

PAST TIMES
The Parish Cottages and Allotments
North End and South End
Seaton Ross



SOUTH END COTTAGES - 1920

An important part of village life was the vestry meeting, at which village worthies came together in the church vestry to appoint each other to the various caretaking jobs of the poor, which did not necessarily have anything to do with church matters. They appointed guardians and overseers of the poor who apart from many other duties looked after the parish cottages in the village.

Many parishes owned cottages that were let to the poor. In some cases they had been bought by the parish, in others they were given. At Seaton Ross, the parish cottages were situated at the North End and South End of the village.

The cottages belonging to the parish were not always used to house the poor and needy, labourers with large families were housed particularly to avoid applying for parish relief. In addition parish allotments were made available to provide tenants the facility to grow produce and be self-sufficient.

At the North End of Seaton Ross four cottages stood on ground next to Halifax House (previously the Blacksmiths Arms). The two cottages nearest Halifax House were built in 1799 and stood six yards from the roadside. The other pair of cottages was built in 1820. The occupiers in 1848 were a Robert Stainton, Thomas Hatfield, Francis Pratt and William Ridsdale.

At the South End of Seaton Ross, a pair of cottages stood just past the corner of Mains Lane on the right hand side of the road just before the Black Horse and were built around 1787. A further three cottages stood at the South End of the village on the left hand side as you leave the village just before the entrance to Park Farm. These three cottages were burnt out but repaired in 1795. The occupiers in 1848 were Francis Iveson a local tailor and Mary Walker. The other 3 cottages at South End were occupied by Thomas Dixon, Matthew Ridsdale and Edward Page.

Allotments were also provided by the parish for the occupiers of the cottages and Seaton Ross was no exception. Three allotments stood at South End with a further four allotments on Lodges Road just before the entrance to the industrial site on the left hand side of the road.

The parish was responsible for the upkeep and good repair of the cottages and the overseers controlled and authorised any expenditure required.

By the time Parish Councils were created in 1894, the vestry system had long since disappeared to a shadow of its former self and the new councils could do very little for their poor and other disadvantaged people. It was then all in the hands of other bodies in the town.

The parish cottages continued to be occupied well into the 20th century but eventually they fell into disrepair. The cottages at South End were demolished in the 1960's and the cottages at the North End fell into ruins and were demolished in the 1980's.

In Victorian times the sense of service to the poor of the village was strong, however, times changed and new ideas began to develop in the rural countryside bringing new independence and a new vision for the future.

Malcolm Young

Note

The Vestry Meeting is still held in the Church annually around Easter time when the Churchwardens of the parish are elected.