of transport has improved. Irish cattle were also brought over for fattening. The development of the railway played a large part in the transportation of livestock with the cattle being walked from Northampton station to the fields around Great Houghton.

Farming seems to be very much a family affair with successive generations continuing the farming tradition. This is certainly true of the present farmers local to the village.

Until recent times there were farms within the village itself. There was the Jones' farm, a model dairy farm, with Mr Jones, a little Welshman delivering milk around the village. There was Lime Farm, farmed by a Mr Courtman, a tall man who milked a few cows and had his fields to the south of the village. 'Italian Joe' was a prisoner-of-war who worked on Lime Farm and stayed on after the war becoming one of the characters of the village.

The Houghton Game Farm reared thousands of chicks and fully-grown birds for market and also young pheasants for stocking woodlands but recently has reduced the number of birds being bred.

The Jones farm, Grange Farm, stood opposite The Green, just south of Paget Close. Lime Farm, as one would expect, stood on the site of the present road Lime Farm Way. Both these farms have been replaced by housing, the remaining farms now being on the periphery of the village.



Aerial picture of Grange Farm and Lime Farm in the 1960s

Talking with the local farmers the conclusion can be drawn that true farmers are livestock men with mixed farming, by necessity, being their preferred option in the present environment. The influence of the European Common

Market has been a mixed blessing for the beef and dairy farmer. For beef it has been particularly detrimental, whereas arable farming has been enhanced.

Arable farming of course has seen a great reduction in manpower requirements in more recent times with 600 acres being managed by two men. Some years ago it used to take two men plus to manage a mere 250 acres.

The local farmers who farm crops, hay etc. do not confine their farming to the immediate village area, but also farm fields some distance from the village. Also, of course, not all the fields adjacent to the village are farmed by local people. This situation can only prevail because of the mobility of modern farm machinery.

The following table shows farms local to the village community :

<b>Farm</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Within Parish Boundary?</b>	<b>Within Ecclesiastical Boundary?</b>	<b>Type of Farming</b>
<b>Saucebridge Farm</b>		4	4	Arable and livestock. Store beef (cows with followers)
<b>Lodge Farm</b>			4	Arable and livestock (fattening beef)
<b>The Leys Farm</b>	Leys Lane		4	Hay, straw & livestock (Fattening beef), sheep & horses.
<b>Houghton Game Farm</b>	Leys Lane		4	Game fowl and other birds - peacocks, geese, ducks, quail & chickens
<b>Martins Farm</b>	Bedford Road	4	4	Livestock, beef, sheep & horses (livery)
<b>New Lodge Farm</b>	Bedford Road		4	Livestock (fattening beef only)

Both Lodge Farm and New Lodge Farm together with Houghton Game Farm are in the Ecclesiastical Parish but since the boundary changes of 1974 which incorporated the Parish into the Borough they are technically no longer in the political Parish.

The Leys Farm is in the Parish of Little Houghton but its only access is from Great Houghton.

## Some Village Families

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Every person within a village makes a contribution however small and apparently insignificant. However some families have had a marked influence on the development of the community and it is appropriate to mention some, although it would be inappropriate to mention those still living, and who may continue to make even greater contributions. The list is by no means complete, as space will not permit comprehensive comment on all those who have made significant contributions during the past few hundred years. However we must apologise to anyone who is not mentioned here but their contribution has been well received and we have all benefited from their efforts.

### *Tresham*

The Treshams owned a manor in Great Houghton and at the beginning of the seventeenth century were charging tenants at the rate of £6-6s-8d per 'yardland' per year. Only 6/8d was paid in the form of an annual rent and the rest in advance by fines, which apparently the tenants expected.

The Treshams grew short of money and proposed to increase the value of their properties across the county. The Great Houghton Manor and Rectory had an annual value of £309 and Sir Francis Tresham planned to increase it to £500 and incorporate an enclosure plan, but this could not be done without 'the over-throw of the town'. At the time there were twelve farms on the manor and the tenants were paying the equivalent of 4/8d per acre. The plan fell through when his son Thomas, of the Gun Powder plot fame, told him that not more than two tenants would give above 5/- an acre and warned him of the danger of 'decaying the whole village' especially as 'you are neare Northampton whose affections are well known to you...'

Finally the village was enclosed and in 1633 eight farms were ordered to be restored. Thus the actions of the Treshams could well have destroyed the entire village.

### *Atterbury*

The Atterbury family can be traced back to the 16th century, and it has a fascinating history.

They held a manor in Great Houghton, which had descended from Richard Houghton through Felicia, his heiress, who married John Warwick about the year 1400, and left a sole heiress Joanna. She married William Park, and the

property passed through four generations of the Park family before coming to an heiress Isabella. Isabella married John Atterbury about the middle of the 16th Century.

John, who was buried at Great Houghton in 1588, had four children. In his Will he left a bequest to maintain the church bells and highway. His eldest son, Lewis, became Lord of the Manor of Houghton Magna sometime during his lifetime. On his death in 1631 it passed to his widow, and on her death it was passed on to Lewis's youngest son, Francis.

It appears that all the Atterbury offspring were highly educated, and Francis was educated at Magdalene College, Oxford and gained B.A. and M.A. degrees by the time he was 22 years old. He married three times and fathered 16 children, 4 of whom died in infancy. His eldest son, Lewis, born in 1631 also gained B.A. and M.A. degrees at Christ Church, Oxford. He inherited the Manor of Great Houghton, which in turn was passed on to be shared by his two sons, Lewis and Francis.

It was this Francis, born in 1662, who was to become Bishop Atterbury and later, in 1713, the famous Bishop of Rochester. Bishop Atterbury moved greatly within the highest society in the land including royalty, and was considered to be the best preacher of his day. Among his intimate friends were Addison, Gay, Prior, Pope, and Swift. Although not a Roman Catholic he had sympathy for and leanings towards the Jacobite cause which resulted in his committal to the Tower of London on a charge of high treason. Despite making a memorable defence he was condemned and sentenced to be deprived of all his ecclesiastical offices and banished for life from the realm. He lived in Belgium and France and became a leader among the Jacobite refugees until his death in 1732. His body was brought back and buried 'very privately' in Westminster Abbey.

A book was written about him in 1909 and in more recent times he was the subject of a talk given to the Birmingham and Midland Institute and also to the Wolverton and District Historical Society.

He fathered two children - his beloved daughter Mary, and a son named Osborn, who, in his younger days, was said to be a strange man, enjoying lowly company. Later he seems to have had a change of heart for he entered the ministry and was ordained Rector of Great Houghton in 1742. His wife bore him nine children, all baptised at Great Houghton, but four did not survive beyond a few months.

Records show that Job Atterbury, a near relative of the Houghton family, emigrated to America, and his two sons set up very successful businesses in several cities. There are still many Atterburys living in various parts of

Northamptonshire who are undoubtedly direct descendants of this interesting family.

### *Dobson*

Mr Dobson was born in Warrington and after moving to Liverpool in his younger days, was a fine athlete. On his return from the First World War, when his experiences included being torpedoed at Galipolii and a tour of Egypt, he moved to Great Houghton, living at No 51 The High Street. He became Headmaster of Little Houghton Church of England School in 1924 where he continued until he retired in 1956. The school served both Great and Little Houghton, as it does today. Some can still remember walking to school with him across the fields. He lived in Great Houghton until the 1940s and then moved to Little Houghton.

Mr Dobson was a very sociable man and became very involved with almost every club and organisation in the village. He belonged to the Men's Institute, serving on their committee and opening debates with the WI; he was the Group Scoutmaster for a long time, he was a special constable during the Second World War and a sergeant in the Home Guard.

He was the instigator of the schools athletic competitions for Northampton and district which was held annually at Timkens sports ground and at which the school always performed very well. He was the Captain of the Cricket team, a member of the 'Pride of Houghton' Oddfellows lodge, a Church Warden and Treasurer, a founder member and first secretary of the British Legion. He also held the post of Clerk to the Great Houghton Parish Council for a great number of years.

Whilst walking home after a meeting of the Great Houghton Parish Council he was involved in a traffic accident on the Bedford Road, sustaining injuries from which he sadly died. The naming of one of our roads after him perpetuates his memory and honours the dedicated work he gave over many years to both parishes.

### *The Vicars of the Village*

Most of the clergy have left their mark on the village and influenced life to a greater or lesser extent.

The Reverend Theophilus Goodfellow was responsible for the rebuilding of the church, which still stands today as a memorial to his untiring efforts. His wife also left a legacy which created the Goodfellow trust providing some support for the deserving and needy of the village for many years.

The Reverend William Henry Spencer served the village from 1871 to 1900. He was related to both the Spencer family and the Churchills and was the youngest son of a very famous family - the Dukes of Marlborough. He was born in Blenheim and graduated at Christchurch Oxford before finally settling in Great Houghton.

Isaac Woodhams who was here from 1900 to 1916 played a big part in the education scene. He would visit the schools on a regular basis and if children weren't in attendance he would find out why. If the reason was that their parents couldn't afford the 1d per week, he would pay it for them.

The Reverend Caple Cure was a very much loved man who was sadly missed.

In recent years the Reverend Gorsuch, even though blind, left his mark on the village.

### *The Gilpins*

The Gilpins were an eccentric family. Mr Gilpin, the father, was originally a jeweller in Rugby but he decided on a change of occupation, moving with his family to a farm in St. Neots. It was from there that the family - father, mother and three sons - came to live in Great Houghton having bought the "Old Farmhouse" and its grounds in Cherry Tree Lane.



When mother died, a housekeeper was taken on who had her own living quarters in the house. After the death of Mr Gilpin the sons, Percy, Walter and Harold continued to work the market garden business that the family had developed.

However, Percy also took work as a window dresser (a trade in which he was trained) for Nestlé, the chocolate company. He travelled the country by train staying in Temperance hotels and posting postcards home daily telling the family of his movements and

whereabouts. He was away a week at a time, leaving home on a Sunday evening and returning the following Saturday morning.

Harold was a gardener who plied his trade locally. Walter, nicknamed “Konk” on account of his large boney nose, tended the market garden, growing a variety of vegetables. He would take his produce into Northampton, principally in the Rushmere area, selling door-to-door, with his faithful old horse, Dolly, pulling the cart. When Dolly got too old for this, Walter took his vegetables by push-bike to his customers and when Walter got beyond riding his bike he pushed it. When Dolly died she was buried in the grounds, her cart always remaining where she was last un-harnessed.

Percy courted a lady in the village whom Harold stole and married. This led to a parting of the ways, Harold and Percy not speaking to each other again. Harold moved away from the family home to a house at the top end of the High Street. He would regularly and secretly visit Walter but would leave should Percy's presence threaten.



Percy wrote many poems in his spare time which are poignant, sensitive and enjoyable. Walter, not to be outdone, also wrote poetry.

The brothers were undoubtedly eccentric. Percy was never seen about the village during the day. He walked the village at night huddled in coat and balaclava. Walter bartered with his fruit and veg. for hay and straw for Dolly.

The three brothers have now passed on, all the victims of cancer and with them passed a chapter into village history.

Their house was cleared for a nominal fee: no doubt someone the recipient of some bargain treasures. The house and land were sold and the area was redeveloped: the farmhouse was modernised and houses were built on the land.

A Peom by Walter Gilpin

*Now there was an old man and his old steed  
Who carried veg' and fruit, his good folk to feed.  
His name was Gilpin and his old mare Dol'  
They came from Houghton village on the knoll.  
"Donkey's" years he did this without a break  
Keeping good time, for his customers' sake.  
Rain or shine, he always tried to turn up  
If only to say "how-do" and just have a "cup".  
Though the variety he carried was not very great  
Those "coppers" he had often kept him out late.  
As the years passed by, he became no stranger*

*But, by the younger motoring generation he stood in great danger,  
So not wishing to "pass-out" before his time  
He thought it wise to "pack-up" and live sublime.  
With sorrow, seeing things develop to this uncertain state  
Prompted him to seek some safety, before too late.  
So thanking "one and all", who have been so good at heart  
There has come the time when one must part.  
So it's just adieu', but not farewell,  
Though from now on, he will have nought to sell.*

A Poem by Percy Gilpin

JUNE THE FIRST

*Come June the First - with beauty to fill the Earth  
Long have we waited for that true blue sky;  
Though May was sweet, it passed yesterday  
And those chilly winds we hope went too, which oft chilled our mirth.  
But of lovely flowers there really was no dearth.  
Overhead the swallows now fly  
And, viewing Earth's fair beauty, wonder why  
They stayed so long in lands of less worth:  
And the lark mounts up to greet the day  
Forgetful of last winter's wet and cold.  
At evening the nightingale sings its lay  
To charm us to slumber as of old.  
Ah! Sweetest month, if you could but stay  
Too soon the tale of these Glad Days are told.*

### *The Stontons*

We repeat here the actual words of Mrs Stonton as she remembered the village and its people. Clearly this family had an influence on the village.

In 1849 The Hall was altered and my maternal great grandmother was the caretaker whilst the alterations took place. My grandmother was eight years old at the time. She used to come up every day to see that the home in Willow Lane was alright because her father (John Dunkly) was away from home farming at Holcot. That farm was owned by his brother, Charles, who farmed at the Old Farm House that is now called The Manor.

My paternal grandfather, Thomas Stonton, walked over from Northampton most Sundays. Then all our family would walk around the village and fields and learn about the natural world. My grandmother would not go on the train ever because they had taken her cottage (where the bridge now stands in

Willow Lane) to build the railway. My pleasures were Great Houghton village based, though I did go on school outings.

The Honourable Reverend William Spencer (Rector 1872-1900) was 92 years old when he died. During his incumbency a new curate arrived. He found that he had to take the service, but, oh dear, his shoes needed repairing. Despite it being Sunday, he went to my grandfather, Thomas Barker, to have them repaired. My grandfather at first refused because it was Sunday and in those days you did not do jobs of work on Sundays. After a lot of persuasion he agreed to help the curate by mending his shoes.

My mother, Sarah Barker, was at one time in service in Market Harborough. My father walked the eighteen miles from Great Houghton to visit her every other Sunday. They would go for a walk together. He caught the train from Market Harborough to Northampton and then walked back to the village. The alternate Sundays he walked to Towcester and back to visit relatives.



the groom. Also, she went on certain days scrubbing at The Rectory. She was on her knees from 8:00am until 6:00pm for 1 shilling and thruppence (less than seven pence in today's money).

My mother was also in service at The Hall as a parlour maid. Being in service meant you not only worked at a house but you lived there also. When she was twenty years old she had to come home to look after her mother, Maria Barker. She continued to earn money by doing the washing from The Rectory and from The Hall. This was brought up to her, probably by

When I was ten years old I began to look after Gwyneth Dobson on Saturday mornings while Mrs Dobson went shopping. Also on Thursday evenings so that Mrs Dobson could catch the bus into Northampton to go to the Royal Theatre to see the weekly repertory productions.



Picture shows:

Frederick Stonton 1883-1968

Sarah (nee Barker) 1885-1968

Ada Maria 1912-1981

Thomas Frederick 1917-1982

Alice Margaret 1919-

Not shown George Arthur 1923 -

## *Seatons*

John Seaton was born in Blisworth in about 1844 and settled in Great Houghton in a house in Main Street having married Charlotte who was born in the village in 1843. He was a shoemaker by trade and they had five children.

The eldest son, Walter kept the shop and Brewhouse called 'The Old House at Home' until it burnt down on the fateful night of November 5<sup>th</sup> 1914 after which he became the Landlord of The Old Cherry Tree for the next 35 years - the longest any landlord has ever served. He also kept a horse and cart and was the local parcel carrier operating between Great Houghton and Wood Street (the entrance to the Grosvenor Centre off Abington Street). Locals could rely on him for a lift to and from Northampton.

Another son Henry, who was also a shoemaker, had 11 children and in 1919, the Seaton family dominated the village school at Great Houghton. Pictured below are five of the 11 Seaton children. They are, John (far left back row), Marjory (third from

right back row), Vera, born 1909 (far left middle row), Florence, born 1915 (fourth from right front row) and Percy, born 1914 (fifth from right front row). Also pictured is their cousin, Mabel Masters, (second from left back row), later Mrs Brunt who was landlady of The Old Cherry Tree.



All the children eventually moved away from the village after the second world war but have been the subject of a number of local press reports. Only two are still living but their families live on in various parts of the country.

Charles Seaton was a village cricket umpire in the late 1920s and also member of the Parish Council who stood up for the village folk against the dominant 'upper class' who attempted to promote their ways in the early days of the Parish Council.

There is a typical story of families coming to the village, being part of it, contributing and finally moving on as many others have done in the past and many will in the future.

Many other families have influenced the village and their exclusion from this document is due to space limitation is no reflection of their contribution to village life.

## Village Memories

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We all remember 'The Good Old Days' and Great Houghton Village is no exception. Some of the more 'Senior' members of the community were asked during the 1990s to tell their thoughts and recollections of the village as they remembered it from their childhood and later on in life. Some go back to before the 1920s and others are a little more recent. The list of tales which can be told is almost endless but a few have been selected for inclusion here.

### *Some Village Memories*

One year there was an eclipse of the sun and it came over total blackness so people lit their candles and most automatically drew their curtains. After an hour the light returned and my mother became worried about Mr and Mrs John Atkins who lived at Number 30 Willow Lane so she went to see if they were alright. Mrs Atkins was pacing up and down carrying her candle moaning that the end of the world had come!

Miss M Stonton

### *The Goodfellow Charity*

This used to be given out on December 21 at the Rectory. The Rector and Churchwardens would sit at the Rectory and people had to go and state their case for receiving this benefit. It was given out on merit

Miss M Stonton

Mr Walter Seaton from The Old Cherry Tree (having moved there when his shop in Little Lane was burned down in November 1914) kept a horse and cart and was the parcel carrier. He operated between Great Houghton and the big hotel on Wood Street in Northampton (where the Midland bank (HSBC) now stands). My mother would walk into town pushing her pram - if Mr Seaton came along she'd get a lift home in the carrier cart.

Mrs M Irons

Lane End was a shop with an entrance in Little Lane. Gradually more goods were available after the 1914-1918 War. This shop was also a smallholding growing vegetables and they kept one or two cows. I think they sold milk. The family's name was Smith. When they left the shop it became the Co-op, with Mrs Elizabeth Wade as Manageress. I well remember the excitement of going with my mother to collect a tin of biscuits, which must have been a form of dividend.

The Tuesday Man. Between the Wars the "Tuesday Man" pushed a big wicker cart from Northampton to Great Houghton. It had one wheel at the front and two wheels at the back. It had a wicker lid and a piece of American cloth over the top so that things didn't get wet. He sold oddments like cottons and soap powder etc. He was a German, probably remaining after being a prisoner of war. On Thursdays he pushed his cart to Brafield, presumably being known there as the "Thursday Man"!

Mrs B Letts.

We walked across the fields to Little Houghton School four times a day, the older children caring for the younger ones. If it was wet when we left school in the afternoon we used the "old bacon box" - one of the first buses to come along the road to serve the village. It was run by Knights of Denton.

Mrs M Irons.

My mother, Sarah Barker, was in service at The Hall as a parlour maid. Being in service meant you not only worked at a house but you lived there also. When she was twenty years old she had to come home to look after her mother (Maria Barker).

She continued to earn money by doing the washing from The Rectory and from The Hall. This was brought up to her, probably by the groom. Also, she went on certain days scrubbing at The Rectory. She was on her knees from 8.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. for 1s 3d.

Miss M Stonton.

Shops only sold the bare necessities, like soap, candles, flour, matches and so on. As a child I remember the shop at The Hill end of Little Lane. You can still see the stone step. The thatch of this shop was set alight by a firework in 1914 and the premises gutted.

Mrs B Letts.

The bakehouse was up Cook's yard (so called because a Mrs Cook lived and kept a shop where Nos 45 and 45A High Street now stand). The bakehouse was behind but almost adjoining No.49 High Street. On Sundays those families who could afford a Sunday roast took the partly cooked meat, with the Yorkshire pudding round it, to be cooked in the bakehouse oven.

Margaret Irons

I had a new bike when I was fourteen to go to work. I cycled with my friend Rene and others. When the floods were out by The Britannia we would beg a lift in the back of a passing lorry. Also when the roads were too icy to ride, we used to walk, a whole crowd of us and have a good sing-song along the way. Happy days!

Mrs M Irons.

My father came to Great Houghton from Northampton when he was nineteen years old to work at The Hall as under gardener. He lodged at The Hill, along with the groom from The Hall. My father asked for a rise of an extra shilling a week on top of the fifteen shillings paid to him. He was told that he was not worth it, so he went to work for Tom Smith at Lane End for £1 per week.

Miss M Stonton.

I left school when I was 14 years old, the day the school in Cracknuts closed. I straight away started work as a dress machinist for 7s 6d per week, making ladies dresses. This was at Wilkinsons along Talbot Road in Northampton. The hours were 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

I cycled to work and there was always someone in front and behind and only a few cars.

It was my parents who decided I was not going to work in a shoe factory despite the pay being more, but I was to do something useful.

Mrs B Letts.

When my mother Annie Kilsby went to school at the corner of Cherry Tree Lane, you had to pay a penny per week.

The Reverend Isaac Woodhams went on Monday morning to see which children were in school. He would visit the homes of those who were not at school, to ask why. If the parents had not sent them due to poverty he would pay the penny for the week.

The Reverend Isaac Woodhams was Rector and a teacher who taught foreign students at the Rectory where he took in boarders.

Mrs B Letts.

### *Memories of the Home Guard*

I was in it before I went in the Forces, but we did not have the uniforms then nor enough rifles etc to go round. We used to meet at the old school.

I remember the morning when the Wellington bomber crashed at the top of Gold Street. My father, Mr B.Morris heard a plane, went out and saw a parachute coming down in the fields near Ox - hovel. At that time we did not know what nationality. Anyway, my father and I went down to Ox-hovel, saw an Air-man coming towards

the hovel. We kept out of his sight until he was close enough to challenge. I believe he was a French Canadian. At that time my father had 303 rifle trained on him and he did not seem able to understand. We took him to Mr F.Muuroe's house, who did the necessary after that.

George Morris

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