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# LIVING IN LAXTON

A Snapshot in Time:  
Laxton in Peace and War, 1900–1920



CYNTHIA BARTLE

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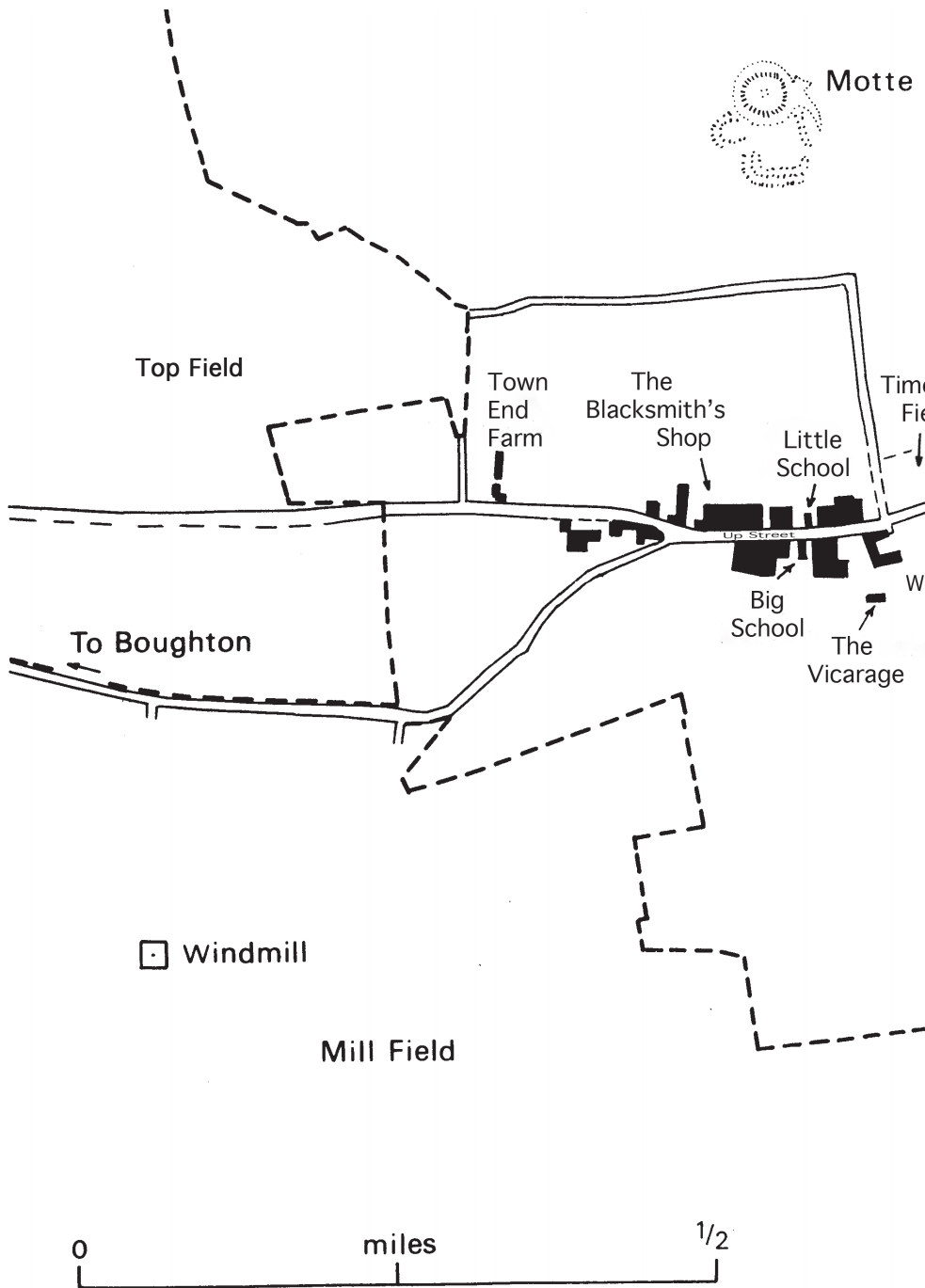
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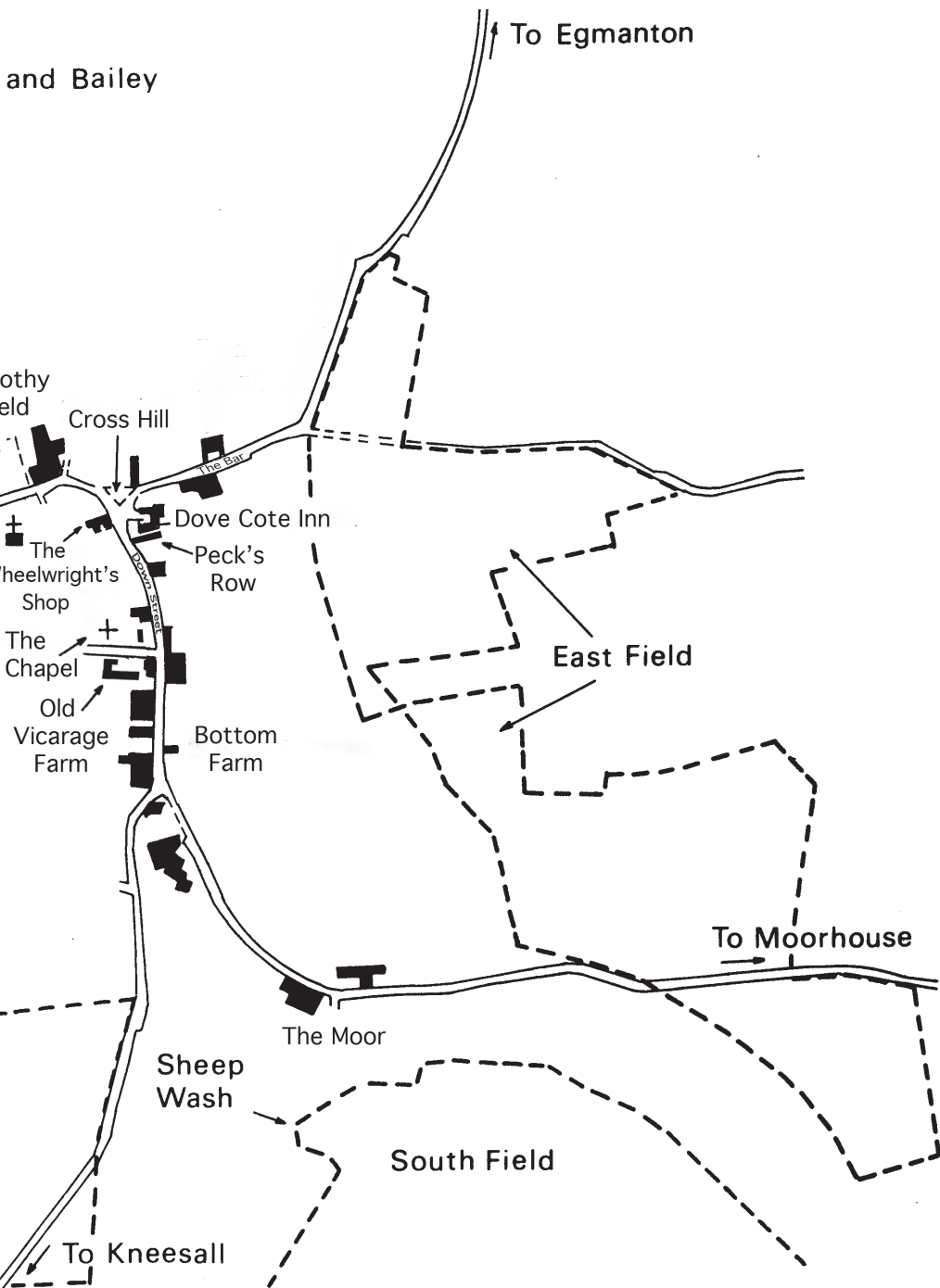
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and Bailey



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IF ANYTHING PASSES  
YOU BY ON THE ROAD  
IT WON'T BE A NOISY  
LORRY OR A FOUR  
BY FOUR, BUT THE  
SQUEAKING WHEELS OF  
A HORSE DRAWN CART

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# IMAGINE THE SCENE

Today, you are standing on Cross Hill, with your back resting against the Jubilee lime tree planted in the middle of the grass triangle.

Imagine the scene in 1900! For a start, you would not be able to stand resting against the tree as it has not long been planted by Lady Manvers, to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, and, putting both hands together, you would be able to wrap them around the trunk. Not a tree on which to lean!

Behind you is what used to be The Volunteer Inn, closed only in the last few years after the sale of the property for £500 to Lord Manvers in 1895. How resplendent it would have looked with its sign of The Volunteer cut out and painted as a soldier. Margaret Rose (nee Fretnall) remembers going there as a small child occasionally and seeing the sign in a box room.

In front of you, across the road, is the village pinfold, where straying cattle brought in for safe keeping by the Pinder, a farmer, or a farmhand for safekeeping, may be standing, softly bellowing, awaiting collection by their rightful owner.



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## Pictured

*The planting of  
the Jubilee Tree  
on Cross Hill*

Below the pinfold there is 'The Twitchell,' a snicket running up to the church of St. Michael the Archangel, and also branching off across the bottom of the churchyard. Running alongside The Twitchell is the village wheelwright's single storey building, accessed from the other side.

During daylight hours, the continuous thudding sound of William Duckmanton's mallet (or is it John, his son's?) can be heard striking the wooden end of his chisel upon the seasoned oak of a new spoke. It is being prepared to replace the broken one in the metal-bound wheel propped up against the wall, at the back of the pit.

To the right and opposite the wheelwright's is The Dove Cote Inn, not just an alehouse but also a fully functioning farm! Thankfully for the tenant, Robert Watling, it only opens in the evening and is closed on Sundays. Some say it is the Lord of the Manor who will not allow it to be operational on the Sabbath. Now, glancing in the opposite direction, to your right and just visible on the inside bend of the corner, is a



house and farmstead that once used to house The Sun Inn. At one time, three inns used to stand within a few feet of each other!

A pathway runs across the bottom of the churchyard. Along here is a detached house which is the Post Office and the Post Box is situated in the wall. Around the corner, and below this house, on the opposite side to the wheelwright's, we have another farm. We have just walked round in a small circle and are heading back to "Up Street".

If anything passes you by on the road it won't be a noisy lorry or a four by four, but the squeaking wheels of a horse drawn cart, the horses' shoes on the road, and the voice of the driver, shouting 'goo-on' as he encourages his stallion or mare to move faster. Teatime, and it could be the voices of children you hear, passing by as they collect the cows, herding them through the village to their milking parlours, the cows knowing exactly where they are going and urgent to be relieved of their full udders. The roads are filthy and, on a hot day, smelly, as the cattle and cart horses have deposited their excrement on the chippings and there it stays.

Behind you is The Bar, the name for the road leading out to Tuxford. There is a row of cottages running end on to the road at the side of what once was The Volunteer.

Next to them is a recently built pair of cottages built by Earl Manvers. Beyond, at the end of the village, on each side of the road, is a farm, one having stood there since 1703, and then the road gate, stretching the width of the road and closed at night. Returning from here to the Dove Cote Inn we discover the cottage where Mr Frank Moody, author of 'My Lifetime Memories of Laxton', grew up and he would be, no doubt, running around playing with a few pals.



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## Pictured

*Looking towards  
the Dove Cote Inn*

To conclude this scene around Cross Hill, imagine it is now night-time. It is pitch black, the stars are so visible on clear nights as there is no street lighting or pollution. The odd voice of the partakers of ale, on leaving The Dove Cote, shout goodnight to each other, as one or two, worse for wear, stumble on home.

White-grey smoke twists and turns or rises straight up from red brick chimney stacks. In a few houses there is the flickering glimmer, through the windows, of the oil lamps or candles burning. Early to bed, early to rise... a busy day ahead.

On walking 'Up Street', from Cross Hill, an impressive farmhouse, named Cross Hill Farm, stands at the end of a drive, its farm buildings on the right hand side. Next to the yard and buildings is Timothy Field. In the bottom corner of the field, near the road, is a pond and many a village child has been warned not to slide on it in winter as it is 'deep and dangerous on one particular side,' but squeals of



delight can be heard on a crisp winter's day once the weekend comes.

Opposite Timothy Field is the church of St. Michael the Archangel. The new gates, for which the vicar and parishioners are working hard to raise funds, have not yet been erected.

Next to the church are a couple of semi-detached houses and from the first one, if you listen carefully, you can hear tacks being hammered into the soles of a pair of boots as they sit on the last (a wooden or metal block shaped like a human foot that a shoemaker or cobbler uses for making or repairing shoes). This is the home of Sam Moody, one of the village shoemakers. A strong protective pair of boots is essential to protect workers' feet, especially when dealing with horses. The lane opposite, Hall Lane, leads to what was once a Motte and Bailey Castle and in its day, centuries ago, was the hub of the then village, within the confines of the bailey.

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#### Pictured

*Timothy Field opposite  
the Church Wall*



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## Pictured

*The church of St. Michael the Archangel with the village shoemaker's cottage to the side*

In its heyday King John enjoyed staying here on several occasions, as it was one of the deer hunting centres of the forest. Where a king once hunted, children now happily roll on the slopes of the earthworks. Visitors come to the village, not just to see the Open Field System, but to walk on this site. Rice Pudding Hill, where the Motte once stood, can be seen from many a view point and the three ageing trees make it easily identifiable.

The drive at the side of the church is U-shaped and provides access to and from the new Vicarage, a magnificent mansion. When Rev. C. B. Collinson and his wife came to the living it was only about four years old. His predecessor Rev. H. A. Martin had had the living for forty years. The building, with its decorative Victorian brickwork was so very different to The Old Vicarage, now a farm opposite the Methodist Primitive Chapel. Apparently, Lady Manvers was a cousin of

the previous vicar, Rev. H. A. Martin, and had said she wouldn't visit him again until he lived in a more worthy building. Situated to the front of The Vicarage, and in its grounds, is The Parish Room, used for village and church social activities and a meeting-place for committees etc. This building is sometimes called The Vicarage Room and also The Reading Room.

Further up the street on the right hand side, is a house running end-on to the road, the front room of which is a shop. Its 'Open all hours' policy is an asset to villagers where they can buy almost anything. Samuel Laughton rents this shop. To the side of it is the 'Little School', where the younger children attend and receive their education. The enclosed playground reassures parents that their children are safe within the confines of the yard.

The School House, where Mr Frank Willis and his family live, is opposite, also running end-on to the road and backing on to School Farm. Mr Willis is literally only 'a stone's throw' away from the 'Big School' where the older village children receive their education. Each year the Laxton and Moorhouse Village Almanac records the names of children who achieve full attendance.

At certain times during the school day you can see children playing on the road, the only playground for this building, unless they join the younger children across the road.

No school meals are provided but you can always guarantee someone will be at home when they dash back for a bite. Parents are proud of their child's appearance and, as seen from the photograph below, where they could afford it, the boys wore stiff white collars, jackets, trousers to the knee and knee socks. The girls kept their smart dresses clean and tidy by wearing white smocks or aprons over the top.



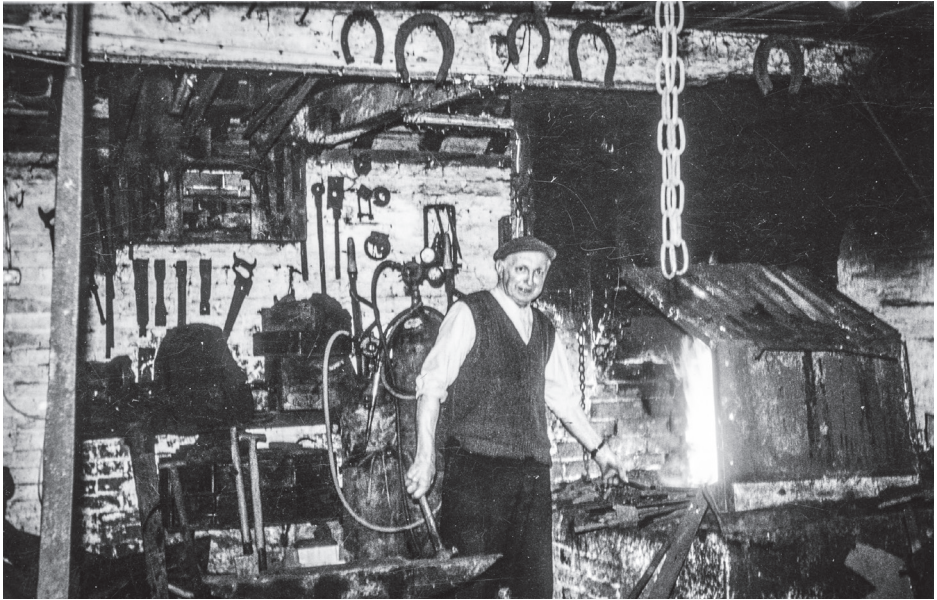
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## Pictured

*The School Children  
and Mr Willis posing  
on the road*

At the side of the 'Big School' is the farm where the Corn Miller, James Laughton, and his son, Samuel, live. The mill stands away from the farm in Mill Field, and is clearly visible from the road as you travel to Boughton. It is a Wooden Post Mill and much used by the farmers. Next to the 'Little School', and opposite the Laughton's, is another farmhouse with the crew yard (cattle yard) just a pathway's width from the kitchen door. Imagine the smells from that 'muck yard' on a hot summer's day! And the flies! Arrrghh! As we walk further up the road towards the top of the village, just before the road forks, there is the Blacksmith's cottage on the right (the top one of a pair of cottages facing on to the road).

Behind the cottage is the forge, in which Thomas Hilton forms horseshoes from metal bars over the heat of the red hot coals. Bellows are hand worked by the blacksmith's worker and it is his job to keep the coals hot by pumping air underneath them.



The acrid stench of burning hoof fills the air as the new hot shoe is fitted to the horse. It is hard, tiring work amongst the stench and heat. The weight of the cumbersome leather apron pulls down on the body, but is very necessary for protection.

We are nearly at this end of the village. Three more farms are on the right hand side, two are close to the blacksmith's whilst the third, Townend Farm, is situated at the entrance to Top Field, just before the gate leading into it. Only pigsties are in between this farm and the others.

On the opposite side to Townend is another farm. Walking away from the field gate and next to this farm is a pair of recently built cottages, similar to those on The Bar. Next to them is another farm with a row of small arches clearly visible from the road. Hens and ducks can be seen scratching the ground near the arches, but these brick structures offer no protection at night against the stealthy fox!

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#### Pictured

*Arthur Grundy in Thomas Hilton's Blacksmith's Shop. Arthur moved to Laxton to work for Mr Hilton when he was seventeen years old. He learnt the trade and continued as village Blacksmith after for 77 years.*



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### Pictured

*Looking towards  
Top Field. The edge  
of Bunkers Tunnel  
is on the left*

Next to the stack yard is a single cottage and then a row of cottages. These cottages are called Bunkers Tunnel as the back of the row is at the road side and they are accessed through a 'tunnel', an archway separating the pair of cottages on either side. Running end on to Toad Lane from the cottage furthest away from the church is a row of toilets and wash houses. The gardens are enclosed on three sides as another row of cottages, end on to the road butts up to them. In the fork stands a single cottage. There are no houses on Toad Lane but access to the gardens at Bunkers Tunnel is possible.

We have completed our look at 'Up Street', except for the Farm and cottage out of the village on the road towards Boughton, and just before The Common. These properties, whilst away from the village, are



part of the Parish of Laxton, as is the land just before Cocking Hill. The farm house is another, large building not dissimilar to the farmhouse at Cross Hill Farm.

Imagine leading cattle all the way up here to graze The Common and the enclosed fields around. Once you are working horses up here, so far away from your homestead, you have to stay working until dusk. You have to take food and drink (beer) for yourself and your workers, especially at harvest time. The horses need sustenance too; water troughs are available in the fields. The horses are brought home at night because their feathers are clarted up with clay.

The horseman cleans them down and checks them all over, looking for any injuries on the legs and body. The harnesses and collar may have rubbed and caused sores. If your horse becomes injured then you have no working 'implement'. Once happy the horseman lets them into the field. Next morning the horses are brought in early, fed, and whilst they are champing on their oats, the horseman goes in for breakfast with the other farmhands.

Now, let us retrace our steps to Cross Hill. We have discussed the Dove Cote (sometimes spelt as one word) Inn. We will stay on this side of the road as we walk "Down Street" and then return on the other side.

Just peeping out below The Dove Cote and its line of pine trees, can be seen the butcher's shop, a single storey building. George Bagshaw is the village butcher as well as the pig killer. He also works as a farm labourer to supplement his income. There is another building end on to the road in between it and the Inn.

After the butcher's shop we pass a row of cottages that stand end on to the road called Peck's Row, not there for much longer as they are about to be pulled down and replaced due to their condition. (New cottages are promised to replace them.)



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## Pictured

*Looking towards  
Cross Hill we can  
see Peck's Row on  
the right hand side*

Then it is on to Steps Farm, aptly named for all the steps up to the front door. At the side of the farmhouse is the open crew yard and other outbuildings. The barn to the farm is on the opposite side of the road.

Carrying on further down the road we come to Bottom Farm, again with the farmhouse and buildings at the side of the road. Then, keeping on the right, we go down the road towards Moorhouse. We pass some enclosed fields used as paddocks. After these fields are farm buildings belonging to the next farm, the farmhouse and adjoining cottage standing back from the road. These properties are more recently built than the others around.

Only two more buildings remain before we come to The Moor on the opposite side of the road. Several cottages or 'tofts' as they were once called, benefit from having a letting on The Moor tied to their cottage

as this means they can graze a beast or cow on the common grass down here. According to William Beckitt and Jack Cook there was a road gate into Laxton down here too.

We will now cross over this road and retrace our steps up to Cross Hill. We have a farm on this side of the road, the yard and farmhouse both approached over bridges as there is a deep dyke running down this side of the road and on through the Moor Field, almost cutting it in half. Higher up there is another house standing back from the road and accessed via a bridge. This is a well appointed double-fronted house having been built to replace a much smaller cottage. There is a field in between it and the next farmhouse and buildings. This farm and its buildings can be approached from both the road out to Moorhouse and the road to Kneesall.

A pair of cottages are situated in the fork of the road and behind them flows another dyke which comes from the bottom of The Fishponds fields and joins into the dyke already mentioned. Over the road we see Corner Farm. The farmhouse stands back from the road and has the crew yard immediately in front of the 'front door' of the house. Again just a path's width between the two! Next is another cottage. Large diameter pipes have been laid to enable access to the farm but the houses higher up appear to retain the bridges for access over the dyke.

We now come to an old farm house where the front is again end on to the road and immediately on to the dyke. I forgot to mention the piles of chippings that can be seen on the sides of the road, conveniently 'dumped' by Sam Whitworth who hauls around two hundred tons each year from Tuxford Station. This is awaiting Thomas Walker, the roadman, to spread over the road and into the ruts made by the cartwheels.



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### Pictured

*Looking up from Bottom Farm towards Cross Hill. Notice chippings heaped against the side of the road*

After this farm and its roadside buildings we are back at Step Farm's barn and the lane leading up to The Old Vicarage Farm and Chapel. Behind the chapel and adjoining it is an attached cottage.

Another twitchell runs across here to the churchyard. If we go back down the lane we come to the recently built single storey Almshouses. There are three houses in the row. The end ones are approached and entered through a door to the side and the smaller middle one is accessed from the back. Mrs Dolby, the village nurse, lives in one of the Almshouses.

A much older cottage stands next door. This is the home of William Bagshaw and his family. William is a shopkeeper and carrier. The shop is in the room you immediately enter through the front door.



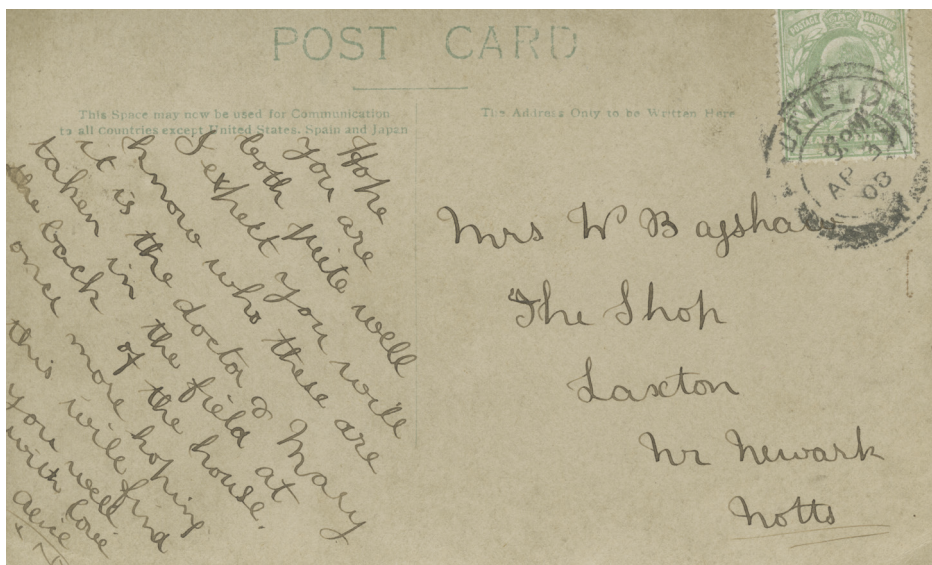
Villagers take baskets of produce to him on a Friday night or early Saturday morning and he takes it to Retford market to be sold. When she was alive, I recall my Auntie Blanche telling me about baskets of produce in his front room. Joined on to the house at the back is the fotherum and stable. The horse is stabled here and grazes on The Moor as the cottage has a letting. This horse is used by the carrier not only on Saturday to the markets at Retford, but also to the Wednesday markets at Newark. The very last building added on at the end is the toilet, a long way from the house and almost in the garden.

Next to the shop is a field belonging to a farm "Up Street". Beyond this field and opposite Peck's Row, standing on the top of the rise, is a pair of newly built

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#### Pictured

*Bagshaw's  
Grocer's Shop*



## Pictured

ABOVE: The back of the old postcard showing the address for 'The Shop'

OPPOSITE: The shared Washhouse

Thoresby houses. If you go up one of their paths to the back yard you may hear the conversation of the women behind the central door of the free standing building. In this building are two coppers and sinks, one for each house, for this is a shared washhouse.

Standing almost on the same level and the other side of the hedge is a large double fronted detached single house and to the other side of it, the wheelwright's workshop. We are back at Cross Hill.



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MR FRANK WILLIS, THE  
HEADMASTER AT THE  
VILLAGE SCHOOL,  
COMPLETED THESE  
CENSUS RETURNS,  
BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO  
WORK OUT WHO WAS  
IN WHICH PROPERTY

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# THE 1901 CENSUS FOR LAXTON

## A SELF-SUFFICIENT VILLAGE

The statistics laid out in the 1901 Census for Laxton give a fascinating insight into the life of the village, mentioning the occupants of all the properties. However, it is difficult to work out who was in which property. Mr Frank Willis, the Headmaster at the village school, completed these census returns. The easiest way to present the information is in a list of occupations and the names of the people carrying out this work.

**FARMER (26)** - Jane Pinder, John Bagshaw, Arthur Small, George Johnson, John Dewick, William Wilkinson, William Merrills, Henry Bamford, Joseph Merrills, Edward Small, George Weatherall, John Cook, Robert Watling + **INNKEEPER**, William Moody, John G Bartle, George Bennett, James Patrick, John Rose, Sam Whitworth, George Cocking, Jane Peatfield (widow), George Burkitt, William Atkinson, John Atkinson, John Hewerdine, John Trow.

**Woodman**

George Newbert, John Lacey,  
George Favill, Henry Cob Dolby

**Carrier**

John Henry Newbert

**Roadman (Labourer)**

Thomas Walker

**Estate Labourer**

James Henry Pearson, William Horton

**Living On Own Means**

John Bamford, John Pearce

**Shepherd (On Farm)**

John Sampson

**Servant**

George Thomas Sheaker (Servant/Carter on Farm),  
John Leverton (Servant/Carter on Farm)

**Horseman (On Farm)**

William Lea, George Laughton, John Taylor,  
Leonard Laughton, Walter Allen,  
William Sampson, Harry Dean, George Ingleton

**Cattle Dealer**

Joseph Eyre

**Ordinary Farm Labourer**

John Rose, William Taylor,  
Thomas Rose, George Bagshaw

**Railway Shunter**

Herbert Moody

**Blacksmith**

Thomas Hilton (Employer at Home), Walter Pratt

**Son: Worker**

Richard Wilkinson, Frederick Merrills, William Bamford, Sam G Bartle, Robert Bennett, Charles Whitworth, Samuel Peatfield, John Peatfield

**Daughter (General Servant/Domestic)**

Mary Lacey

**Farmer Servant/Worker**

Joe Smith, Arthur Holloway

**Grandson-Worker**

John Naylor (William Wilkinson's Grandson)

**Corn Miller**

James Laughton, Samuel Laughton

**Farm Labourer**

John Laughton, John Sampson,  
Thomas Bagshaw, George Saxilby (9)

**Shoemaker**

Henry Laughton, Sam Moody

**Wheelwright**

William Duckmanton, John Duckmanton

**Schoolmaster**

Frank Willis

**Schoolmistress**

Ruth Willis

**Monitress**

Barbara Willis

**Cottager**

Thomas Bennett, Ann Merrills,  
Sam Sampson, William Bennett

**Dressmaker**

Edith Rayner, Annie Rose, Sarah Preston

**Clergyman C of E**

Christopher Collinson

**Housemaid (Domestic)**

Mary Hurt/Hunt (To Rev. Collinson), Harriet Russell

**Cook**

Sarah Altoft ( To Rev. Collinson), Emma Lacey

**Groom/Gardener**

George Barlow (To Rev. Collinson)

**Gardener**

Moses Lacey, Stubbs Preston

**Retired Police Officer**

John Coupe

**Carter On Farm**

John Lee

**Retired Farmer**

John Quibell

**Cattleman On Farm**

George Drabble

### **General Servant/Domestic**

Eliza Billyard, Harriet Russell

### **Yard Lad On Farm**

James Allen, Thomas Trout (Lincoln),  
Theophilus W Laughton (All mid-teens)

### **Waggoner On Farm**

Joseph Rose, Arthur Petitt, George Wakefield

### **Innkeeper**

Robert Watling (Farmer) came from Dereham Norfolk

### **Housekeeper/Domestic**

Sarah E Smith, Emma Bennett, Mary Cocking (Sister  
of George, at his house), Catherine Atkinson

### **Agricultural Labourer (Ordinary)**

John Bagshaw, Arthur Rose, Tom Lacey

### **Threshing Machine Engine Driver**

Frederick Rose

### **Butcher**

George Bagshaw (Pig Killer)

### **Grocer/Shopkeeper**

William Bagshaw

### **Charwoman**

Annie Priest

### **Monthly Nurse**

Jane Dolby

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# THE VILLAGE DID NOT HAVE A RESIDENT DOCTOR AND ONE HAD TO TRAVEL FROM TUXFORD OR OLLERTON

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## **Woodenman**

Walter Moody, John Bagshaw  
(William Bagshaw's Son)

## **General Servant/Domestic**

Mabel Hardy, Eva Barlow

## **Own (Bricklayer)**

William Quibell

## **Navy**

Thomas Bagshaw

## **Grocer's Assistant**

George Atkin

## **Gamekeeper**

George Preston

## **Farm Foreman**

Richard Clarke

There are very few occupations that go unmentioned. The village did not have a resident doctor and one had to travel from Tuxford or Ollerton, very similar to today's situation, but transport would have been by pony and trap, and of course, much slower. The National Health Service as we know it today, did not exist and a doctor's visit was followed by a bill. Just over one hundred people were employed.

I found it surprising to read where people had been born. You tend to think people did not explore beyond their local surroundings, but judging by the list some had travelled a great distance at the time. The village was getting fresh blood all the time.

In addition to Laxton, residents stated they had been born in the following places in Nottinghamshire:

Barthorpe	East Markham	Newark	
Bleasby	Eddingly	Norwell	
Boughton	Egmanton	Ossington	
Bradmore	Epperstone	Ordsall	
Carlton-on-Trent	Grove	Plumtree	
Cauntton	Halam	Retford	
Claypole	Laneham	Skegby	
Clumber	Lound	Stapleford	
Dry Doddington	Marnham	Weston	
East Drayton	Moorhouse	Yollerton	

I think the last village is a little of the local dialect seeping in and Mr Willis assumed such a place existed but, I have been unable to find it and can only assume the person meant Ollerton!

Some residents came from much further afield and are recorded as having been born in the following places and counties.

### **Buckinghamshire**

Hambledon

### **Lincolnshire**

Brigg, Bletchford, Coleby, Fulletby,  
Heapham, Lincoln, Old Leake, Panton, Sutton

*Bletchford and Westbow were also mentioned as being in Lincolnshire but I have been unable to find them there. (Bletchford does exist but not in Lincolnshire). There were other indecipherable place names down for Lincolnshire.*

### **Huntingdonshire**

Alwalton (Now in Cambridgeshire. Could this be due to changing boundaries?)

### **Herefordshire**

Ross-on-Wye

### **Norfolk**

East Dereham

### **Yorkshire**

Sheffield, Rotherham, Wakefield

Two other much further afield places, across the Atlantic Ocean in fact, are also mentioned.

### **U.S.America**

Reeny Rebecca Rose. She was the daughter of John and Mary Rose. John was born in Laxton and his wife Mary in Brigg. I know he went to America as he was nicknamed 'America Rose'. I can only assume that Reeny was born there during their stay.

### **Toronto, Canada**

Richard Clarke's wife was born there.



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THE 1921 CENSUS, WHEN  
RELEASED, WILL GIVE  
A FINAL INDICATION  
OF THE RESIDENTS  
OCCUPATIONS  
AND MOVEMENTS  
DURING 1900-1920

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“GREAT PREPARATIONS  
WERE SET AFOOT.  
ARCHES APPEARED  
OVER THE STREETS,  
BUNTING AND FLAGS  
OF ALL SHAPES AND  
SIZES WERE UNEARTHED”

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# THE CORONATIONS

## THE CORONATION OF KING EDWARD VII

Edward became king when his mother, Queen Victoria, died on the 22nd January 1901. He was not crowned until the 9th August of that year. His coronation had originally been scheduled for the 26th June 1901, but had to be postponed at very short notice as he became ill with an abdominal abscess that required immediate surgery. Instead, on the 26th June itself a ‘solemn service of intercession’ was held at St Paul’s Cathedral, attended by many British and foreign dignitaries as they were in London for the coronation. Edward was insistent that regional celebrations and a planned ‘Coronation Dinner for the Poor of London’ should go ahead. The King personally contributed £30,000 towards the cost.

When the actual coronation went ahead the elderly and infirm Archbishop of Canterbury, Frederick Temple, placed the Imperial State Crown back-to-front on the king’s head.

Edith Hickson in her book, 'Life at Laxton' states:

*“Great preparations were set afoot. Arches appeared over the streets, bunting and flags of all shapes and sizes were unearthed. Then, suddenly, everything went flat as a punctured tyre, dashed by the very serious illness of the elderly man who was to have been crowned our King. No tea, no school holiday - a terrible disappointment instead, and everything postponed indefinitely. The*

*eventual coronation celebration following the recovery of the royal personage came as somewhat an anticlimax but fresh plans were made as the situation eased and the tea and sports were once again organised...”*

She later adds:

*“Over the road, up the Bar, a wonderful imitation of a crown composed of flowers wired into shape, had hung swaying above the very centre of the road, a sight that Laxton viewed with astonishment.”*

She goes on to say that she knew who did the “work of art” very intimately, but fails to give a name. She concludes her account of the coronation celebrations adding:

**“THEN, AS  
THE GLOOM  
DEEPENED  
TOWARDS  
DARKNESS,  
CAME THE MOST  
SPECTACULAR  
SIGHT LAXTON  
EVER DID SEE”**

*“Then, as the gloom deepened towards darkness, came the most spectacular sight Laxton ever did see. That was the torchlight procession through the village streets which marched both up-street and down-street in a two-abreast column of men and ewths (sic) and a tail of glassy-eyed boys; which was a never-to-be-forgotten spectacle, which children could gaze on in wonderment.”*

I have not seen any photographs of this event at Laxton which I am sure must have been very spectacular. The reports that appear in The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times are very tame and matter of fact, compared to Edith’s accounts.

An article on the 20th June 1902 simply states:

*“LAXTON - The final arrangements for the coronation festivities at Laxton have not yet been made. The following is part of the programme already decided:- Church parade 10.30am, dinner for committee at 12, subscribers of 10s and upwards at 1 and remainder of the parishioners at 2 o’clock. There will be sports followed by dancing.”*

On the 15th August 1902 the account reads:

*“LAXTON - The Coronation. A programme of sports was gone through on Saturday on the cricket field and dancing was kept up in the schoolroom until a late hour.”*

King Edward VII reigned until his death on 6th May 1910.

# THE CORONATION OF KING GEORGE V

The coronation of George V took place on 22nd June 1911. A list appeared in The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times regarding the planning of activities for the coronation celebrations under the following general title:

## “FESTIVITIES IN THE VILLAGES DETAILED PROGRAMME LAXTON-WITH-MOORHOUSE

*Honorary Secretary: Mr. F. Willis.*

1. *United service in the Parish Church.*
2. *Children’s Parade of the village and ladies’ decorated bicycle parade.*
- 3.30. *Tea (meat) for the whole parish.*
- 5.30. *Dancing round the Maypole.*
6. *Sports, including racing, tug-of-war, etc.*

On the 30th June 1911 the following article appears under the title - ‘LAXTON’ - giving an account of these festivities:

*“The coronation festivities were a remarkable success and the whole village thoroughly enjoyed themselves. At 8 o’clock a.m. the ringers gave a merry peel. A cricket match between married and single began at 9.30, the former proving victorious. The farm servants had a match at 11.30. The service in the parish church was attended by a large congregation, and was remarkable for the heartiness of the singing.*

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# “THE PRETTIEST SCENE OF THE DAY’S PROCEEDINGS WAS THE DANCING ROUND THE MAYPOLE, TO THE PLAYING OF THE VILLAGE FIDDLER”

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*A grand parade followed when the children were taken round the village in decorated traps, and sang the national Anthem and patriotic songs. At the head of the procession was a gaily decorated car, which carried the twelve girls prettily dressed for the Maypole dances. This was followed by the decorated bicycles.*

*A meat tea was served for the whole of the parish in the Schoolroom, and in the Vicarage Room for children under 14. The prettiest scene of the day’s proceedings was the dancing round the Maypole, to the playing of the village fiddler. A programme of sports followed. Dancing was kept up in the Schoolroom until midnight.”*

A photograph of girls ‘prettily dressed’ and seated on a cart does exist. Could this have been connected with the day’s events or the maypole dancing?

The article goes on to list all the committee members involved in the planning and running of the event. Twenty-seven people were on the committee, and worked together as a great team to achieve these results.







# WORK IN THE HOME

## SERVANTS

A husband's resources or income into the family home made a huge difference to the lifestyle of the women. Those that could afford to employ servants had a very 'genteel' life compared to the less 'well-off' who had a physical struggle due to very little support. The 1911 Census gives a clear picture of parishioners' circumstances as each household is entered on a single page and you can see at a glance who was able to employ staff. If they had the 'means' for a servant, it was usually a young girl of about fourteen years of age as a maid to help with household chores. Sometimes dairymaids were employed too.

## WASHDAY

Mondays were usually washdays and it could take a whole day to get it all done. Women started early in the morning by filling the coppers with buckets of cold water from the pump outside, or if they



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### Pictured

*Clothes washing  
equipment of the period*

were fortunate enough to have piped water this would be drawn off from the only tap in the scullery or kitchen and carried to the coppers. A fire would be lit underneath in the hearth to get the water boiling. Once it was hot enough, some of the water would be taken out of the coppers with a scoop and put into a dolly tub, usually outside, and then the 'coloureds' would be put in to the dolly to soak. The 'whites' would be boiled in the remaining water in the copper and the fire stoked to keep it boiling. Hard blocks of soap and soda were used to wash the clothes. Sometimes the block soap was grated.

Dolly tubs, pippins, dolly pegs, punches, and washboards would all be used in the process. The early washing machines were still operated by hand. The women had to be fit and strong to cope with all the collecting of water, lifting, bending, washing, rinsing, wringing and mangling that would take place each Monday.

## DRYING THE WASHING

In good weather the washing would be pegged outside to dry on a line made with thin rope. A prop was used to raise the line so that the washing would catch the wind. On a bad day it was usually dried inside, hung over the fireguard or a clothes horse which was sometimes called a maiden. Some women would string a line up inside the scullery or kitchen. Drying clothes inside made the rooms in which they were dried steamy and damp.

## IRONING DAY

After washing and drying the clothes they had to be ironed. Everyone was very particular about presentation. Flat irons were mostly used but some people did have box irons. Flat irons came in pairs. This was to make sure there was always a hot iron at hand. One iron was getting hot on the kitchen range in front of the bars of the fire whilst the other was being used and getting cooler.

One method of testing that the iron was hot enough to use was to spit on the hot flat surface. If the spit spitted, bubbled and ran then it was ready for action. The box iron was different in that it had a clay 'slug' that fitted inside the box and it was these that kept the iron hot. These clay 'slugs' were placed into the fire and had a specially shaped long hook to lift them out and place them inside the iron compartment.

The ironing board was usually the scrubbed kitchen table. An old blanket folded several times

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LIFTING, BENDING,  
WASHING,  
RINSING,  
WRINGING AND  
MANGLING**

---

would be placed onto the table and up to one edge. An old clean cotton sheet would be placed on the top of the blanket and this formed the ironing surface. The whole of the iron got hot, including the handle, so a piece of cloth was usually wrapped around this so that the hands were not burnt. Sometimes solid soap was rubbed over the bottom of the iron to help it glide more easily. This work was very hot, steamy and strenuous and usually took place on Tuesday.

## CLEANING AND GENERAL HOUSEWORK

Another chore or task in the home was scrubbing floors. This was usually done on 'all fours' with a bucket of hot water, scrubbing brush and clean cloth to 'dry' the surface. Carpets and peg rugs had to be cleaned. They were usually taken up and put outside over a line or wall and beaten to get the dust and dirt out. Brasses had to be cleaned and polished. Dusting had to be done regularly. Feather mattresses were used on beds. Each morning they had to be shaken and 'fluffed up' ready for bedtime.

Through Household Sales Catalogues and advertisements in the local press we can get a picture of furnishings in homes at the time. These appeared to include oak tables, oak bureaux, chairs, Windsor chairs, couches, pianofortes, barometers, brass and iron bedspreads, feather beds, wash stands, dressing tables, brass candlesticks, carpets, sewing machines and wringers to mention a few. All these homely shackles would need cleaning and polishing.

If mattresses were homemade or refurbished using feathers from plucking hens, these feathers had to be sterilised by putting them into a hot oven overnight.

A woman's work was endless. There would be windows to clean, clothes and socks to darn, clothes

to sew and knit for the young children, meals to prepare and cook, fruit and vegetables to preserve, beer to make for the men, pies to bake and hams to salt after a pig killing, rugs to peg, oil lamps to clean and fill; the list was endless.

I have given detailed descriptions of some of the tasks to give a picture of how strenuous life was during this period. Alongside all this activity a young farmer's wife bore children and reared them. Very often 'Granny' was at hand, living in the home too and if not, she would be only a short distance away in a cottage, so help was always readily available.

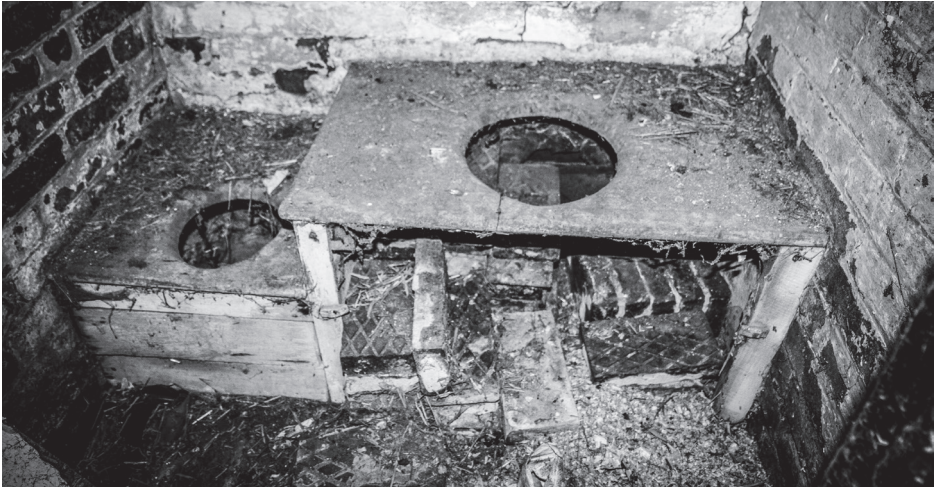
Very often children had both an 'Up Street' Granny and a 'Down Street' Granny and both would be much loved and visited regularly.

## **TOILETS, WASHSTANDS AND 'GOES-UNDERS'**

Farm houses and cottages at this time did not have bathrooms and en-suites as we know them today. Toilets were usually 'down the garden'.

It was a small building which had a raised wooden structure at one end almost like a solid bench, and usually opposite the door. The 'bench' had a wooden lid with a large circular or oval hole in it. Ideal for a 'quiet sit'! Some toilets had a small child's version at the side. Some toilets had buckets underneath the hole to catch waste products and this bucket was emptied as necessary and the contents buried in the garden. Other versions had a building at the back and the waste was pushed through and often sprinkled with a light covering of soil.

Periodically it would be emptied and the contents spread over one of the fields. Upstairs, in one of the bedrooms there would be a washstand.



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### Pictured

*An old toilet of the period at Lilac Farm*

Often the pride and joy of the household would be a decorated pottery wash set consisting of a large jug, washing bowl and soap dish sitting on top of the washstand. These items were used for personal cleanliness. Sometimes these sets also had matching ‘goes-unders’ or chamber pots. These chamber pots were put under the bed to be used during the night if necessary, and were emptied in the morning.

This is not necessarily the most appropriate place to mention these items but it is all connected with everyday home life of the period.

## DAIRYMAIDS

Dairymaids were employed on some farms. One of the tasks was to churn butter. She would first sieve the milk and then leave it to settle for about twenty four hours. Then she would skim the cream off the top of the milk and churn it in the butter churner. This was like a small, thin barrel with a hole in the top and a lid. Inside the barrel were paddles operated from the outside by a handle, which, when turned, moved the paddles through the milk. The churning

had to be at a steady continuous speed and was a skilful task. Eventually, buttery lumps would begin to form in the churn and cling together. These lumps of ‘butter’ were lifted out of the churn and had to be washed and kneaded in fresh clean water over and over again until the water was clear. It was then pressed between two butter pats to squeeze out any remaining water. All this work was very physical. Making cheese, especially hard varieties, was a much longer process.

Each farm had its own design on the butter patters and this helped to identify who had made the butter. The waste buttermilk was usually fed to the pigs. The dairymaid had to make sure that the milk pails were scrupulously clean and sterilised.

The dairy floor, all work surfaces and all work utensils had to be scrubbed after each use. Common soda was used to purify. Occasionally, dairymaids were also expected to milk the cows, but this was mostly done by the cowhands.

Bear in mind that if the household was unable to afford a servant all the aforementioned tasks were done by the housewife alone! As the children grew older they were expected to take on some of this work. Some young people stayed working at home until they got married themselves.

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**EACH FARM HAD  
ITS OWN DESIGN  
ON THE BUTTER  
PATTERS AND  
THIS HELPED TO  
IDENTIFY WHO  
HAD MADE  
THE BUTTER**

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“EIGHT WEEKLY  
LECTURES AND  
PRACTICAL LESSONS  
IN LAUNDRY  
WORK WILL BE  
GIVEN IN THE  
VICARAGE ROOM,  
LAXTON, UNDER  
THE TECHNICAL  
INSTRUCTION  
COMMITTEE OF THE  
COUNTY COUNCIL  
OF NOTTS”

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# A WOMAN'S WORK IS NEVER DONE!

## COURSES

It was reported in The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times issue of the 3rd October as follows:

*“LAXTON*

*A course of eight weekly lectures and practical lessons in laundry work will be given in the Vicarage room, Laxton, under the Technical Instruction Committee of the County Council of Notts. The first lecture, which was most interesting, took place on Tuesday afternoon last. There were a large number present and nine pupils entered for the course. There will be alternative lecture and practical lessons.”*

This training course was no doubt offered throughout the county, presumably to offer training to women already in employment and those young girls who were contemplating working as laundry maids. Attending such a course would have put the young girls in a good position for employment. The course appears to have been very popular. It is interesting to read that such courses were provided by the Notts. County Council for people during this period.

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“PREVIOUS TO  
1909 THERE WERE  
PROBABLY MORE  
HOUSEHOLDS IN  
LAXTON WHO  
BREWED THEIR OWN  
BEER THAN ANY  
OTHER PARISH IN  
THE EAST MIDLANDS”

---



# BEER MAKING

Beer Making went on in many homes around the countryside during this period, not just Laxton, but the following excerpt from a newspaper cutting in a scrapbook at Nottingham City Library makes interesting reading. Unfortunately these particular records do not state the newspaper in question or the author:

*“LAXTON BEER*

*The subject of Laxton has been so dinned into their ears lately that it is well to add the second word to the title of this paragraph, knowing that if readers feel inclined to skip the first they are not likely to pass the second.*

*Previous to 1909 there were probably more households in Laxton who brewed their own beer than any other parish in the East Midlands. Almost every cottager there, as well as the farmers did so.*

*Mr Lloyd George's Budget of 1909 was the death knell of home brewed ale. Previous to that all the authority one needed was a five shilling licence, obtained at a Post Office, if one's cottage was assessed to be no more than £10 a year-which applied in spacious Victorian days to almost all country cottages - or one guinea a year, if one was a farmer with an important homestead. For that fee one could brew as much beer as one liked for the consumption of oneself and household."*

It is intriguing to read this article as the author gives the feeling he is not too enamoured with Laxton and I wonder why Laxton had been dinned into the readers' ears of late? On another card index at the library it simply read, "*Laxton home-brewed beer at 6d a gallon, to 1909.*"

At Lilac Farm, on the corner of a whitewashed wall near the door of an outbuilding the following can still be read:

*Brewed  
7th March  
12  
Brewed  
9th Jan 11  
Brewed February  
8th 1911'*

Edith Hickson, in her book 'Life at Laxton' describes the brewing process. She states that it was done in either the brew house or the back kitchen, whichever had the copper. The hops were well boiled.

---

## Pictured

*The Brewer's dates  
on outbuilding*



*A “large tub of frothing dark liquid with dollops of barm afloat on the surface, stood for a while to work. The barm was the result of the yeast and sugar, which was, or had to be, at the right temperature... On one of his visits to a farmhouse, a doctor - on seeing the curd-like floating barm, scooped up in his hands some of the froth and swallowed it.”*



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### Pictured

*Ivy House Farm  
outhouse with two  
coppers and low sink*

You can imagine the surprise of the farmer’s wife. The quality of this homemade brew was variable depending on the timing: the length of time the hops were left to boil; the length of time the sugar and yeast were left to ferment; the length of time it was left to stand, etc. Also added into the equation would be the quality of the ingredients.

The photograph above was taken at Ivy House Farm recently. Did this building get used as the brew house? The low trough would be ideal for washing the hops. The copper, standing next to it in the corner may have been used to boil the hot water. Interestingly, an area outside on the farm is called The Hop Yard.

Beer was a huge component of the daily diet. The best brewing season was from October to March. No doubt you were well known if you brewed a beer particularly pleasant to the palette and would not go short of farm hands offering help, especially on threshing day!

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“A RECENT BORING  
IN THE VALLEY,  
ABOUT A MILE  
SW OF KNEESALL  
CHURCH, HAS  
PROVED SUCCESSFUL  
AND WILL SUPPLY  
BOTH KNEESALL  
AND LAXTON  
WITH WATER”

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# WATER

## IMAGINE DRAWING WATER

At the commencement of the 20th century, a common sight at houses and cottages in Laxton would be people drawing water from their wells. Most wells were in the backyards outside the kitchen. A cast iron pump would be situated over the well head, sometimes covered over with planks of wood. Often, where these pumps had broken, the heavy lid would be taken off the top of the well and buckets lowered into it to draw out water. Care had to be taken and lids replaced when not in use as there were always dangers.

The buckets were galvanised or wooden and not light by any means when pulled up full of water. Many times the women, especially on wash days, would do this as the men would be occupied out in the fields, on the farmsteads or in one of the other varied jobs taking place in this very active village.

Imagine, all water used had to be drawn from these wells - drinking water, cooking water, personal washing water (this very often would not be hot), water for washing clothes, water for feeding the farm

cats, dogs and small livestock being reared in the house (often caded lambs and neglected piglets would be hand reared in the scullery/kitchen). Imagine the task of drawing water on a hard winter's day in deep snow and frost, pleasant enough on a brilliantly sunny one possibly but still very tiring, hard, physical work whatever the weather! It was into the next decade before a piped water system was in place in Laxton.

At this time, there were several troughs scattered around the open fields and fed by springs, as the horses, when working, would need water during the long day away from the farm.

## **GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY (WATER SUPPLY NOTTS, 1914)**

The Geographical Survey (Water Supply Notts, 1914) provides the following information:

### **LAXTON - WELLS**

*“Skerry belts permit percolation of water in some degree, and occasionally give rise to rather copious springs when cut into at lower levels by stream erosion, an example of which is the spring known as ‘Duck’s Mouth’ near Laxton. The water being loaded with mineral matter in solution, frequently deposits masses of calcareous tufa when flowing in the open in shallow streams. Some portions of the marl are freely streaked and veined gypsum, which facilitates the passage of water, but where this mineral is present the water is often too hard for domestic use.” (G.S.WSN 1914 11)*



## LAXTON - WATER SUPPLY (1)

*“Stands rather high up on the dip slope of Keuper Marl, and its water supply is often scanty and unsatisfactory. Laxton has wells of varying depth up to 40ft or more, with water of hard quality, sometimes standing at different levels in neighbouring wells, depending, no doubt, upon different layers in a skerry-band that happen to yield supply.” (G.S.WSN 1914 32)*

## LAXTON - WATER SUPPLY (2)

*“A recent boring in the valley, about a mile SW of Kneesall Church, has proved successful and will supply both Kneesall and Laxton with water.”*

J. V. Beckett briefly mentions the water supply:

*“The facilities of the houses were primitive. Water had been piped into the village at Lord Manvers’s expense in 1913, and most of the houses had running water although often only in the scullery and not in the adjoining buildings.”*

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**“WATER HAD BEEN PIPED INTO THE VILLAGE AT LORD MANVERS’ EXPENSE IN 1913, AND MOST OF THE HOUSES HAD RUNNING WATER ALTHOUGH OFTEN ONLY IN THE SCULLERY”**

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How successful was the tap water supply? Most water was supplied through lead pipes in those days and people were unaware of the health dangers associated with lead. Burst pipes occurred and there were periods of time without water. When the supply was reinstated, brown, dirty water ran out until the flow had flushed out the sediment of clay particles. Wells were rarely filled in after the installation of piped water. They were always on standby for that emergency and still used to water stock. Some existed well into the 1950's and the odd one can still be found today, minus the pump.

It is questionable as to whether all properties had running water as both my Auntie, Hilda Wilson (nee Bartle) and Margaret Rose, (nee Frecknall) remember as children, water being laid to their family homes. As both were born in the mid to late 1920's and therefore children in the 1930's, it suggests that in some homes, the installation of water took place outside the period of study. My Aunt can remember the excitement of turning on the tap and the well, literally by the back door, being filled in and concreted over, the word "WELL" written in the concrete over it.

After reading these articles I did wonder where the spring 'Duck's Mouth' was situated and thanks to William Beckitt and Jack Cook in their booklet, 'Open Field Reflections' I discovered:

*"It was situated at the bottom of Brockilow Farm Homestead, a ram was fixed too and water driven uphill to supply the farm and cottages on the other side of the road."*

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## Pictured

*A typical water pump now used as a garden ornament*







# ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, LAXTON 1900-1920

REV. CHRISTOPHER BARBER COLLINSON  
30TH MAY 1898–30TH SEPTEMBER 1916

Rev. C. B. Collinson came to the village in 1898, two years prior to the start of the twentieth century. He and his wife appear to have become very involved in village life. Apparently they were both seen walking around the village regularly, he wearing his spats or gaiters and she in a fur coat on chillier days. They no doubt made a handsome couple and a visitor to the village would have been unaware that he was the vicar as he seldom appeared in plain clerical attire.

He was a clerical scholar, spending many hours in the muniment room at Thoresby Hall, working through papers relating to Laxton. (The impressive vicarage in which they lived was built twenty-three years before they arrived in the village and compared to the old one was rather 'stately').

In 1901, Rev. Collinson's mother presented 'a beautiful solid silver alms-dish' to the church but 'at present the Vicar is abroad for the purpose of recruiting his health after a severe attack of influenza and rheumatism'. He was absent in May of this year.

When The Thoroton Society visited Laxton on their 'Autumn Excursion' in 1902 Rev Collinson addressed them:

*"There are three subjects of antiquarian interest in Laxton- The Church of St Michael's, the large earthworks called locally "The Old Hall Grounds", and the enclosed "three field system, ..."*

The order in which these subjects were presented may indicate the order of his interests!

In the Rev A.W. Keeton's booklet "Laxton and its Past" the only entry relevant to the 1900-1920's was a reference to Rev C.B. Collinson:

*'I am greatly indebted to the scholarly industry of my predecessor, the late Rev C. B. Collinson, who left behind him three large manuscript volumes of documents and excerpts, and much other valuable material.'*

Sadly, these documents appear to be untraceable. They would have been an amazing source of information and insight to this period.

In 1911 Rev. C. B. Collinson was also chaplain to the Derbyshire Regiment of the Territorials.

From the beginning of February 1916 the Parish Church service was held in the afternoon rather than the evening.

On Sunday 3rd September 1916 Rev CB Collinson conducted his farewell service and The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times reads:

*'On Sunday the Rev C.B Collinson preached his farewell service as vicar of Laxton, although his official resignation does not take place until the 30th September. The service was also an Intercessory War Service with special reference to the death of Corporal O. P. Willis. The Vicar spoke from the text "At the time appointed the end cometh." In bidding farewell to his parishioners he spoke of the beautiful and historic building in which they worshipped, of those he had baptised and confirmed, of the bright and hearty services, especially on the great Festivals, and very feelingly referred to those who had passed on before, particularly the one who had lately so nobly laid down his life. The service was most impressive, especially the Litany for War Time, which was sung kneeling at the end of the service. The parishioners presented the Rev C. B. Collinson and Mrs. Collinson with a beautiful silver rose bowl, for which each of the subscribers has received the sincere thanks of the recipients.'*

This must have been a most moving service, remembering the life sacrificed by a courageous young man, away at war and that of, what I can only imagine to be, a well respected clergyman who did so much for the village during his time as Vicar of the Parish. Edith Hickson sums up their departure very aptly; *"...when he left the place, Laxton lost its most distinguished couple."* A Rev. G. R. Chell, who had once been the vicar of Kneesall took church services until the appointment of the new vicar.

## CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Attendance at church services during this time seems to have been a little irregular. Special services like Easter, Christmas, Harvest Festival, Plough Sunday, (Sunday between the 7th and 13th January) Mothering Sunday etc. and the more personally connected services like Christenings, Weddings and Funerals received a greater presence. They also held a service in August ‘to ask God’s blessing on the gathering in of crops.’ In 1912 Easter communicants are said to have peaked at 101, an amazing number considering the size of the village. There were reportedly 45 children on the Sunday School roll in this year.

The most well attended services, when the church was reportedly full during this period, was the service held on the day of Edward VII’s funeral in 1910 when Rev. Collinson stated:

*‘practically the whole adult population attended and most of the younger ones, and almost all were in black. A very solemn and impressive occasion.’*

A full church also appears to have taken place for the subsequent service to celebrate the coronation of George V in 1911. Such occasions are rare, but occurred during the period.

It was reported, *‘On Easter Day 1914, there were celebrations of Holy Communion at 7.45 and at mid-day, and at Moorhouse Chapel-of-ease. The total number of communicants was 90.’* This indicates the parishioners’ involvement in the church at the main services in the church calendar and supports the opening statement.

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**“THEY ALSO HELD A SERVICE IN AUGUST ‘TO ASK GOD’S BLESSING ON THE GATHERING IN OF CROPS’”**

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## THE CHURCH BUILDING 1900-1920

The upkeep of the church appears to have been financed by the income derived from the rent on a small acreage of church lands, a church rate, offerings, and specific fund raising activities including jumble sales. Lord Manvers made a donation of £10 each year towards running costs of the church which had spent over the proposed £2000 pounds on extensive restoration work in 1859/60.

New church gates and a path cost £44 in 1907, and the iron gates £76 in 1907, and £182 in 1912-13. (Thanks to the research by John Beckett for his book for this information.) As the 3rd Earl Manvers had died in 1900, the 4th Earl, Charles William Sydney Pierrepont who succeeded him, would have been the Lord Manvers mentioned above.

Several memorials were erected in church relating to people of the period. A brass plaque in church, to the side of the altar reads:

*TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF  
SYDNEY HERBERT 3RD EARL MANVERS  
WHO DIED 16TH JANUARY 1900  
THIS REREDOS WAS ERECTED IN HIS  
MEMORY BY HIS LAXTON TENANTS*

In the Retford Gainsborough and Worksop Times 8th June 1900 an Entry for LAXTON reads:

*“A bazaar was held in the schoolroom on Tuesday last in order to raise money for the improvement of the interior of the Parish Church. The bazaar was opened at 3 o’clock by the Countess Manvers. The vicar (the Rev C. B. Collinson) welcomed the Lord and Lady Manvers to Laxton, and in speaking of the improvement of the Church, stated that the memorial*

to the late Earl, which had been subscribed to by the tenantry of Laxton, would take the form of a new reredos. Lady Manvers expressed her great pleasure in coming to Laxton, and declared the bazaar open. Three hearty cheers were given to the Manvers',” and Earl Manvers spoke of a “kind feeling that always existed between Laxton and Thoresby.”

By October of that year an article from the same publisher informs us that a new altar and reredos had been erected, the former a gift of the Rev. H. A. Martin, (Rev. Collinson’s predecessor). The reredos was: “a memorial to the late Earl Manvers, who during his lifetime was such a great benefactor to the villagers. The work consists of beautifully carved oak from designs of Mr Hodgson Fowler.”

Earl Manvers had died in January of this year and ten months later his memorial, and a new altar, had been made and were in place in the church and dedicated by the Bishop of Derby at the Thursday Harvest Festival Service of Feast Week. It is impressive how quickly these objects were produced.

Other items were given in memory of people during this time. The oak pulpit was given in memory of Rev. Collinson. The dedication can be seen today:

IN MEMORY OF CHRISTOPHER  
BARBER COLLINSON, PRIEST,  
VICAR OF LAXTON, 1898-1916

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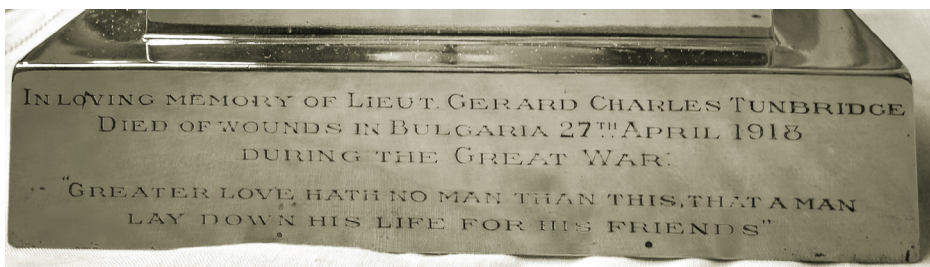
## Pictured

*The carved inscription to Rev. C. B. Collinson on the Pulpit*

*The reredos in memory of Earl Manvers*

*The Altar Cross and inscription to Lieut Gerard Chambers Tunbridge*





The Altar Cross, as seen today, is inscribed:

*IN LOVING MEMORY OF LIEUT  
GERARD CHAMBERS TUNBRIDGE  
DIED OF WOUNDS IN BULGARIA,  
27TH APRIL 1918  
DURING THE GREAT WAR*



## THE CHURCH CHOIR

The Church Choir was very popular and active, numbering over twenty choristers, and achieving excellent accounts of their renditions. They appear to have had an annual outing during the summer, varying from a day on the Lincolnshire Coast to Lincoln Cathedral to hear “the great musical festival”. On this occasion they travelled by train from Tuxford LD and EC Station to Lincoln, leaving at eleven o’clock and getting back at eight o’clock. I wonder how long they were in the cathedral and how long on the train? How did they get to Tuxford first, by horse and cart or ‘Shanks’ Pony’?

In The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times of 3rd July 1903 reports:

*“Through the kindness of the vicar (Rev. C. B. Collinson) the members of the Parish Church choir had their annual outing Tuesday last. This year they were taken to Scarborough, and had a capital day. A start was made from Tuxford G.N.R at 7.20, and Scarborough was reached at 11.20. Dinner and tea were served at The Grand Hotel Restaurant. Boating, bathing, entertainments on the sands etc. formed the chief amusements during the afternoon. After tea the boys were particularly interested in watching from the castle rock, the firing of the canon. The party reached Tuxford again at 10.30.”*

What an early start to make that day but I would imagine well worth it and one to remember! The train journey alone took four hours but they would enjoy at least seven hours in Scarborough. After the journey home from Tuxford it would be straight to bed no doubt, as work was the order of the day the following

morning. The Grand Hotel was the most prestigious hotel in Scarborough at the time.

Five years later it reports on the account of the Choir Outing reading:

*... 'This year the place was Cleethorpes. Messrs. Bartle, Wm. Moody, and Whitworth very kindly conveyed the party, which also included the senior scholars of the day school, to and from the station. A start was made from Boughton at 9 o'clock, the train arriving in Cleethorpes soon after 11.'*

Further on in this write up it went on to say:

*'All kinds of amusements were heartily enjoyed, including donkey riding, aerial flights, motor rides, sails on the fairy river etc.'*

Aerial flights and motor rides must have been a great thrill. The former is very much so today. At the end it goes on to state

*'Mr Willis, who had charge of the party, was requested to convey the hearty thanks of the members of the choir to the Vicar for his kindness and generosity in providing this treat.'*

It was certainly a very generous act of Rev. C. B. Collinson to treat the members of the choir each year to, what must have been, such memorable days for them all.

On the 11th August 1911 the following account of the annual Church Choir outing appears:

*CHOIR OUTING:-Through the kindness of the Vicar, the Rev. C. B. Collinson, the choir of the Parish Church had a trip to Skegness on Thursday.*




---

## Pictured

Laxton Church  
Choir Members

Back Row, Left to Right:  
Harold Sampson  
Billy Bamford  
(Organ Blower)  
Frank Moody  
Bernard Atkins  
Dick Cocking  
Son Bennett

Seated:  
Samuel Moody  
George Burkitt  
Richard Clarke  
(Church Warden)  
Mr Willis  
(Organist, School  
Master)  
James Price  
G.B. Atkins  
Jack Cook

Front Row, Left to Right:  
Fred Sampson  
Steve Marrison  
Walter Laughton  
Tom Marrison  
Eric Sampson

*Unfortunately the weather was very unfavourable in the morning, but after dinner it brightened up... the younger members of the party amused themselves with donkey riding, paddling, etc. whilst some of the seniors attended a concert in the Pavilion, and others went for a sail. All seemed to heartily enjoy the outing. The Choir of the Primitive Methodist Chapel also arranged to have their annual outing by the same train.*

*Unfortunately Miss Merrills (organist) and the senior members of the choir were caught in a heavy storm whilst cycling to the station, and as they were wet through were obliged to return at once greatly disappointed.'*

They would have been even more disappointed after reading this article. One can only but feel sorry for them and it does make you realise how we take transport today for granted and how hard life was a hundred years ago.

# THE MOTHER'S UNION

Laxton Mother's Union was formed in 1898 and therefore was in its early years during the period of this study.

In church, a certificate celebrating 110 years of Laxton Mother's Union, is on display today. On 10th October 1906 an account appears in the Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times reporting the annual outing when they went to Thoresby Park:

*"About thirty members journeyed by traps to Thoresby, where they were met by Mr R. W. Wordsworth. A plentiful supply of refreshments awaited them. After visiting the Hall, the grounds, and Perlethorpe Church, the party proceeded to Whitmoor, where they were entertained to a capital tea by Mr and Mrs Wordsworth. The weather was all that could be desired and most thoroughly enjoyed by all."*

What a sight that would have been!

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## Pictured

Certificate celebrating 110 years of Laxton Mother's Union



# St. Michael's Church, LAXTON.



*St. Michael's Church, Laxton.*

## Parish Almanack,

1911.

NEWARK :

J. STENNETT, PRINTER, MARKET-PLACE AND CHURCH-STREET.



# THE PARISH ALMANAC

Each year a Parish Almanac was produced. The outside and inside cover being the only part pertinent to Laxton and appears to be written by the vicar recording information about the previous year.

The front inside cover started with the parish Register and gave the Baptisms, Marriages, and Burials followed by a list of the services for LAXTON AND MOORHOUSE.

The back inside cover started with a TABLE OF OFFERINGS AND FEES PAYABLE IN THIS PARISH and then a letter from the vicar starting, DEAR FRIENDS AND PARISHIONERS, and continuing with a very brief résumé of events the previous year.

On the back cover there was a brief account of events that happened at the school and a list of scholars who had achieved full attendance at school i.e. 408 sessions, and those who had been absent no more than the equivalent of three and a half days.

## REV. JAMES TUNBRIDGE 14TH NOV 1916–MAR 1921

The announcement of the appointment of Rev. James Tunbridge appears in the Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times on the 27th October 1916:

*'PARISH CHURCH:-The Rev. J. Tunbridge, late of Bisbrook, near Uppingham has now commenced duties at Laxton. He was formerly on the staff of the Church Missionary Society, and has spent many years in India on mission work.'*

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### Pictured

*The cover of the  
1911 Almanac*

Strangely enough that was all that was said on this occasion of Rev. Tunbridge. The article then continues with:

*“It has been found impossible to darken the Parish Church for evening service, and the parishioners, having expressed a wish that some arrangements should be made for evening service, it is proposed to find curtains for the schoolroom and hold services there instead of in the afternoon at the Parish Church.”*

This article appears one month after the Zeppelin Airship LZ17 dropped a bomb in the River Trent at North Muskham on the night of the 24th Sept 1916. It went on to cause much damage in Nottingham. Two months earlier posters had been displayed around Nottinghamshire, in July 1916, giving strict instructions and forbidding the use of electric torches, flash lights, even cycle lamps and bull’s eye lanterns. It would appear that blackout restrictions were the reason for afternoon services in the church.

Rev. James Tunbridge was inducted at Laxton and it appears in the 24th November issue as THE NEW VICAR:

*The Rev James Tunbridge was instituted into the living of Laxton by the Lord Bishop of The Diocese of Southwell on November 1st. The Induction took place at the Parish Church on Tuesday Nov 14th, when the Ven. Archdeacon of Newark conducted the ceremony. The service was held at 2.30pm.*

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# THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST. MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL, LAXTON, PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIVING IN THE VILLAGE AT THESE TIMES

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In an article 2nd March 1917 it states:

*'LAXTON*

*Owing to the illness of the Rev. J Tunbridge, Vicar, the ordinary Church services were not held on Sunday. Mr Willis conducted a service in the Schoolroom in the evening.*

*A meeting was held on Friday evening in order to try to increase the staff of Sunday school teachers. In the absence of the vicar through illness, Mr Willis explained the proposals. The following promised their assistance:- Mrs Hare, Mrs Moody, Miss Bennett, Miss W. Moody and Miss A. Clarke. it was decided to begin the new arrangements at once.'*

The Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel, Laxton, played an important part in the lives of people living in the village at these times. They also had dedicated Vicars who tried to support them in all aspects of daily life.

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“THERE WAS A GOOD COMPANY ATTENDED, THE CHAPEL BEING CROWDED. THE SINGING WAS EXCELLENT. MISS CLARA MERRILLS AND MISS ALICE BAGSHAW WERE FULLY APPLAUDED”

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# LAXTON PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL

The following accounts are a sample of those relating to the activities of the Laxton Primitive Methodist Chapel recorded in The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times.

They first appeared on the 4th April 1902:

*“LAXTON:*

*A service of song was given in the primitive Chapel at Laxton on Friday night, last, in aid of the funds for the restoration of the chapel. There was a good company attended, the chapel being crowded. The singing was excellent. Miss Clara Merrills and Miss Alice Bagshaw were fully applauded. Messrs. S Moody, F Rose and S. Bartle also contributed. The choir acquitted themselves in a most credible manner. Great praise is due to Miss Small (choirmaster), for her untiring efforts in trying to make this function a success.”*

On the 24th February 1905 this article appeared relating to a Service of Song:

*“On Thursday evening, in the primitive Methodist Chapel, a service of song, entitled ‘Two Cabins’ was ably rendered by the Tuxford Wesleyan Choir, assisted by a string band.*

*After the service of song a presentation took place of a new Methodist Hymn Book to Mr. E. Small, who had been leader of the class for over eleven years, and also a marble timepiece to Miss E. Small who had presided at the organ for the same time... They are leaving Laxton for East Drayton.*

In January 1908 the following article appears and throws light upon the Congregational / Primitive Methodist situation:

*“LAXTON:*

*At a meeting of the District Executive Committee in the Sheffield District at Sheffield, correspondence in reference to the deeds of a Congregational Church at Laxton, which is occupied by the Primitive Methodist Church for several years was considered and a resolution adopted’ disapproving of any interference with the existing arrangements.”*

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**“THE REV. C. E. ALBON  
PRESENTED MISS  
MERRILLS, WHO HAS  
BEEN ORGANIST FOR  
OVER 11 YEARS, ON  
THE APPROACH OF  
HER MARRIAGE WITH  
A PURSE OF GOLD  
ON BEHALF OF THE  
MEMBERS AND FRIENDS”**

---

In December 1915 the following appears showing appreciation of the church organist:

*“On Tuesday evening, at the close of the service at the Primitive Methodist Church, the Rev. C. E. Albon presented Miss Merrills, who has been organist for over 11 years, on the approach of her marriage with a purse of gold on behalf of the members and friends. Expressions of thanks for her past services and good wishes for her future prosperity were given. Miss Merrills suitably replied.”*

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THE WINDOW  
SILLS WERE ALSO  
LAVISHLY COVERED  
IN DECORATIONS  
USING HARVEST  
PRODUCE WHICH  
WAS SOLD AFTER  
THE SUNDAY SERVICE

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# FEAST WEEK

‘Feast Week’, a past village annual event, has recently been much talked about and I have been curious to know if it was linked to the Harvest Festival Services. As a child, I remember attending an evening Harvest Festival Service on a Thursday early in October, followed by a further service on the following Sunday evening.

The church, in my childhood memories, was always beautifully decorated. Most eye-catching for a child were the pillars, which were covered in reeds forming a spiral running down them, from the very top to the floor.

The window sills were also lavishly covered in decorations using harvest produce which was sold after the Sunday service. Did this tradition originate from ‘Feast Week’? I now know that the Harvest Festival Service was held on the Sunday nearest to the 11th October, and presumably the previous Thursday. Why this was I haven’t been able to discover and thought it may have been the saint’s day celebrating St Michael The Archangel, but that falls on the 29th September. Could it have been governed by the school holidays?

The first account of the celebrated 'Feast Week' for the period of this particular booklet, 1900-1920 appears to be a brief account in The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times.

The article is dated 10th October 1902 and reads:

*"LAXTON:*

*Next week is the Feast week at Laxton and general preparations are being made throughout the village. A comedian has been engaged by Mr R Watling of the Dove Cote Inn."*

This, no doubt, proved to be a successful advertisement as the following week, on 17th October 1902, this article appeared in the paper:

*"LAXTON*

*This week has been the Feast week, and although the weather has been very unsettled the village has been visited by several visitors. There has been dancing at the Dove Cote Inn nightly. A comedian named Jimmy O'Hara, engaged at the village inn, has served to enliven the inhabitants. Messrs. Ball and Eva have also visited this place with their cinematograph, etc."*

The following year, under the title 'THE FEAST', an article dated 16th October 1903 appears in the same publication and reads:

*"Last Sunday was Feast Sunday, when it poured with rain from morning till night; consequently the village wore anything but a festive appearance. There were special services at the Parish Church, but the congregations were much affected by the wretched weather. In the evening the choir gave an excellent rendering of Simper's anthem,*

*"Fear not, O Lord." There is the usual show of stalls, roundabouts etc., but the business has been considerably interfered with by the rain."*

One can really feel the annoyance of the correspondent!

I feel my questions relating to the links of 'Feast Week' to the Harvest Festival of my childhood days may have been answered by the article appearing on 21st October 1904 which reads:

*"LAXTON:*

*During the Feast Week there have been a large number of visitors, and the special services at the Parish Church have been remarkably well attended. As usual the harvest festival was held on Thursday in Feast Week. The vicar, the Rev. C.B. Collinson took the prayers. The Rev. C. Jenner and the Rev. C. Gamson read the lessons, and the latter preached a very appropriate sermon. The church was tastefully decorated. The altar was adorned with white dahlias and the sedilia with fruit, ferns and chrysanthemums. Around the pillars were wreaths of wheat and oats in which were fastened lovely reeds.*

*Some of the small sheaves of corn were placed on the top of the beautiful oak screen. The font looked nice with its wreaths of wheat and oats, and its Michaelmas daisies. Great care had also been bestowed on the windows, which were adorned with moss, corn and flowers. A table was placed in each of the two side arches. On each was a large loaf of bread, around which was a quantity of fruit, corn, and flowers were arranged. The service was very bright, and the congregation joined heartily in the singing.*

*The services were continued on Sunday. The offertories, which amounted to £3 10s., are to be devoted to the fund for providing new gates at the entrance to the churchyard. On Sunday afternoon there was also a special thanksgiving service at the Moorhouse chapel-of-ease, when there was a good congregation.”*

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## SITTING IN SUCH A LARGE, IMPRESSIVE CHURCH AS IT IS, ONE CAN IMAGINE ITS TRUE GLORY AT THIS TIME

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What a colourful picture of the church decorations at harvest is given by this article! Sitting in such a large, impressive church as it is, one can imagine its true glory at this time. I'm thrilled my memories of Harvest Festivals at St. Michael the Archangel are linked to Feast Week and a little saddened that in my childhood the activities of the rest of the week had been discontinued. I would have loved to have had fun playing on the merry-go-round, and all the other

entertainment as *“in the green yard there had been the usual ‘Aunt Sallies’, shooting galleries and swing boats etc”* What a spectacle!

In 1910 we get a picture of the people involved that year. The account also confirms that school holidays took place during Feast Week:

*“The following ladies kindly assisted with the decorations:- Mrs Collinson, Mrs Willis, Mrs Cook, Miss Willis, Miss Bagshaw, the Misses Bennett, Miss Lloyd and Miss Saxilby. Some of the farmers very kindly sent a quantity of corn, and many of*

*the parishioners sent flowers, fruit, and vegetables. Messrs. Marrison of Westwood Farm, did some beautiful trellis work for the screen and side arches. The offerings amounted to £4 2s 5d. There have been the usual amusements in the Green Yard adjoining the Dove Cote Inn. Monday and Thursday were the chief days for enjoyment, and the children attending the parish school had a holiday on those days according to custom."*

In that year there is no mention of the fund to which the collection money would be given. Usually it was used by the church for such projects as the new gates and entrances to the churchyard, repair of pathways, refurbishment of bells etc.

Interestingly, in the 1911 account it states: *"The offerings of fruit and vegetables were given to Newark Hospital."*

This practice was still carried on much later into the century. At all the services during the period, 1900-1920 the choir played a very prominent part and was always congratulated on the performances. Usually a visiting vicar, from a church in the locality, preached the sermon.

After the Elementary Education act of 1870, when elementary education became compulsory, 'Feast Week' ceased to be a week's holiday for the children and was reduced to a Monday and a Thursday.

**"MONDAY AND THURSDAY WERE THE CHIEF DAYS FOR ENJOYMENT, AND THE CHILDREN ATTENDING THE PARISH SCHOOL HAD A HOLIDAY ON THOSE DAYS ACCORDING TO CUSTOM"**

I wouldn't be surprised if the attendance at school was poor during this week, especially if the amusements were open during the daytime!

During Feast Week in 1913 a Mr Ball who owned the swing boats, shooting galleries etc:

*“met with a nasty accident on Thursday morning. A horse attached to one of the caravans plunged and knocked him down and trod on his leg, tearing open the flesh and causing serious injury to his ankle. Dr Whittington was immediately sent for, and stated that the accident might prove serious. Mr Ball was, however, removed from Laxton the next day.”*

There appears to be no follow-up as to his recovery.

Discovering information about this annual village activity has been fascinating. Sadly, I have no recollections of 'Feast Week' being talked about by my family but it appears to have been a very special time during the year for the people of Laxton.

Janet Cooke (nee Sayer) recalls her grandfather, Mark Bailey, saying words to the effect that once the bells of the church stopped ringing for Thursday Harvest Festival Service, it was an indicator to the fairground organiser that he had to prepare the machinery to build up steam to activate the organ etc. It took the length of the service to get 'a full head of steam' for everything to be fully operational for when the parishioners descended on the Green Yard after the service.

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MR. BALL MET WITH A  
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“THERE SEEMS NO REASON TO DOUBT THAT THE REVIVAL OF PLOUGHING MATCHES, WHICH WERE SO POPULAR IN RURAL DISTRICTS A GENERATION AGO, IS LIKELY TO BE ATTENDED WITH A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF SUCCESS”

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# PLOUGHING MATCHES

On the 29th October 1909 an article that appeared in The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times started with the following words:

*“The second annual ploughing and hedge cutting competitions held under the auspices of the Notts. Agricultural Society took place on Thursday on the Grange Farm, Ruddington. The entries were considerably more than last year, there being 43 in the ploughing competition and 19 in the hedge cutting.”*

At the luncheon over which Earl Manvers presided he is reported as saying that:

*“...these ploughing competitions were excellent things for the future prosperity of farming. Ploughing would be more important in years to come than at present, because he believed the price of corn would go up again, and they would see some of that land which was laid down to grass 30 years ago ploughed up. (Applause)”*

Some very political statements were made by several people at this luncheon. It appears, from the beginning of the article, that the ploughing matches started in 1908. This particular account does not give any details or results of the competitions held.

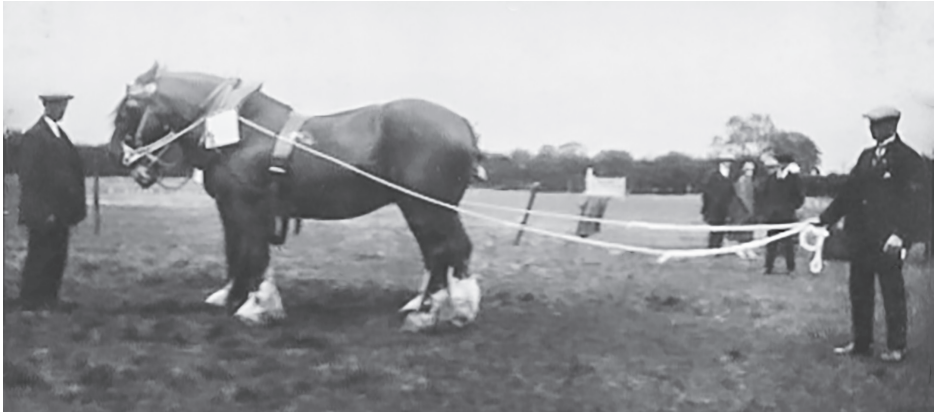
In November 1909 another successful ploughing competition took place under the auspices of the newly formed Thoresby Estate Ploughing Association. The author states in this article that:

*“There was once again a good attendance, and, judging by the critical interest with which the proceedings were watched, and the keenness evinced by the competitors, there seems no reason to doubt that the revival of ploughing matches, which were so popular in rural districts a generation ago, is likely to be attended with a considerable amount of success.”*

The task for the competitors in the ploughing matches was to plough half an acre of land within 4½ hours at 8 o'clock in the morning. No plough was to exceed 4ft 6ins from point to share to end of breast. Not only did ploughing and hedge laying competitions take place but also prizes were awarded for: *“the best pair of agricultural horses, soundness and general turn-out.”* The horses entered had to have taken part in the ploughing competitions but not necessarily had success.

The Thoresby estate competitions appear to have included a thatching competition. The prize was awarded: *“to the man who shall thatch with loose straw at least one, and cover with sheaves at least one stack in the best and most workmanlike manner.”*

There does not appear to have been any hedging competitions at this particular ploughing match.



This was much to the regret of Lord Manvers as he said that:

*“One of the reasons he took such great interest in it was because he had always been a great lover of fox hunting, and he hoped that if the farmers improved their fences and hedges there would be no need to use that curse of hunting, barbed wire.”*

The following year, November 1910, the ploughing competition was held at Laxton:

*“Earl Manvers expressed pleasure at the increase in the numbers of entries, which were greater than the previous year. He was also glad that they had seen some good plashing and some good teams of horses. These competitions did great good; the land would be better ploughed and the hedges better looked after so that there would be no need for barbed wire. So strong were his feelings about barbed wire since his serious accident that he would not speak to any tenant of his who used it in his hedges.”*

---

#### Pictured

*These horses may have been entered in the competition for the best pair of agricultural horses*

In 1913 Earl Manvers said that:

*“He sincerely hoped that young men would take a great interest in ploughing matches. He was anxious to see country life made attractive, so that there would not be such numbers of young people going off to the towns and cities.”*

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**EARL MANVERS  
“WAS ANXIOUS  
TO SEE COUNTRY  
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THE TOWNS  
AND CITIES”**

---

During this time Mr R. W. Wordsworth was the agent to Earl Manvers.

It was also reported in 1913 that Mr Thomas Marrison (Westwood Farm) and his men had had several successes during the season at Laxton, Collingham, Sutton-on-Trent and Perlethorpe. Mr Frank Marshall had won a first prize for ploughing at each event.

Others to win prizes for the group were Charles Taylor, George Saxilby and Charles Marshall. Altogether they had achieved the sum of £14 15s in prize money. That would be

a very good figure during this period. Not only did they receive prize money but they were also given beautiful certificates.

After the 1913 reports nothing appears relating to ploughing matches until November 1920. The ploughing matches stopped immediately after the outbreak of World War I and it was not until two years after it had ended that they were reinstated.

Many agricultural horses were taken to work at The Front during the war and Laxton lost its share of horses. The Retford Gainsborough and Worksop Times for the 12th November 1920 mentions the 'Rufford Hunt Ploughing Match and Foal Show' and it appears that this ploughing event replaced the Thoresby estates' and tenants' competitions.

In this article, Earl Manvers:

*"congratulated everyone who had in any way contributed to the success of the show, which was the first they had held for some years and hoped it would not be the last."*

He continued to say:

*"We are aware of the critical times through which we passed two or three years ago, but hoped that things would now settle down and a prosperous period dawn for all classes. He hoped farmers would sow a lot of wheat as a duty from a patriotic point of view so that England might be a little more independent of other countries."*

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**MANY  
AGRICULTURAL  
HORSES WERE  
TAKEN TO  
WORK AT THE  
FRONT DURING  
THE WAR AND  
LAXTON LOST  
ITS SHARE  
OF HORSES**

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# MAYPOLE DANCING

Only one or two accounts connected with Maypole Dancing exist. We know that Maypole dancing took place during the celebrations for the coronation of George V on 22nd June 1911 as two articles appear in The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times. Details of these articles are in the section about the coronations which took place during the period.

The photograph opposite is thought to have taken place at the back of the last farm on the left as you go out of the village towards Egmanton. It appears to date to the period. My Auntie Hilda, who was born in the village in the late 1920's, has a photograph of herself as the May Queen with her attendants. This photograph was taken when she was a five year old little girl and is therefore just outside our period of study.

It is difficult to say whether Maypole Dancing festivities took place annually as I have been unable to find sufficient information to establish that this was the case.



# THE BELGIAN REFUGEES

Reading an article from The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times dated 11th December 1914, I discovered that just before Christmas 1914 a party of eight refugees arrived at Laxton on the Monday evening prior to that publication.

I am assuming that the arrival of the refugees took place on the 7th December. They consisted of two families, a lawyer and his wife and three children and their servants (presumably the second family).

They arrived at Mansfield station from Folkestone. At Mansfield, three cars awaited them to bring them to Laxton. They were accompanied by Mrs Stacey (secretary of the Mansfield Refugee Committee), Mr Houghton and Mr Stacey. Earl Manvers had provided them with a cottage and the parishioners had furnished it and also gave a written promise “to subscribe so much per week as long as the war lasts or until the refugees can return.” The intention was to support the family without outside help. Mrs Collinson collected the subscriptions.



Apparently the lawyer, (un-named in the article) knew some English. They had escaped from Ypres where they, and especially the children aged six, four and two years, had suffered. My Uncle, Tom Barlow, when visiting Laxton, used to talk to Joe Moody about their war experiences. Uncle Tom, having been at Ypres, gave me some idea of the terrible times there and the suffering.

Several years ago I visited the Museum there and saw the exhibitions relating to the war. The town was flattened! The photographs appalling! Being there was a very moving experience and I can fully understand what a relief it must have been to be away from the carnage. Thankfully the article continues:

*“They seem to be well settled in their comfortable cottage, and are very grateful to the parishioners for the kindness which has so generously been shown”.*

The family name was van Batenburg. Herman van Batenburg was admitted to school in December 1914 when he was six years old. It appears his father loved painting views of the village and rural life and gave several paintings to parishioners.

Further information connected with the 1st World War is contained in a separate book.

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BENEVOLENCE  
AND FRIENDSHIP”

---



# THE ANCIENT ORDER OF DRUIDS

## THE LEXINGTON ORDER OF THE ANCIENT ORDER OF DRUIDS

The Ancient Order of Druids (AOD) is a fraternal organisation and still operates today. The AOD organisation, on its website, states:

*“Its object is to preserve and practise the main principles attributed to the early Druids, particularly those of justice, benevolence and friendship. Ours is not a religious organisation - in fact any discussion on religion and politics is forbidden within lodge rooms.”*

The Ancient Order of Druids in Laxton was a very active one and sometimes celebrated having over forty members, and according to Edith Hickson in her book ‘Life at Laxton’, it was “*belonging entirely to the workmen of the village.*” During the month of June they held their annual parade and this appears to have been a very colourful occasion.

Accounts in The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times for our period, first appeared in 1902:

*“The annual club feast in connection with the Ancient Order of Druids was held on Thursday last. The members marched in procession to the Parish Church, headed by the Calverton Brass Band. A short bright service was held, and a most excellent sermon was preached by Gamaton, (sic) vicar of Normanton. The members dined at the Dovecote Inn, and dinner was served in capital style by Mr and Mrs Watling. It was intended to have cricket and other sports, but the weather was so unfavourable that it was impossible to have any outdoor sports. In the evening dancing was kept up until eleven o’clock to the music of the band.”*

Again the following year, the club feast was held on the Thursday of Whit Week, which on looking at the dates of the subsequent accounts it appears that this was so each year. In 1903 they were headed by the Calverton Brass Band: *“The Laxton Branch of this benefit society now numbers about forty members.”*

In 1905 they were headed by the Tuxford Temperance Band. This year the vicar of Normanton returned and gave:

*“an excellent sermon was preached by the Rev. C. R. Gamson, Vicar of Normanton-on -Trent. The band afterwards played selections on the Vicarage lawn and paraded the village. Dinner was provided by Mr and Mrs Price of the Dovecote Inn. In the evening a dance was held in the clubroom, when there was a large attendance. The whole of the proceedings passed off most successfully.”*

In 1909, in the annual account (11th June), we read the actual title of the Lodge as it starts with:

*DRUIDS DINNER.- The 15th anniversary dinner of the Lexington Excelsior Lodge of the Sheffield Order of Druids was held in the vicarage room at Laxton on Thursday.*

On this occasion an excellent lunch was provided in the Vicarage Room by “Mr Cuckson of the Mail Hotel, Tuxford.” The band leading them on this parade was the Maplebeck Brass Band. It is fascinating reading these accounts, to see that so many villages had their own brass bands and that the Laxton Druids supported them.

In 1912 (19th July) this brief account appears:

*”INSURANCE ACT.- On Saturday evening, under the auspices of the Lexington branch of the Ancient Order of Druids, Mr Richardson, of the Miner’s Lodge, Mansfield, gave an address on the working of the Insurance Act with regard to friendly societies in the Vicarage Room”.*

The previous week’s account, appearing under the same title reads:

*“...Unfortunately the speaker did not turn up. There was a good attendance and those present discussed amongst themselves the method of working the Act in conjunction with their branch of the Druids.”*

Edith Hickson also goes on to say in her book, “Fortunately an old photograph exists showing both Jolly Sampson and Herbert (Pinder) as Druids”.

She goes on to recall one occasion with the Calverton Brass Band:

*“Two abreast, the Druids, behind the band, marched to church for a special service and, after that, they marched up and down the streets to the pom, pom, pom of the enormous drum and the tootling of the various wind instruments.”*

Later on she adds:

*“The leading Druids bore a large blue silk banner on poles and on it was a large circle enclosing an old man and a young man clasping hands and the words ‘Sheffield Equalised Independent Druids’. That banner must have been five to six yards long and less in depth...each man and ewth (sic) wore round his neck or aslant his chest a blue silk sash with the same motto.’*

Sadly I have been unable to trace the photograph she mentions or any of the regalia associated with ‘The Sheffield Order of Druids’, though on some of the banners belonging to other towns and cities there is a picture of an older and younger man standing together.

One notable member of the A.O.D. at this time was Winston Churchill who belonged to the Albion Lodge of the Anciente Order of Druids of Oxford.

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“EACH MAN AND  
EWTH (SIC) WORE  
ROUND HIS NECK  
OR ASLANT HIS  
CHEST A BLUE  
SILK SASH WITH  
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‘SHEFFIELD EQUALISED  
INDEPENDENT DRUIDS’

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“A FARMER, WHO WAS ABOUT TO SHOOT HIS DOG FOR BITING HIM, CAUGHT HIS SERVANT AS WELL! UNFORTUNATELY, HIS SERVANT, WHO WALKED THROUGH THE DOOR AT THE VERY MOMENT THE GUN WAS FIRED, CAUGHT SHOT IN BOTH HIS KNEES”

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# ACCIDENTS DID HAPPEN!

We are very aware today, with so much Health and Safety advice and documentation at our finger tips, of the dangers in our daily lives and no more so than the Agricultural Industry.

## DEATHS OF INFANTS

In 1901 there was the sad death of a baby girl just seventeen days old. The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times of 22nd February 1901 reported on the inquest of the infant. The baby's name was Ruth Walker and her father, Thomas Walker said:

*"On Tuesday she appeared to have a slight cold which began on the Monday. It got worse and his wife sent a note to Dr. Holmstead of Tuxford on Tuesday . -Jane Dolby said she lived at Laxton, and had been helping Mrs Walker with the deceased as nurse. She was there on the previous Tuesday night and saw the child was poorly. It had a cough. Mrs Walker had told her she had sent for the doctor who had sent a bottle*

*of medicine. - Mr C. W. Holmstead said he was a registered surgeon, practising at Tuxford. He had not attended any of Mr Walker's children before. He received a note from Mrs Walker asking him to call as deceased had a cold and appeared to have some difficulty in breathing. He made up a bottle of medicine and sent it back by bearer, and said he would call the next day. He did so and found the child had died. He did not see it on that day. He afterwards had a conversation with the mother and nurse, who he thought did everything possible for the child."*

He attributed death to acute inflammation to the lungs. What a tragic case? This was health care in the days before the National Health Service.

Another tragic death of an infant was reported two years later. Harold Fillingham, aged two years, drowned by falling into a 'pippin' half full of water. The mother, who was a single person, paid for nursing since the child was a young baby. She did not live in Laxton but he did and she saw him occasionally.

The person looking after the child said she had heard the child scream and thinking he had fallen over called, *'All right, I'll be there in a minute'*. When she got outside there was *'no child to be seen.'* She found him *'on his head in the pippin.'*

*"She at once took him out and tried to restore him, but it was of no use. She was fond of the child and should have kept him whether his mother paid her or not."*

The coroner said it was quite clear that it was an accident, and no blame was attached. A verdict of *'Accidentally drowned by falling into a dolly tub'* was unanimously agreed.

## ANOTHER ACCIDENT

Under the title, 'Another Accident' it was reported in 1901 that Mrs Rose (90 years):

*"...is remarkably active , and as she was going about the house on Saturday morning she caught her foot in a mat and fell with her leg under her causing a bad fracture above the knee... It is a remarkable fact that there are now four persons in the village suffering from broken bones."*

Mrs Rose sadly died a few days later.

## EXAMPLE OF A SHOOTING ACCIDENT

One such incident was where a farmer, who was about to shoot his dog for biting him, caught his servant as well! Unfortunately, his servant, who walked through the door at the very moment the gun was fired, caught shot in both his knees! Dr Holmstead was on hand as he was luckily in the village. The servant appears to have made a successful recovery.

## EXAMPLE OF ACCIDENT INVOLVING DRIVER OF A DRAY

We are all aware sadly of accidents with horses in the Twenty-First Century, but in the period of study, horses were very common in the community, a necessity for working the farm land, transporting goods and as a means of personal travel.

In one reported incident a dray (a low, strong cart without fixed sides with four wheels, for carrying heavy loads) with a pair of horse belonging to Messrs. Dickens and Co., of Newark was going along the street in Laxton when one of the wheels of the vehicle

came off and the driver fell between the horses. This caused the horses to bolt, but we are told were soon stopped. However, one of the other wheels of the dray went over the man's foot:

*"In other respects he had a miraculous escape, especially as one of the horses kicked furiously. Man and horses were both taken to the Dove Cote Inn where they received every attention"*

This so easily could have been fatal, and, sadly, some accidents did result in death.

In 1913 the Inquest and Verdict of the death of Mr. Harold L. Marrison, aged 27 years was reported. He was a farmer and: *"sharpening a mowing machine knife, when it slipped out of the stand and cut through his boot inflicting a wound on his foot."* Dr Whittington saw the deceased and: *"found the knife had gone through the boot and stocking and nearly through the foot. he was bleeding very much."* He died from loss of blood and blood poisoning.

## AN ACCIDENT WHEN DRINKING BEER

On the 9th October 1914 the following report appeared:

*"WHEN DRINKING BEER. At an Inquest held at Whitworth's Farm on Saturday, the Jury found that James Rollis, 63, labourer, died through choking, while drinking ale, a mug of which had been given to him, after he had assisted to thresh ."*

It is, of course, very sad to read of these deaths caused by accidents and the shock to relatives would have been great.

These are only some of the accidents that took place but they show different causes that could happen in these days of the study.

Sometimes it was the animals that were injured as this article records:

*“VALUABLE HORSE INJURED*

*A steam roller was standing near Cross Hill, when a wagon drawn by two horses belonging to Mr Joseph Merrills was passing. A valuable mare in the shafts reared, and got her front leg over the chain attached to the front horse. The front horse jumped forward, throwing the rear one down, and galloped off, dragging its companion, which had its legs entangled in the chain. The animal was thus dragged about fifty yards. the flesh was abraded from both legs on the near side. Mr Talbot, the veterinary surgeon, Tuxford, was sent for immediately and described the injuries as serious.”*

One can imagine the fright and suffering of the poor animal. In the 1900's to 1920's a phone call was not an option. Someone would have had to ride to Tuxford, contact the vet and assuming he was at home, ask him to ride out to Laxton and attend to the animal. It could have easily been a couple of hours before the horse received attention.



# THE WOMEN'S LEAGUE

The Women's League was in existence in the village in 1900 when The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times printed the following articles. I am sure they were a very active group of ladies but I have been unable to discover many accounts of their activities. Mrs Collinson appears to have been the main organiser with meetings being held in the Vicarage Room.

The following report appeared on 20th July 1900:

## *“WOMEN'S LEAGUE*

*The members of the Laxton branch met at the vicarage on Friday last, and were entertained by Mrs Collinson. After tea, croquet was played on the lawn and a very pleasant evening was spent.”*

The following year, in December 1901, a Mrs Bradstock, of Ripley Hall, addressed members in the Vicarage Room. Lady Elinor Dennison from Ossington and Mrs. C. B. Collinson were present.

At a meeting of the Women's League in November 1904 a Miss Lucy Nevile of Lincoln gave an address 'Five years' work in Korea' She had returned from Korea in 1903. She described:

*"The difficulties on landing owing to having no one to interpret the language; the opening of a hospital, in order to make a favourable impression on the natives; and also the great difficulty of missionaries owing to the many different dialects among the Koreans.*

*With regard to food Miss Nevile said that it was simply impossible for English to eat the same food as Koreans, although the Bishop out there had strongly recommended them to do so."*

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“MR. S. BARTLE  
WAS CHOSEN  
CAPTAIN, AND IT  
WAS AGREED TO  
TRY AND ARRANGE  
MATCHES SO AS TO  
HAVE THEM FINISHED  
BEFORE THE HAY  
HARVEST BEGAN”

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# LAXTON CRICKET CLUB

The village Cricket Club Team seems to have been very active during the summer months of the period. Did this have anything to do with the fact that Rev. C.B. Collinson and Mr F Willis were very involved? In 1904 a meeting was held in April for:

*“the purpose of trying to reorganise the village cricket club. The vicar presided, and as several had expressed a wish to have a club, it was agreed to make a start at once. The subscription is to be 2s, to be paid on joining the club. Mr. S. Bartle was chosen captain, and it was agreed to try and arrange matches so as to have them finished before the hay harvest began.”*

– Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times  
29th April 1904

It is interesting to see that harvest took precedence over cricket. A year later there appears to have been an active Boys’ Cricket Club in existence.



---

## Pictured

*Laxton Cricket  
Club Members*

*Back Row Left to Right:*

*A. Grundy  
J. Price  
W. Barnes  
C. Hare  
W. Beckitt  
W. Quibell  
S. Sampson  
W. Sampson*

*Front Row Seated*

*Left to Right:  
G. Saxilby  
J. Cook  
R. Clark  
Kathleen Clark (Scorer)  
W. Pratt*

The results of matches were regularly reported in the press and it was a relief to read in one account:

*“Pratt and S. Bartle both did well with the ball. The former took five wickets for twelve runs, and the latter four wickets for ten runs.”*

S. Bartle was my grandfather. It is a relief to read of his success as in one account he had been bowled out, no score, a ‘duck’ one would presume. On these occasions there is no report regarding the bowling results.

What a sight they must have been, heading off in pony and traps, carts etc! Returning may have been even more fun if there had been a visit to the local hostelries by some members of the team! William Beckitt reports on cricket in ‘Open Field Recollections’ about his own exploits in cricket from 1910.

He writes:

*“The great event of the year was when we played Nottingham Post Office. Mr Sidney Johnson of Brockilow Farm always provided for us very generously with boiled ham for tea. If we could not win them at cricket, for they were a bit above our standard, we did do justice to the ham.”*

Regular accounts of matches played during the season appeared in the local papers. At each Annual General Meeting the finances of the club were presented and discussed and members’ subscriptions fixed.

In 1914 the accounts showed an income of £4 11s and the expenditure was £4 0s 6d. That would mean they were 10s and 6d in profit.

This money, that year, was to be spent on repairs to the roller. Application to hire the schoolroom during Easter week for a whist drive and dance was also agreed.

These meetings took place early in the year and the officers for that year were elected at this meeting.

---

**“MR SIDNEY  
JOHNSON OF  
BROCKILOW  
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IF WE COULD  
NOT WIN THEM  
AT CRICKET, FOR  
THEY WERE A  
BIT ABOVE OUR  
STANDARD, WE  
DID DO JUSTICE  
TO THE HAM”**

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## Pictured

*Top: Lilly and Jack's Wedding*

*Bottom: Alice and Mark's Wedding*

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# TWO WEDDINGS

## TWENTY YEARS APART

The two group wedding photographs are connected to the family of Janet Cooke (nee Sayer) and show the change in fashion over the period. The first wedding took place on 11th November 1901 between Lilly Johnson and Jack Laughton.

## LILLY AND JACK'S WEDDING

*(Left to Right): (unknown), Mr Butler, Richard Clarke, Herbert Bartle (Kneesall), (unknown), Sid Johnson (Bride's Father), Jack Laughton (Groom), Lily Johnson (Bride), Kate Clarke, Mrs Laughton, Mr Laughton (Miller)*

We have more details for the second photograph which took place twenty years later on 29th March 1921 between Mark Bailey and Alice Clark.

The photograph is taken at Town End Farm. (Mark and Alice were Janet and her brother Neville's granddad and grandma).

## ALICE AND MARK'S WEDDING

*(Left to Right): Doll Clark, Edie Gilbert, Mark Bailey (Groom), Alice Clark (Bride), Arthur Grundy, Kathleen Clarke, (who later became Arthur's Wife)*

Janet's grandma had written down fabric details for the dresses. The Bride's dress was oyster crêpe-de-chine and the hat was the same material with a blue ostrich feather. The bridesmaids dresses were salmon pink crêpe-de chine. They wore black lace hats trimmed with the dress material.

Interestingly, the dresses were made by one of the dressmakers in the 1901 Census. Her name was Anne Rose and she lived opposite Town End Farm.

---

**THE DRESSES  
WERE MADE BY  
ONE OF THE  
DRESSMAKERS IN  
THE 1901 CENSUS.  
HER NAME WAS  
ANNE ROSE  
AND SHE LIVED  
OPPOSITE TOWN  
END FARM**

---



The last of the three wedding photographs is a fun one, taken at the wedding above in 1921 and shows the revelry of the gentlemen guests. Harold Willis poses as he holds one of the bridesmaid's bouquets! The tilt of the hats adds to the jollity of the occasion. An enjoyable time was had by all!

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#### Pictured

*Gentlemen's Revelry*

## GENTLEMEN'S REVELRY

*(Left to Right): Mr Willis, Hawkie Marrison, Richard Clark (Bride's Father), Charlie Hare, Jack Cook, Harold Willis, Arthur Whitlam, Arthur Grundy*





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# END OF AN ERA

## LAXTON POST MILL

The mill served the millers and farmers of Laxton for many years but sadly it began to fall into disrepair. It was only a matter of time before the inevitable collapse would happen.

On the 21st July 1916 it was reported in *The Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times* under the title AN ANCIENT LANDMARK:

*“Old friends of Laxton will be sorry to know that the old wooden Post Mill fell to pieces on Sunday last. The mill was a prominent landmark, and gave its name to the great open field of several hundred acres in which it was situate. It had been in working order until recently, but had gone beyond repair, and so it was prey to the elements. These post mills - entirely constructed of timber and supported on great oak posts - are now very rare, and this was perhaps the last survival in the district. No bricks were used in this structure.*”

*It turned bodily on its post to the wind, and the corn was ground by stones into the real old flour which it is almost impossible to get in these days of steel rollers. We sympathise with Mr. James Laughton in the loss of an old servant, and all regret the passing of an old friend. Many of the villagers visited the wreck on Sunday evening.”*

Janet Cooke has a photograph of the mill when it was standing and on the back of that photograph her grandma has written the following words:

*“The photograph on the opposite side is one of the old mill situated on the Top Field which fell peacefully to rest at 5.30 Sunday afternoon July 16th 1916. I think Mr Clark seems to be about the only person who heard it fall and he said it went down with a terrible crash. In spite of Saturday being St. Swithen’s and a lovely fine day Sunday turned wet and miserable. Monday rained all day greatly to the disappointment of the haymakers, but the remainder of the week was perfection.*

*After church on Sunday Eve a party consisting of Mr and Mrs Clark, Mr and Mrs Dewick, Aunty C and myself had a pleasant walk over the Top Field and found quite a number of people looking at the old relic. We walked slowly home again, had a little gossip outside came indoors for a cuppa tea.”*



---

**Pictured**

*Ruins of the Post  
Mill post-1916*

---

**“WE SYMPATHISE WITH  
MR. JAMES LAUGHTON  
IN THE LOSS OF AN  
OLD SERVANT, AND  
ALL REGRET THE PASSING  
OF AN OLD FRIEND.  
MANY OF THE VILLAGERS  
VISITED THE WRECK ON  
SUNDAY EVENING”**

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The Evening Telegram  
Published Daily  
except on Sundays and  
Public Holidays

TELEGRAM



# 1900-1920: THE WIDER WORLD

## EVENTS THAT HAPPENED ELSEWHERE DURING OUR PERIOD OF STUDY

### 1900

Robert Gascoigne-Cecil, 3rd Marquiss of Salisbury is Prime Minister and is the last one to serve office entirely from the House of Lords through out his terms; Sydney William Herbert Pierrepont, 3rd Earl Manvers dies 16th Jan; Charles William Sydney Pierrepont, 4th Earl Manvers succeeds him; Mines Act prohibits children under the age of 13 from working down mines.

### 1901

Queen Victoria dies; Australia granted dominion status.

### 1902

Arthur Balfour becomes Prime Minister; First Trans-Atlantic radio transmission: Edward is crowned on August 9th; Edward VII institutes The Order of Merit; Empire Day is celebrated for the first time; Boer War ends; 1902 Education Act; Marmite first produced at Burton-on-Trent.

### 1903

Wilbur and Orville Wright of the US make first manned and controlled aircraft flight; The Women's Social and Political Union, demanding votes for women is founded by Emmeline Pankhurst.

## 1904

Britain and France sign the Entente Cordiale, settling outstanding territorial disputes.

## 1905

Motor buses are first used in London; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman becomes Prime Minister.

## 1906

Construction of HMS Dreadnought.

## 1907

Edward VII visits his cousin Tsar Nicholas II of Russia; Taxi-cabs are legally recognised in Britain for the first time; Baden Powell takes the first ever group of Boy Scouts on holiday to Brownsea Island, Dorset; Parliament rejects Channel Tunnel Scheme; New Zealand is granted dominion status.

## 1908

Production of Ford Motor Cars begins; The fourth Olympic Games are held in London; Herbert Henry Asquith becomes Prime Minister; The Triple Entente is signed between Russia, France and Britain; The Children's Act establishes separate juvenile courts to try children; Old Age

Pensions established in Britain for all over seventy years of age with an income of less than ten shillings a week.

## 1909

The People's Budget is introduced by Lloyd George, Chancellor of the Exchequer; The Women's Suffrage movement becomes more militant in their fight for votes for women; Introduction of Labour Exchange; French airman Louis Bleriot makes first cross-channel flight from Calais to Dover; First Boy Scout Rally held in Crystal Palace London.

## 1910

Constitutional crisis is caused by The House of Commons' attempt to curb the power of The House of Lords; Edward VII dies of pneumonia at Buckingham Palace; George V becomes King and Emperor of India on the death of his father Edward VII.

## 1911

Parliament Act ensures the sovereignty of The House of Commons; National Insurance provides Sickness and Unemployment Benefits.

## 1912

Luxury passenger ship R.M.S. Titanic sinks on her maiden voyage with the loss of over 1500 lives.

## 1913

Suffragette Emily Wilding Davidson throws herself under the King's horse at the Epsom Derby.

## 1914

Anglican Church in Wales is disestablished; The heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire is assassinated: Outbreak of World War I; Battles of Mons, the Marne, Ypres.

## 1915

Second Battle of Ypres; Allied Gallipoli Expedition fails to remove Turkey from the war.

## 1916

Battle of the Somme; Battle of Verdun, longest battle of war lasting 301 days; Naval Battle of Jutland between British and German fleets; Easter Uprising in Dublin in support of Irish Independence, Sherwood Foresters deployed to Dublin; David Lloyd George replaces Asquith as Prime Minister.

## 1917

Battle of Passchendale; Russian Revolution.

## 1918

Tsar Nicholas II and his wife, Alexandra, (both cousins of George V) and their royal family are shot in Ekaterinburg; Kaiser Wilhem II (cousin of George V) abdicates as Germany faces defeat in World War I; The end of World War I; Armistice signed on 11th November; Reform Act gives votes to women over thirty years old; General Election produces landslide victory for Sinn Fein MP's in Ireland, who refuse to take their seats in Westminster and form their own Dail Parliament in Dublin.

## 1919

Lady Astor becomes the first women MP to take her seat in The House of Commons; Third Afghan War. Afghanistan gains independence from Britain; A flu epidemic known as 'Spanish Flu' rages around the world, killing over 50 million people.

## 1920

Marconi opens first radio broadcasting station in Britain; The flu epidemic continues to rage around the world, killing a further 20 million people.



# FINAL COMMENTS

There are many sections I would have loved to have included in this booklet as the village at this time was incredibly active. It has been fascinating researching the information and the quantity available is vast. The people worked very hard but also knew how to enjoy themselves. I will be interested to read the 1921 Census when the contents are released as it will complete the study and give a final indication of the movement of the residents, occupations and changes in their lives.

I have avoided including in this booklet any sections relating to Mr Willis, the headmaster, the children and the school; the effects of the First World War on the village and also about farming and the Three Field System in general as all of these areas are thoroughly covered in the other Booklets in the series. I have not included any information relating to the Parish Council involvement in village life as unfortunately the Minutes of the Meetings held during the period appear to have been lost.

It is concerning that the three books written by Rev. C. B. Collinson have also disappeared as I am sure they too would have been a great help.



I wonder where they are all hiding and if any light can be shed upon them? I do hope they have not been inadvertently destroyed.

A. W. Keeton in his book 'Laxton and its Past' concludes with: *"The history of Laxton has not yet been fully written; when it is it will be the epitome of the history of England."*

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**LAXTON HAS ALWAYS  
BEEN CHANGING AND  
WILL CONTINUE TO DO  
SO. IT IS VERY DIFFERENT  
TODAY, TO THE LAXTON  
OF A CENTURY AGO.  
WHAT WILL THE FUTURE  
HOLD FOR THE VILLAGE?  
WILL IT STILL EXIST  
AS OUR FOREFATHERS  
INTENDED AND WORKED  
SO HARD TO PRESERVE?**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## JANET COOKE

I thank Janet for her help during the writing of this booklet. Her knowledge of Laxton and the meticulous recording of events in the village by her grandmother, Alice Bailey, have been invaluable as they link to the period of study which is outside living memory. Janet is thankfully continuing in her grandmother's footsteps.

I am also indebted to her for the loan of family photographs which have been used to illustrate passages. Thank you Janet for reading through the document and putting me correct over some facts you noticed that I had recorded incorrectly. I have enjoyed our discussions together and the happy memories recalled!

## JO GODSON

I thank Jo for her research at the Retford, Gainsborough and Worksop Times Archives and for allowing me to use her files covering the period 1900 -1920. I have found her research invaluable as it gives a recording of events as they happened in the period. I apologise for hanging on to them for so long Jo! They will be returned!

## MARGARET ROSE, GRAHAM MARSDEN, ROBERT HAIGH & AMANDA HENNELL

I would like to thank all the people who have allowed me to take photographs at their properties and given me absolute freedom to do so. This has been most useful as it helps to illustrate the times. I thank Margaret Rose for the old toilet outside, the beer records and laundry utensils from The Heritage Museum; Graham Marsden for the shared washhouse at the back of his property; Robert Haigh for the coppers and sink at Ivy House Farm.

I also thank Margaret for the many conversations we have had and the information she has shared. Much appreciated!

## JOSIE LIMBERT, ALLYSON FORD, LAWENCE MILBOURN AND JEFF NAYLOR

I thank you all for proof reading the document, correcting my mistakes and making relevant suggestions. Any mistakes discovered will be due to myself, my lapse in concentration when correcting the originals and my antiquated technology system! I treasure your friendship and am thankful we are still on speaking terms!

## LAXTON HISTORY GROUP

Lastly, I would like to thank the members of Laxton History Group who have pawed over collections of Archive paperwork to form the group's own collection of documents relating to the history of Laxton. These documents are now available to Laxton History Group members on their website. It is hoped that they will be available to the general public in the future.

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## ARCHIVES

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National Archives, Kew Surrey

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## NEWSPAPERS

Retford, Gainsborough and  
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