

PAST TIMES

The Blacksmiths Arms Seaton Ross



Mary Howden and children, Thomas Howden holding the horse, his brother stood at the doorway of the blacksmith shop. circa 1900

The Blacksmiths Arms at the North End, Seaton Ross, was built in 1813. The first owner and occupier was William Pexton who apart from being the victualler was also the village blacksmith and served as churchwarden at Seaton Ross from 1811-12. The blacksmiths shop was attached to the public house.

Prior to 1813, the Blacksmiths Arms was situated at The Cross, Seaton Ross and stood on the site, which is now the old butchers shop. William Pexton occupied the premises at The

Cross before moving to North End. He remained there until the 1840's when John Sykes jnr, took over as the landlord. The ownership changed again in the 1850's when William Lumley became the owner. Neither John Sykes jnr. or William Lumley was a blacksmith – Robert Chapman jnr. was the blacksmith at North End.

During the 1860's, the Howden family acquired the Blacksmiths Arms with Richard Howden snr. being the landlord and blacksmith. Richard also farmed 16 acres at North End. He continued to run the business with his wife Eliza until the 1890's when his son, Thomas took over. Richard Howden snr. died in 1903 aged 75 and Eliza died in 1921 aged 93. They are both buried in the graveyard at St Edmunds Church.

Thomas ran the pub and the blacksmiths shop with his wife Mary. He was well known and respected throughout the district as an expert on reapers, agricultural machinery and mechanical devices. He discontinued horse shoeing and blacksmithing in the early 1900's due to an accident, which resulted him losing an eye and a finger. Richard Howden jnr., Thomas's younger brother, was a wheelwright and joiner at the Blacksmiths, being well known locally as a keen and proficient cyclist. He could be seen riding around the district on his penny-farthing. Thomas and Richard were also cycle dealers at North End.

Thomas's wife, Mary died in 1913 aged 45 and Thomas continued in the business until his death in 1943 aged 84. The Howden family had owned and occupied the Blacksmiths Arms for the major part of the 19th and 20th century.

The ownership changed several times after the Howden family and the pub was renamed the "Bombers" after the local Halifax bomber squadrons stationed in the area during the second world war.

Sadly, in the late 1990's the doors of the Blacksmith Arms closed for the last time after almost two hundred years at North End.

Thank you to Malcolm Young for this article.