

PAST TIMES
Black Horse Inn
Seaton Ross

Almost all now are called public houses, but in past times they were ale-kitchens, alehouses and inns and during the Victorian period they were in great numbers. The Inn was a place that provided food, lodgings and stabling for a traveller's horse as well as drink and tended to be situated on a road to a particular destination. They also became the place to meet and transact business, make deals, pay debts to one another and find work. Alehouses have existed since saxon times but were really ale kitchens, which were set in private homes from houses to cottages. The wife would sell her home brew to the locals and let them sit and chat. These ale kitchens eventually grew to provide for more drinkers particularly near where villagers usually gathered such as the village blacksmiths. However in Victorian times brewing became a major industry and the large brewers forced the kitchen home brewers out of business or took them over. The term 'public house' was first used in the mid 19th century. The ale kitchen would be much in demand in Seaton Ross and it is almost certain that before the Black Horse became a public house it was for many years an ale kitchen attached to the blacksmiths shop.



The Black Horse as a property was re-built in 1822 according to William Watson's 1848 book of properties in Seaton Ross with the owner listed as John Walker Beer keeper and Blacksmith. William Watson's June 1811 plan of Seaton Ross shows three properties on the site (cottages) occupied by John Walker (Blacksmith), John Stadder (Cordwainer) and Samuel Carvill (Labourer). His 1828 plan of roads in Seaton Ross shows four properties on the site occupied by William Walker, John Stadder and John Walker with one property being the Blacksmiths shop. It would appear that when the property was rebuilt in 1822 it consisted of four properties (which were almost certainly single storey cottages) occupied in 1828 as above. It is almost certain that John Walker as well as a blacksmith used his cottage as an ale kitchen in the days before it became a public house.

The first mention of the property being an Inn is from Kelly's directory of Hull & East Riding of 1840 showing John Walker as a Blacksmith at the Black Horse Inn.

No mention of an Inn is mentioned in the Baines 1822 directory or William Watson's 1828 Seaton Ross plan of roads. It seems likely therefore, that it became an Inn during the 1830's.

Some early beer traders operated as a licensed retailer of beer with drinks not to be consumed on the premises as they were not a licensed house. This could have been the case as the Black Horse before it obtained its licence (A bit cold drinking your pint of ale outside in the middle of winter!).

In the late 1890's part of the property was used as a slaughterhouse and butchers.

The Walker family occupied the Black Horse from the 1830's to the late 1890's since which time there has been a number of different occupiers. Extensions were made to the property in the 1970's and the current owners are David and Denise Reid who have been at the Black Horse Inn since the late 1980's.

The photograph above shows the front of the Black Horse taken in August 1929 – with the words "Tadcaster Ales" visible on the side wall.

Malcolm Young