

## PAST TIMES

### The Village Pump Seaton Ross



Long before villages became 'connected to the mains' for water supplies, homesteads had to obtain their water manually and laboriously. The pump was a prominent feature in village life and was essential in providing water for drinking, cooking, house cleaning, bathing, brewing and laundering. The water was hand pumped and this could be difficult in winter, as the pipes tended to freeze solid. Some larger homesteads had their own pump but for the vast majority, the village pump was the main source for water provision.

The village pump was a popular meeting place in the village. Waiting in the queue to use the pump, which might be a long time if there was a water shortage, provided a good excuse to catch up with the local gossip.

The village pump at Seaton Ross was situated near the roadside in the field between the Primitive Methodist Chapel and the entrance to Chapel Farm at Church Lane and is clearly shown by the letter P on the 1851 and 1910 ordnance survey map. It was of a wooden construction with a cast iron spout. Most early pumps were made of wood (usually elm) and if the water table was low were expected to draw water from up to 25 feet below the surface. It was the task of the village carpenter to bore a central hole straight down to the water level. By the early 18th century pumps were made of lead, which were, in turn, superseded by cast iron in the Victorian era. An example of a similar Seaton Ross village pump remains today in Everingham, located near the wall outside the priory on the road to Thorpe-Le-Street. There was also a number of private pumps in the village in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the

1851 ordnance survey map clearly shows several of these some of which were located at Park House (now Park Farm), South End; The Cottage (now Park Farm Cottage), South End; Rose Farm, South End; Green Farm (now The Old Farm House), South End; Mains Cottage, Mains Lane; Stockton House and Mains Farm, South End.

The Rural District Council proposed a new water scheme for Seaton Ross in the early 1920's. Many residents made objection to this. It was expressed at a meeting in January 1920 by a number of residents that there was an adequate supply of good water in the village and there was no need for change. In a newspaper article on the village in the Hull and East Riding Times dated 15<sup>th</sup> July 1922, Mrs. Falkingham who was then aged 94 and the oldest resident, did not believe in the new water scheme proposals and when interviewed commented that, "she had drunk Seaton water all her life; the only thing about any fresh water may be that it might kill them off faster."

However, by the mid 1930's a new water supply was installed in Seaton Ross providing mains water to households. The days of the village pump as a source of water provision and a meeting place for gossip was gone. The illustration above shows a typical village pump in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century and likely to have been very similar to the pump at Seaton Ross.