

# TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF CLAXBY PARISH HISTORY

1801 ~ 1901 by Rex C. Russell

1901 ~ 2000 by Elizabeth Holmes

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**CLAXBY** *by* *Normandy*, a pleasant village on a picturesque acclivity, 4 miles N. of Market Rasen, has in its parish 205 souls, and 1700 acres. The Earl of Yarborough is lord of the manor, and owner of nearly all the soil. The Witherwick and Markham families were formerly seated here. The latter were an ancient Catholic family, whose estates passed to the Tunstalls, and from them to the Clifford-Constables. There is a tumulus near the church, and some years ago, a piece of tessellated pavement was dug up, composed of blue and-white tesserae, disposed in oblong figures of about four inches by two. The Church (St. Mary) is a neat structure, with a tower and three bells, and in its chancel is a monument with kneeling effigies of John Witherwick (ob. 1595) and his wife and daughter. The rectory, valued in K.B. at £8. 10s. 10d., is in the patronage of Richard Atkinson, Esq., and incumbency of the Rev. Richard Atkinson, M.A. He also enjoys *Normandy* rectory, and the two united livings were valued, in 1854, at £44. The tithes were commuted, in 1841, for a yearly rent-charge, and the glebe of Claxby is 36a. 3s. The Rectory and Claxby House are ~~not~~ ~~near~~ near the church; and about 1½ mile to the north, is

**Acra House**, a farm once belonging to a religious house, and long occupied by *Mr. Gen. Witherwick*, the father of *agricultural botany*. *Dr. Lingard*, the present eminent historian, was born at Claxby, which is called *Claxton* in *Domesday Book*, and described as being united with *Normanby*, and in the "*Hundred of Walsby*." Some years ago, great efforts were made to get coal here, but the quality was so inferior, that the speculation was abandoned. The parish has an interest in the Almshouses at *Kingerby*, and has a noted fox-covey, called *Claxby Wood*, and several farnes, called *Claxby Moor*.

- |                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Atkinson Rev Richard, M.A. Rectory   | Shepherd Wm. blacksmith                   |
| Child Robert, parish clerk           | Young John Joseph, Esq. <i>Claxby Ho</i>  |
| Coulson George, tailor               | Whitworth George, gent. <i>Acra House</i> |
| Dawson Wm. wheelwright & joiner      | <i>Farmers.</i> Bickells Wm.              |
| Gall Thomas, beerhouse               | Chapman Edwd. Stephenson Cphr.            |
| Hill Adam, shoemaker                 | Marshall Benj. White-orth Wm.             |
| Mundy Wm. butcher                    | Mundy Geo. sen. Clitheroe, <i>Acra</i>    |
| Shepherd John, vict. (& blacksmith.) | Mundy Geo. jun. <i>House</i>              |
| Folham's Arms                        |   |

## PREFACE

This book was born in a suggestion from Rex Russell to Claxby Parish Council that a history of the village would be a suitable project to mark the millenium. Rex offered to write the 1800 to 1901 chapters and invited Elizabeth Holmes to prepare the 1901 to 2000 chapters. The Parish Council agreed and this volume records the life in the village for the last 200 years. For Elizabeth Holmes this was a new experience and she has received enormous help, advice and encouragement from Rex.

The two sections are different in content and style not only because they are the result of different authors. For the nineteenth century, statistical information forms the greater part of the sources available. There is relatively little

informal and no oral information. For the twentieth century, however, statistical information broken down to village level is scarce, census information is protected for 100 years. Elizabeth Holmes therefore has relied on newspapers and the extensive memories of past and present residents of Claxby and surrounding villages as well as parish records. In addition it is difficult to write objectively about recent history. There are still too many different opinions to have a clear view of the immediate past. She has tried to give facts up to the end of the century but has concentrated mainly on the first 60 or 70 years. For the delay in publication, Elizabeth Holmes is to blame. She had no idea of what she was taking on!

*Rex Russell  
Elizabeth Holmes  
April 2002*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Rex Russell wishes to thank Caroline Adamson for research conducted into the parish registers. Elizabeth Holmes wishes to acknowledge the assistance given by staff at the Lincolnshire Archives, the Lincolnshire Library, Grimsby Library and the Market Rasen Mail. We are grateful for permission to quote extensively from the Market Rasen Mail and to use photographs from the Market Rasen Mail, the Grimsby Evening Telegraph, Lincolnshire Chronicle and many local residents. Elizabeth Holmes has received great help from the following residents and past residents of this and other villages: Rene Barton, John and Margaret Brant, Motley and Corinne Brant, John and Dorothy Bristow, Dorothy Brumby, George Brumby, Kathleen Bunford, Kath Burrell, Kitty Combs, Anita

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## PHOTOGRAPHS

The photographs used in this history have come from many different sources. Some have been copied from private collections, from newspapers and libraries. The quality of the source material has been very variable and this is

reflected in their reproduction in this book. In spite of this it was thought worthwhile to include those pictures that are somewhat less than perfect.

## AN OUTLINE OF 19TH CENTURY CLAXBY HISTORY

Rex C. Russell

1801	Population, 136	1853	Joint annual value of Church livings - Claxby and Normanby - £844.
1811	Population, 159		Tithe Rents - Claxby £567, Normanby £316. "The School for the two parishes ... is supported by the lord of the manors, and the farmers, who have lately erected a neat house for the master." (White's Directory, 1856).
	Before 1813 Claxby parish had joined CAISTOR SOCIETY OF INDUSTRY (founded by William Dixon of Holton le Moor): Claxby could send its poor to the Workhouse (House of Industry) on Caistor Moor	1861	Population 237 ( a decrease since 1851).
		1862	Date of building PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL (now the Village Hall).
1821	Population, 184	1868	IRONSTONE MINES begin in Claxby and Normanby
1829	A Day School and a Sunday School are started	1871	Population increased to 357 (with influx of miners). 44 ironstone workers live in Claxby.
1831	Population, 205	1870-71	Major restoration of the dilapidated church by architect James Fowler of Louth. Rectory house considerably altered and enlarged. Cost of church restoration £1600 "... the Earl of Yarborough (proprietor of all the land except the glebe farm) having given all the new stone and the sand required for the building, in addition to a subscription of £350 ..."
1835	Education Enquiry: "One Daily School, in which 10 males and 13 females receive instruction at the expense of their parents. One Sunday School - with 12 males and 4 females taught gratuitously; these Schools commenced in 1829."	1871	Church re-opened on 8 June 1871. Large assembly of clergy and gentry. "At about 10.30 a.m. the Bishop of Lincoln with all the clergy ... perambulated the grounds around the church, being headed by the choir singing hymns ..."
1836	First Wesleyan Methodist Chapel erected.	1881	Population decreased to 325. Now only 19 ironstone workers in Claxby.
1837	Claxby becomes part of CAISTOR POOR LAW UNION (one of 76 parishes).	1891	Population diminished to 226 (down by 131 from 1871): no miners resident in Claxby.
1841	Population, 220	1894	Parish Councils created
1847	Claxby TITHE AWARD. Tithes commuted to an annual Tithe Rent payable to the rector - £304 (increased to £567 by 1856: White's Directory).	1901	Population 237 (Population in 1981, 162).
1848	The Railway opens.	1904	New Wesleyan Chapel built.
1851	Population, 262 (highest population until Ironstone Mines start).		
1851	Religious Census Attendance at Wesleyan Chapel - 75 in general congregation plus 40 Sunday School pupils. St Mary's Church, usual attendance about 60. (No Primitive Methodist Chapel yet built).		

### How many people in Claxby were born in the parish?

	1851	1871	1881	1891
Total Population	262	357	325	226
Number born in Claxby	104 40%	97 27%	107 33%	91 40%
Number born elsewhere in Lincolnshire	140 53%	144 40%	181 56%	116 51%
Number born in other English counties	15 6%	90 25%	33 10%	17 8%

# 1.

## CLAXBY PARISH 1801 TO 1901 Rex C. Russell

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Before we deal with changes in parish history in the last century, it is essential to recall that the background to the lives of nineteenth century parishioners was harsh: the first fifty years were particularly oppressive. In 1800 we were at war with revolutionary France: this war had started in 1793 and was not to end until 1815. It affected everybody in Lincolnshire: food prices went up and up; every parish had to provide men for service in the Militia. Many men joined Volunteer forces such as the North Lincolnshire Legion and the Market Rasen Volunteer Cavalry.

The criminal laws were exceedingly harsh as these sentences passed at Quarter Sessions reveal:-

29 July 1814

*John Air alias Winter sentenced to death for stealing four ewes and four lambs at Nettleton. Reprieved / transported for life.*

3 November 1820

*Lancelot Lidgard, late of Caistor, labourer, convicted of stealing a waistcoat and a pair of leather boots from ... Usselby: seven years' transportation.*

29 April 1825

*John Stephenson, late of Caistor, labourer, convicted of stealing one black leather pocket book ... to be transported for seven years.*

26 April 1846

*"Jas. White, 15, John M'Intyre, 14, Sarah Stevenson, 11, and Sarah Wilson, 15, were indicted for stealing at Lissington ... two pair of wellington shoes, value 12s., ... Guilty, each seven years' transportation."*

Between 1800 and 1849, no fewer than 89,617 men and 13,431 women were transported from Great Britain to Australia. (There were no return tickets.)

In the 1830s and 1840s there was periodic unrest within Lincolnshire and this often took the form of incendiarism, the deliberate burning of stacks. The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury, the main county newspaper, reported on 10th December 1830:-

*"The panic among the Lincolnshire farmers is universal, particularly such as have threshing machines on their premises. Many have received threatening letters; and the breaking of machines and conflagration of property, form the unvarying theme of conversation amongst all ranks of society ... the magistrates are on the alert, and are actively engaged in swearing in the principal householders of every village as special constables, for the protection of property ..."*

When Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837 a broadsheet sold at that time began:-

*"Welcome now Victoria, welcome to the throne,  
May all the trades begin to stir  
Now you are Queen of England,  
For your most gracious Majesty  
May see what wretched poverty  
Is to be found on England's ground  
Now you are Queen of England."*

People in nineteenth century Claxby lived in a harsh century. There were four main changes in the lives of people living in Claxby in the nineteenth century. These were:

Firstly the big increase and subsequent decline in the numbers of people living in the parish. In the first fifty years Claxby's population almost doubled: from 136 in 1801 up to 262 in 1851. It increased still further, with the influx of ironstone miners, to 357 in 1871; by 1901 the population had fallen to 237 (it was only 162 in 1981 and had been yet smaller - 145 in 1971).

The fast rise in population was in line with both national and Lincolnshire trends. The main reason for this was the regular excess of births over deaths and this shows clearly in Caroline Adamson's research which follows. The subsequent decline in numbers in Claxby was partly due to the closure of the ironstone mines and partly to migration and emigration.

Secondly there was the major change from a partially literate population to an almost wholly literate one. This was a social as well as an educational change. Again Caroline Adamson's research makes this clear.

Thirdly the establishment of Methodism in the parish. The first Wesleyan Methodist chapel was built in 1836: next a Primitive Methodist chapel (the present village hall) in 1862, followed by the new Wesleyan chapel on a new site in 1904. Methodism contributed to a religious, social and cultural change in Claxby. It was a challenge to the existing social order as well as a powerful challenge to the Church of England.

Fourthly the starting and ending of Ironstone Mining - beginning in 1868 and ending a little before 1890. The influx of forty-four miners into the parish clearly altered the nature of Claxby - but only for about 20 years.

We will deal with these four changes in some detail.

**POPULATION GROWTH AND DECLINE**

A national census was taken every ten years from 1801. Changes in Claxby were as follows:-

Date of Census	Total Population	Change
1801	136	
1811	159	+23
1821	184	+25
1831	205	+21
1841	220	+15
1851	262	+42
1861	237	-25 (the first decline)
1871	357	+120 (influx of miners)
1881	325	-32
1891	226	-99
1901	237	+11

Parishioners were always on the move, people moved into the village and others moved away from it. The Census of 1851 reveals that only 40% of people then resident in Claxby had been born in the parish: that of 1871 shows that only 27% of residents had been born here. In 1851 people then in the village had been born in no fewer than 71 different parishes within Lincolnshire. Mobility was normal on a national and local scale.

Then, as now, people moved to new occupations (or to the same job in another parish); many farmworkers (especially farm-servants who lived in with employers or foremen) moved almost yearly in the earlier years of their

careers. Teachers moved frequently especially as more and more schools were built. Tenant-farmers moved to new farms. Tradesmen and craftsmen moved after completing their apprenticeships.

The coming of the railway in 1848 helped movement, but people were frequently on the move, on foot, by horse and cart, and by carriers' carts long before 1848.

When the detailed Enumerators' Returns for the Census of 1851 are examined for a small number of parishes within the Claxby region and a little further afield, one discovers no fewer than 114 people who had been born in Claxby and had moved away by 1851.

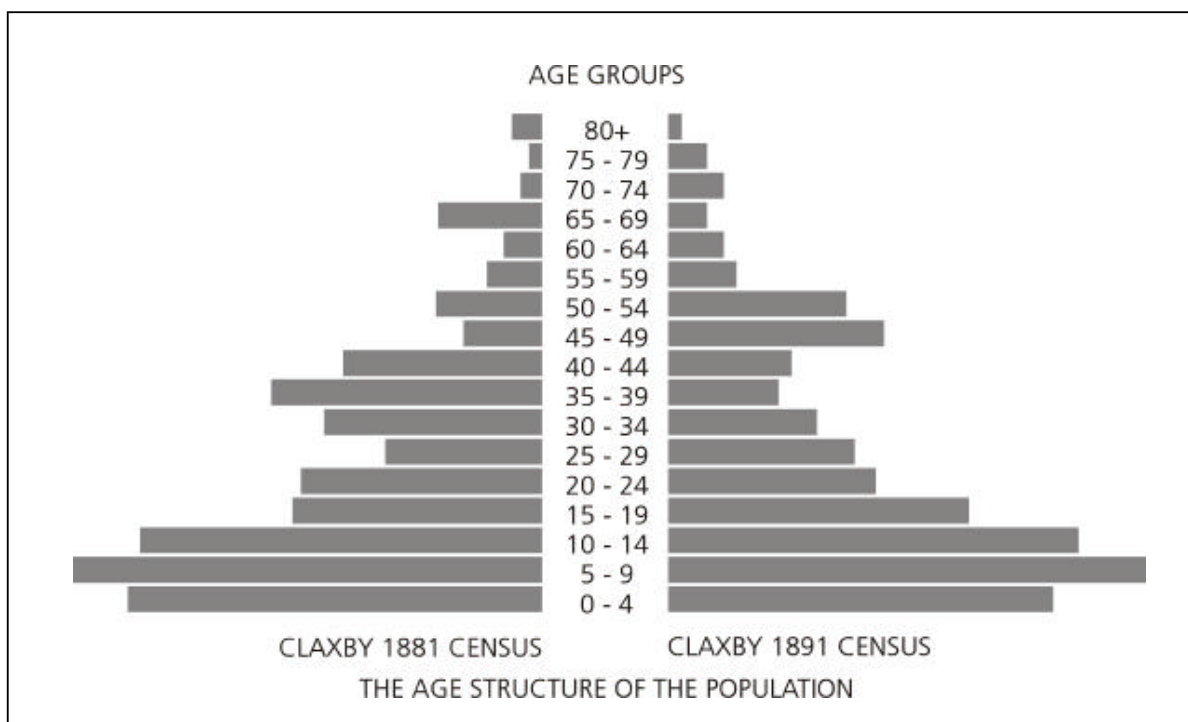
**POPULATION MOVEMENT**

The list below shows the numbers of Claxby-born people who lived in these 30 parishes in 1851:-

17	Middle Rasen	One resident in each of these parishes:-	
16	Caistor	Barnetby le Wold	Saxby-all-Saints
12	Grimsby	Swallow	Wootton
8	Market Rasen	Barrow on Humber	Ulceby
10	Kirkby cum Osgodby	Lissington	Great Limber
5	Walesby	Sixhills	Habrough
5	Normanby le Wold	Ludford	Greetham
5	North & South Owersby	Northorpe	
5	Tealby	Immingham	
3	Thornton Curtis	Utterby	
2	Toft Newton	Kirmington	
2	Holton Beckering	Fotherby	

A fast-growing population is a young population. In 1851 there were far fewer people over 50 years of age than at present and far more young people. In 1851 half Claxby's population was under 20 years of age and only 15% over fifty (and only eleven folk were over 70). When diet

improved, when the standard of housing got better, and, very importantly, when conditions and hours of work became less harsh and shorter, then people began to live longer. The age-structure of the population is shown in the diagram on the opposite page



**CLAXBY PARISH BAPTISMS AND BURIALS FROM 1800 - 1900**

Research by Caroline Adamson

Date	Number of baptisms	Number of burials	Excess of baptisms over burials
1800 - 09	48	13	35
1810 - 19	54	35	19
1820 - 29	60	27	33
1830 - 39	67	21	46
1840 - 49	52	48	4
1850 - 59	72	36	36
1860 - 69	52	28	24
1870 - 79	125	57	68
1880 - 89	91	49	42
1890 - 99	50	45	5

No burial records exist for the years 1800, 1804, 1808, 1822, 1861 and 1870.  
 Information based on the Church Baptism and Burial Registers held at Lincoln Archives.

**2        SCHOOLS AND CHANGES IN LITERACY**

Literacy depends upon the availability of education: what do we know about schools in Claxby? Our first factual information comes from the Abstract of the Answers and Returns for the government enquiry of 1835. This states:-

*“CLAXBY Parish ... One Daily School, in which 10 males and 13 females receive instruction at the expense of their parents. - One Sunday School, with 12 males and 4 females, who are taught gratuitously; these schools commenced in 1829.”*

This day school was held in a private house, the location of which is unknown. There was no purpose-built school before c.1856 when White’s Lincolnshire Directory states:-

*“The School for the two parishes of Claxby and Normanby is supported by the lord of the manors [the Earl of Yarborough] and the farmers, who have lately erected a neat house for the master.”*

The master was Edward Canty who had been teaching in

Claxby before this school was built. The census shows him in 1851 as a teacher aged 30. He was still schoolmaster in 1881 with his wife Mildred as his assistant, together with their daughter Alice then aged 18. In 1892 Edward Canty was still master: before 1905 his daughter Fanny succeeded him, in that year Kelly's Directory tells us that the Earl of Yarborough subscribes £10 yearly towards its support and

*"...the school will hold 100 children; average attendance 58..."*

Too little is known about this school (now the Viking Centre) in the nineteenth century. A helpful letter from the Diocesan Director of Education (30th June 1999) reads:-

*"We have searched our archives here for details of Claxby by Normanby Church of England School ... and regret to have to inform you that we have no record of the details that you are seeking such as log books for this school."*

Had the Log Book written in last century survived it could tell us much both of the school and of village activities.

In 1855 the Bishop of Lincoln sent out an educational enquiry to all of his clergy. He asked, amongst other things, 'Will your parish support (financially) the Diocesan Board of Education?' The reply from Claxby was:-

*"I fear that at present there would be little hope of obtaining contributions for the Diocesan Board, as the farmers are required by Lord Yarboro' to subscribe to his school at Claxby."*

One delightful press report (Stamford Mercury 12 August 1859) tells that the children of Claxby and Normanby paraded their villages carrying two banners with these inscriptions:-

*"HEALTH & PROSPERITY TO THE SUPPORTERS OF EDUCATION. SCHOOLS ARE ENGLAND'S GLORY"*

The problems facing all village schools in Lincolnshire in last century were, mainly,

- 1 grossly irregular attendance, partly due to a great deal of seasonal child labour on the farms;
- 2 the inadequate staffing of schools and
- 3 the irregular and inadequate annual income of schools largely dependent on school pence and varying sums from subscribers. Not everyone, even as late as the 1860s, fully approved of education for working-class boys and girls.

The Vicar of Burgh le Marsh summed up the situation in 1867 accurately:-

*"... The general sense of the country is in favour of attending school during the winter months; the labourers are anxious that their children should learn all that they*

*can, and are grateful to those who afford help. The employers of labour do not wish the labourers to be wholly ignorant, but think that a very moderate scale of scholarship is sufficient. Their view is that 'more than a little is by much too much'; they are afraid that the labourers will be spoilt for field work."*

*Evidence to the Royal Commission on the Employment of Children, Young Persons and Women in Agriculture, 1867.*

The school was certainly used for village concerts, lectures and other events in last century. Three reports from the Market Rasen Weekly Mail (founded in 1856) bear this out. However, this newspaper during the nineteenth century contained far more national than local news: news of Claxby rarely appears.

*"The Day and Sunday Schools, which have been closed for the last five weeks on account of the prevalency of measles, were opened again on Sunday and Monday last."*

*Rasen Mail 8 August 1874*

*"On Thursday evening last an excellent entertainment took place in the school-room ... when there was a full attendance, and a very pleasant evening was spent. The following is the programme:- Overture by Miss Francis and the Organist; reading 'John Gilpin's Ride' the Rev. W. F. W. Westbrooke [the Curate]; selection on the hand-bells by the Market Rasen Ringers; song, 'Tomorrow' by Miss E. Hill; song, 'The Mill Wheel', Miss Francis; selection Rasen Bell Ringers; ... reading 'A London Schoolfeast' ... finale, 'God Save the Queen' ..."*

*Rasen Mail 10 January 1880*

On the evening of March 1st, 1880, a meeting took place in the schoolroom to say farewell to the Rev. W. F. W. Westbrooke who had been the Curate for several years, and to present a testimonial to him. The Market Rasen Weekly Mail reported this at length.

*"... Some had given gold, some silver, some copper, but all had added the most precious offering of all, their hearty wishes for the true welfare of the recipient."*

On this occasion both the Rector, the Rev. S. W. Andrews and the Curate spoke. The teachers and pupils presented this Address:-

*"An Address to the Rev. W. F. W. Westbrooke from the Teachers and Scholars of Claxby-cum-Normanby Day and Sunday Schools.*

*We, the undersigned, desire to express our gratitude to the Rev. W. F. W. Westbrooke for his uniform and great kindness to us, and for the many good things he has taught us from the Bible, and doctrine and worship of the Church of England. We also wish to express the great pleasure we feel in his appointment as Vicar of Corringham, and the most earnest wish of our hearts is*



*that he may long live to be happy in his new home and successful in his work."*

*Rasen Mail 6 March 1880*

What can we learn from the detailed Enumerators' Returns for the Census about the pupils at Claxby School?

In 1851 the total number of children aged 4 to 14 inclusive was 70. The total number described as 'scholars' was 30: i.e. nearly 43% of the total were attending a school of some sort (before the building of the Earl of Yarborough's school). There were two teachers, Mrs. Mary Coulson (the wife of a tailor) and Edward Canty. The age-range of the 30 scholars was:-

Age Range	Boys	Girls
0-4 years	1	1
5-7 years	6	5
8-10 years	6	5
Over 10 years	3	3

(Note that only six pupils were over the age of 10.)

Twenty years after this, when 91 children were aged between 4 and 14, seventy-four (over 81%) were described as 'scholars': this shows a very marked advance. The only teacher then was Edward Canty, then aged 53. He was born in Middle Rasen; his wife, described as a grocer and draper aged 46, had been born in Claxby.

When we move on to 1881 and 1891 there is further change, as follows:-

Age range of scholars	Boys		Girls	
	1881	1891	1881	1891
0-4 years	3	1	1	3
5-7 years	17	6	8	11
8-10 years	11	14	20	8
Over 10 years	12	8	10	6
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>28</b>

By 1891 the total population and the number of children had fallen since the peak of 1871.

How had schooling improved literacy? A full table, researched by Caroline Adamson, follows this section. Abstracting essential figures from this, we find that out of 13 marriages in 1850 - 59 nearly 31% of the brides and 15% of the bridegrooms could not sign their names in the Marriage Register. In 1890 - 99 all brides were literate and only one bridegroom failed to sign his name.

As the number of children going to Claxby school increased the school was enlarged in size in 1873 - 4.

No information at all has been found on adult education in 19th century Claxby: no mention of Night Schools (which were not uncommon in Lincolnshire) and no record of Mutual Improvement Societies (which were numerous in the county).

#### LITERACY AND ILLITERACY

from the Marriage Registers of Claxby 1800 - 1899

Research by Caroline Adamson

DATE	Number of Marriages	BRIDES		Illiterate %	GROOMS		Illiterate %
		Literate	Illiterate		Literate	Illiterate	
1800-09	8	4	4	50	2	6	75
1810-19	13	5	8	61.5	7	6	46.2
1820-29	13	10	3	23.1	11	2	15.4
1830-39	19	8	11	57.9	14	5	26.3
1840-49	22	8	14	63.6	6	16	72.7
1850-59	13	9	4	30.8	11	2	15.4
1860-69	16	13	3	18.8	13	3	18.8
1870-79	15	14	1	6.7	13	2	13.3
1880-89	12	12	0	0	10	2	16.7
1890-99	6	6	0	0	5	1	16.7

No records exist in the Marriage Registers for the years listed below.

1800-01 (inclusive), 1803, 1806, 1810, 1816, 1826, 1833, 1835, 1868, 1870, 1876, 1882, 1887-88 (inclusive) & 1894-99 (inclusive).

### LITERACY AND ILLITERACY: LOCAL COMPARISONS

from the Marriage Registers of Claxby, Nettleton and Caistor

DATE	CLAXBY		NETTLETON		CAISTOR	
	BRIDES Illiterate %	GROOMS Illiterate %	BRIDES Illiterate	GROOMS Illiterate	BRIDES Illiterate	GROOMS Illiterate
1800-09	50	75	29	29	54	27
1810-19	61.	46.2	45	70	41	34
1820-29	23.1	15.4	61	39	37	25
1830-39	57.9	26.3	63	47	44	24
1840-49	63.6	72.7	54	37	50	24
1850-59	30.8	15.4	33	33	32	24
1860-69	18.8	18.8	18	25	19	20
1870-79	6.7	13.3	12	29	22	14
1880-89	0	16.7	5	10	1	1
1890-99	0	16.7	0	9	3	3

One of the provisions of Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act in 1753 was that brides and bridegrooms must sign their names in the marriage register provided, or, if they were illiterate, must make their mark.

Thus, from 1754, evidence exists of literacy at the time of marriage; this information - in the words of the Registrar General in 1845 - "is of unquestionable value, as an evidence of the relative state of elementary education in different parts of the country, and at different times."

### 3 METHODISM IN THE PARISH

The Reverend John Wesley died in 1791; forty-five years later, in 1836, the first Wesleyan Methodist chapel was built in Claxby. Another Methodist connexion, the Primitive Methodists (who appealed largely to labourers) built their chapel in 1862: this is now the village hall. A second Wesleyan Methodist chapel, replacing that of 1836 was erected, on a new site, in 1904.

The coming and growth of Methodism changed the nature of the parish. Before this there had been one village community and NO significant Nonconformity. After about 1860 there were three communities, three competing communities in a parish of c.240 people. The coming of Methodism deepened division in the parish (social division, of course, had long been evident); it also brought conviction and vitality and this was more important than division.

How strong was Methodism in Lincolnshire by 1851 and why had it grown so fast? In 1851 a national Religious Census was taken: it revealed this picture in Lincolnshire:-

Total number of Church of England churches	657
Total number of Methodist chapels	703

Nearly all of these 703 chapels had been built after 1800: 212 out of this total had been erected after 1818 (these 212 were Primitive Methodist chapels).

Lincolnshire Methodism had taken root and prospered mainly because the Church of England (the Established Church) was in the later 18th century and earlier 19th century in a very poor condition. When Bishop Kaye became Bishop of Lincoln in 1827 he (later) reported that

the absenteeism of clergy was the rule, their residence in their parish exceptional. The Rev. Isaac Wilson, Vicar of Caistor 1777 - 1833, was for fifty-six years non-resident. Many church buildings were in poor repair: the Archdeacon of Lincoln, the Rev. H. K. Bonney, reported in July 1846 on Middle Rasen Topholme:-

*"This church is all but in ruins and is dangerous to use..."*

On Binbrook he wrote:-

*"St. Gabriel is in ruin ... It is a painful sight to observe so much population and yet be told the church is sufficient, and the other church in ruins. There must have been neglect somewhere in former times."*

Thomas Stone, writing mainly on agriculture in Lincolnshire, made this comment on religion in the county in 1800:-

*"Religion is necessary to all, but more especially to the poor. The promises of the Gospel are their peculiar inheritance; for, take away the hope of another life, and what have they left? Their portion in the present, is, for the most part, labour and sorrow ..."*

What did the 1851 Religious Census reveal about Claxby?

At St. Mary's Church, in which there was one service each Sunday, alternately morning and afternoon, the usual attendance was about sixty. At the Wesleyan chapel on census Sunday afternoon (30th March), 75 adults and 40 Sunday school pupils attended, a total of 115.

There is much more to be discovered about Methodism in Claxby. A lively report in the Market Rasen Weekly Mail, dated 12 September 1874, shows its vitality.

*"The Primitive Methodists held their annual camp meeting on Sunday last, after parading the streets singing a variety of hymns, they took their stand in certain places and gave short addresses to the people. In the afternoon the meeting was held in a field kindly lent by Mr. G. Mundy, farmer, the situation was an exceedingly nice one, on the side of a hill ... The preachers were Messrs. Surfleet, Phillipson, Robinson and Coulbeck, senr., the sermons were appropriate and impressive, the congregation good and altogether a very successful meeting ..."*

It is difficult to identify these preachers. In 1871 there were neither Surfleets nor Phillipsons in Claxby: there is one Coulbeck - John Coulbeck, an ironstone miner, unmarried, aged 37. There are no fewer than three Robinsons:-

- Charles Robinson, unmarried, aged 32, ironstone manager
- John Robinson, married, aged 33, labourer in the Iron Works and
- Jonathan Robinson, married, aged 49, the Mine Agent.

It is not possible to say whether any of these was a Primitive Methodist preacher, but it is not unlikely that two of them were.

## 4 EARNING A LIVING: OCCUPATIONS FOR WOMEN AND MEN

### 1 Women's Occupations

The opportunities for paid employment for women were very limited in Lincolnshire in the nineteenth century. A middle class woman might become a governess or perhaps keep a seminary for young ladies. For working-class women nursing (untrained), dress-making, teaching (mainly untrained), house-keeping and domestic service were the main openings. Because there was a lack of paid employment for women, many left Lincolnshire for London, Hull and elsewhere.

The Census of 1851 reveals that, in Claxby, 19 women were employed as house-servants, two housekeepers, one a teacher, one a governess (with the Young family) and one a dress-maker.

By 1871 there had been no great change: employments were:-

1 Grocer & Draper	2 Housemaids
1 Farmer	1 Nursemaid
1 Cottager & Farmer	1 Cook
8 Domestic Servants	1 Kitchen Maid
4 Dress-makers	1 Gate-minder
2 Housekeepers	(the railway crossing)

There had been no major changes by 1881, but there were then 16 domestic servants, 6 housekeepers, 2 schoolmistresses and 1 Post Office clerk, as well as one cottager, one charwoman, one cook, one housemaid and one kitchen-maid.

By 1891 the only new employment were one Sewing Mistress, one Organist at St. Mary's, one Grocer and one Inn-keeper and Farmer.

Not until well into the twentieth century were many different paid employments for women available. There was always part-time seasonal employment for both women and children in agriculture, and, in some parishes occasional employment in basket-making.

### 2 Men's Occupations 1851 - 1891

Employment in agriculture was always dominant in Claxby, with the exception of the period when the ironstone mine was in full operation. In 1871 forty-four men worked

in farming and eighty-two in other occupations: this situation was exceptional. Men's occupations can be summarized as follows on the next page:-

	1851	1871	1881	1891
In Agriculture	70 ... 81.4%	44 ... 34.9%	59 ... 55.1%	52 ... 76.5%
In other occupations	16 ... 18.6%	82 ... 65.1%	46 ... 43.0%	16 ... 23.5%

For all the nineteenth century all farmers were tenants: the great majority were tenants of the Earl of Yarborough who owned all the land apart from the church glebe. Their male farm-workers fell into two main categories, farm-servants hired by the year who lived in, either with the farmer or with his farm-foreman and agricultural labourers hired by the week or by the day. The farm-servants were normally hired at either Market Rasen or Caistor Statute Hirings. These hirings were important, for employers and employees, and for the annual opportunities of farm servants (both men and women) to meet friends and to enjoy their annual holiday with the many stalls and amusements present at the hirings. As the century drew to a close the fun of the fairs mattered more than the seeking for employment. This

report from the Market Rasen Weekly Mail, 1st May 1880, reveals this importance:-

*Market Rasen Statute*

*“Notwithstanding the fact that our annual May-day statute occurred somewhat earlier than usual this year, the number of visitors was equally numerous on Thursday last. The trains, carriers’ carts, and private conveyances, all brought their full complement of ‘country cousins’, whose objects were probably as much for pleasure as business. The register offices for servants appeared as busy as usual, and a fair amount of hiring took place ...”*

<b>EMPLOYMENTS</b>	1851	1871	1881	1891
Farmers	12	9	9	8
Farm Servants	?	9	12	10
Agricultural Labourers	49	15	33	25
Innkeeper and Farmer	1	1	0	0
Blacksmith and Farmer	1	?	0	0
Groom	3	3	0	0
Shepherd	1	1	0	1
Cottager and Farmer	-	1	2	1
Railway Labourer	2	1	1	2
Curate	1	0	1	1
Gardener	1	1	1	0
Tailor	1	1	0	0
Cordwainer (shoe-maker)	3	4	3	0
Wheelwright	1	?	1	1
Wheelwright & Blacksmith	1	?	0	0
Apprentices	4	2	0	0
Schoolmaster	1	1	1	1
Huckster	1	0	0	0
Blacksmith	?	4	1	0
Rector	-	1	1	1
Ironstone Miners	0	39	13	0
Joiner	?	?	3	0

Other occupations which are not included in this table are:-

In 1871:

1 Cattle Dealer, 1 Foreman, 2 Garthmen, 1 Farming Bailiff, 1 Waggoner, 2 Drivers in the Mines, 1 Grocer, 1 Butcher, 3 Joiners, 1 Mason, 7 Labourers, 1 Butcher & Miner, 1 Book-keeper, 1 Gate Minder (railway), 1 Plasterer, 1 Ironstone Burner, 1 Innkeeper & Farmer & Brickmaker, 1 Mine Deputy, 1 Brickmaker, 1 Engine Fitter, 1 Plumber, 1 Builder, 1 Mine Agent, 1 Painter.

In 1881:

1 Garthman, 1 Agricultural Foreman, 1 Cottager & Agricultural Labourer, 1 Sub-postmaster & Shopkeeper, 1 Tile-maker, 1 Errand Boy, 1 Joiner & Wheelwright, 2 Carpenters, 1 Shoe-maker and Cottager, 1 Mine Manager, 1 Furnace Boy at Mine, 1 Pony Driver at Mine, 1 Horse-keeper at Mine, 1 Pay-clerk at Mine, 1 Watchman at Mine, 1 Coachman, 1 Shopkeeper, 3 General Labourers, 1 Magistrate (John J. Young), 1 Footman, 1 Brick & Tile Maker, 1 Brush-manufacturer and Farmer.

In 1891:

1 Garthman, 1 Agricultural Foreman, 1 Threshing Machine Owner, 2 Waggoners, 1 Farmer & Wheelwright, 1 Butcher, 1 Sub-postmaster & Grocer, 1 Letter Carrier, 1 Carpenter & Cottager, 1 Wheelwright & Carpenter, 1 Groom & Gardener, 1 Magistrate (The Rector), 1 Footman, 1 Brickmaker.

The number of men with dual occupations is interesting and this is not uncommon in other parishes.

Note:

A garthman looks after livestock.

A cottager is a small-holder

A farming bailiff takes charge of a farm.

### Wages of Farm-workers

Details given in these pages are, unless another source is quoted, from the Stamford Mercury. They are incomplete. Before the new farm-workers' trade unions exist to draw public attention to his conditions and his demands, details are not given in the press.

1870. *May Statute Fairs and Hirings.* The only figures given are for Lincoln. A few comments are made, e.g. Holbeach: "lower wages than last year"; Boston: "high wages were asked and obtained"; Gainsborough: wages "high"; Sleaford: "wages had a downward tendency."

Lincoln: "same rate of wages as last year."

Horse-feeders and ploughmen £14; second hands £12; boys £6; foremen £20 to £22 (per annum).

1871. *May.* The only figures given are for Lincoln: "High wages were asked: head waggoners £20 per annum; shepherds £24; ploughmen £16; and youths £8 to £10."

1872. *Wages referred to in news reports vary. Here are examples:*

February. Barton 2s. 6d. a day; Alford 13s. 6d. to 15s. a week; Caistor 13s. 6d. a week

March. Long Sutton 2s. 3d. a day; Market Deeping 2s. 6d. a day; Holbeach 15s. and 16s. a week;

Caistor 2s. 3d. and 2s. 6d. a day; Lincoln 2s. 9d. a day; Barrow on Humber 2s. 9d. and 3s. a day.

April. Gainsborough 15s. a week; Spalding 2s. 9d. a day (a recent advance from 2s. 3d.).

May. Crowland 2s. 6d. a day.

November. Alford 16s. a week - had been 18s. before harvest.

1873. "*Hull and Eastern Counties Herald*"

May 15th. *Barton May Day Statutes.* "Servants were in great demand at the highest rate of wages ... waggoners £24 to £28 per year; second waggoners £17 to £22; boys £12 to £18; girls £10 to £16."

May 16th. Several reports of "higher wages" at statutes reported in this issue, e.g. Brigg, Market Deeping, Lincoln, Barton.

"*Eastern Morning News*"

May 19th. *Lincoln May Statutes.* "... Wages ran very high, farm boys asking from £7 to £9 and men from £15 to £20; girls asked from £10 to £16 and stage servants as high as £18."

"*Hull and Eastern Counties Herald*"

August 21st. *Harvest Wages.* Barton. Harvesters getting 27s. or 28s. weekly and board.

"*Eastern Morning News*"

November 17th. *Crowle Statutes.* "High wages were asked, and employers were compelled to give way ... men ... £25 to £30; second class men £16 to £20; youths £4. 10s. to £10 according to age."

"*Hull and Eastern Counties Herald*"

November 20th. *Crowle Statutes.* High wages obtained. Men £25 to £30; second class men £16 to £20; youths £4. 10s. to £10; girls for milking £14.

*Epworth Statutes.* Lads 9 to 12 guineas; men £19 to £26 per year.

1874. "Stamford Mercury"

May 15th. Brigg. Report that at Statutes at Brigg—amongst the largest in N. Lincs.—"The wages ruled very high, which interfered in some measure with the amount of hiring which otherwise would have taken place; still a good deal of business was done ..."

Barton. Again report of "high wages" (many hirers from Yorks.)

Some men in North Lindsey were getting 3s. a day in 1874.

1875. "Stamford Mercury"

May 7th. Gainsborough. Statutes. May-day. "... High wages were asked and obtained in nearly every case, and the following may be taken as the actual wage rates:

Waggoners from £28 to £32 per annum; ploughmen or horsemen £20 to £25; under-grooms (youths) £10 to £14; and female servants to do milking £12 to £15."

May 13th. Barton on Humber Statute. "Waggoners, first-class £25 to £27; second £17 to £19; boys £10 to £14; girls £7 to £10." "Hull and Eastern Counties Herald".

May 20th. Grimsby Statutes. "The wages asked were high, lads of 18 years old demanding and securing from £18 to £20, and adults as much as £30."

1882. "Stamford Mercury"

May 19th. Lincoln. First waggoners £18 to £21; second £12 to £17; farm lads £5 to £8.

Gainsborough. Foremen £22 to £25; head waggoners £16 to £20; second waggoners £10 to £14; lads £6 to £10.

May 26th. Grantham. "Higher wages" reported, but no figures given.

1883. "Stamford Mercury"

May 18th. Lincoln. First waggoners £20 to £21; second waggoners £14 to £16; lads £10.

Brigg. "wages ... somewhat lower than in previous years."

Gainsborough. "Wages had a downward tendency, and as servants stuck out for last year's average, little hiring was done ..." Head waggoners £19 to £21; second men £14 to £17; youths £6 to £10.

1884. "Stamford Mercury"

May 9th. Gainsborough. First May-day hiring. "average wages: Head waggoners from £18 to £23; second men £14 to £16; lads £6 to £10; females £8 to £14."

May 16th. Barton Statute. "There was a large attendance of both masters and servants at the statute. Foremen or first waggoners obtained from £18 to £22; second waggoners £12 to £16; and boys £6 to £10. Girls got £4. 10s. to £10; superior £11 to £12 ..."

May 23rd. Statutes

Boston. "Wages ruled a little lower than the pay of servants last year."

Sleaford. "About last year's rate of wages."

1885. "Stamford Mercury"

May 8th. Barton Statute. "Rather less wages than last year."

Gainsborough Statutes. Tuesday. "... hiring was slow, and only a limited number of servants found places. Men's wages were not quite so high as last year.

Waggoners commanded from £18 to £24; ploughmen £10 to £14; boys £7 to £9. Girls were not so plentiful and met with higher wages. Milkmaids obtained from £12 to £15; and younger girls from £7 to £9."

May 15th. Statutes Spalding. No figures given. "Hiring proceeded slowly, farmers generally holding out for some reduction in terms."

Sleaford. No figures given. "... not much hiring done." Brigg. "... Wages for males had a downward tendency. Waggoners £15 to £20; ploughmen £10 to £15; boys £8 to £12 for the year. Female servants were fully as high as those of last year. Women up to £16; girls up to £12..."

May 22nd. Statutes Grantham. "... prices ruled lower than for several years past."

Sleaford. May Monday. "... comparatively little hiring was done on account of the high wages asked."

Market Deeping. "... The hiring was done at lower wages."

Lincoln. Smaller number of servants attended than usual. Business "was almost wholly confined to the hiring of female servants."

Louth. Large attendance. "Hiring ... was slow, and wages generally had a downward tendency. Waggoners £15 to £20; ploughmen £12. 10s. to £16; useful lads £8 to £13; and boys £5 to £7 for the year."

1886. May.

Gainsborough. "Not a large attendance ... scarcely any business ... was done." Waggoners £10 to £15; ploughmen £9 to £12; boys £6 to £8; maid servants £6 to £12.

Barton on Humber. "Fair attendance ... but little hiring ..." Boys £6 to £9; foremen £17 to £22; servants £6 to £11.

Grantham. "Wages were very low ... the chief demand was for lads from 15 to 18 years of age. Their wages ranged from £7. 10s. to £9."

Other comments in reports from statutes (no other figures are given) include:

Sleaford. Wages offered were at a considerable reduction on those of past years."

Bourne. "Wages ruled lower than last year."

Lincoln. "Very few engagements were contracted."

1887. May.

Barton on Humber. Head waggoners or single foremen £18 to £22 per annum; second waggoners £10 to £16 per annum; average £13. 10s.; boys £5 to £8; strong lads with some experience £9 to £10.

## 5 CLAXBY FARMWORKERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Why is it worthwhile to include a section on Farmworkers? For two reasons: (1) they always formed the single biggest section of the village population, (2) their own history is commonly neglected.

All one can write in this connection is about the background to their lives: what were they aware of, what local events may have influenced their way of thinking and acting? What were their wages - according to contemporary report?

Arthur Young, the secretary of the Board of Agriculture, had the second edition of his *General View of the Agriculture of Lincolnshire* published in 1813. He thought that labourers' wages averaged 12s. 6d. a week the year round. He gives no wage details for the Caistor and Market Rasen area; but was complacent about the labourers' condition.

In the stack-burnings of the 1830s and 1840s an *Association for the Protection of Property against Incendiarism* was formed. Labourers in the Claxby area would note some of its members, for example:-

Name and Residence	Amount subscribed £
Sir Culling Eardley Smith / Nettleton	50
Geo. Skipworth / South Kelsey	30
Thomas Dixon / Holton le Moor	30
Wm. Skipworth / South Kelsey	20
Thomas Brooks / Croxby	20
J. G. Dixon / Caistor	20
Thomas Skipworth / Cabourn	10
G. Borman / South Kelsey	5

(90 names are listed in a List dated November 1845.)

This Association was not efficient, but was long-lived.

In 1852 James Caird published his report (made for THE TIMES) *English Agriculture in 1850-51*. He wrote (page 197) "Labourers' wages in Lincolnshire are at present 10s. a week." In this year, 1852, the Royal Agricultural Society of

England printed J. A. Clarke's prize essay on *The Farming of Lincolnshire*: Clarke concluded on the farm labourer:-

"... that after the lapse of half a century [since 1799] the agricultural labourers of Lincolnshire are obtaining no better livelihood in exchange for their toil than before."

He went on to write:-

"... the labourers generally are regularly employed and comparatively well paid."

In the 1860s and early 1870s the labourers' usual daily wage was 2s. 6d. in summer and 2s. 3d. in winter. Many made provision for illness, unemployment, and death in the family by membership of one of several Friendly Societies. Clarke noticed this fact:-

"... Benefit Societies are plentiful, consisting of Friendly Societies, Odd Fellows, Foresters, and Shepherds' Lodges, &c., which are undoubtedly of great advantage to the artisan and labourer ..."

Did Claxby farmworkers belong to a Friendly Society? Evidence for this has not been found, but many such societies were in easy reach, at these places, for example:-

Rothwell	Interment Society
Tealby	Ancient Order of Foresters
Caistor	Druids, Ancient Shepherds
Market Rasen	Oddfellows, Foresters
South Kelsey	Druids
North Kelsey	Eastern Star

In 1872 and for nearly fifteen years afterwards the farmworker in Claxby was well aware of the formation and activity of two rival agricultural workers' trade unions in this area. The National Agricultural Labourers' Union (the

secretary of which soon became a national figure - Joseph Arch), and the Lincolnshire Labourers' League (secretary William Banks of Boston). These unions were active in Caistor, Market Rasen, Middle Rasen, Owersby and other nearby parishes.

These trade unions energetically encouraged emigration - with a large measure of success. The Hull and Eastern Counties Herald, dated 2nd April 1875 reported:-

*Market Rasen: "A batch of agricultural labourers, with their families, (numbering from 60 to 70) left the Market Rasen station on Wednesday morning for Liverpool to embark for Canada. Mr. Hilliard, a delegate of the Union, [National Agricultural Labourers' Union] addressed them on the platform."*

The Market Rasen Weekly Mail carried such advertisements as this:-  
(28 February 1874, repeated many times)

FREE EMIGRATION TO NEW ZEALAND  
FREE PASSAGES  
are granted by the  
GOVERNMENT OF NEW ZEALAND  
As under:-

*To married and Single Agricultural Labourers, Navvies,  
Ploughmen, Shepherds, Mechanics, &c.*

*Also to*

SINGLE FEMALE DOMESTIC SERVANTS  
*as Cooks, Housemaids, Nurses, General Servants, Dairy  
Maids, &c.*

*For Terms and Conditions apply personally, or by letter, to the  
Agent-General for New Zealand, 7 Westminster Chambers,  
London, S.W., or to Mr. William Banks, Secretary,  
Amalgamated Labour League, 5 Witham-street, Boston.*

Such notices would be seen by labourers in Claxby, who would certainly read of the huge Labourers' Demonstration, reported at great length in the Rasen Mail dated 11th April 1874.

"LABOURERS' DEMONSTRATION -

*The agricultural labourers had a great day on Friday last. Their formidable meeting in the Market-place was a success almost beyond the hopes of its projectors, and being exceedingly well conducted and free from disturbances of any kind, it may justly be recorded with advantage to the cause they met to advocate ...*

*... Although the active business of the Demonstration was not expected to commence until the afternoon, a large body of labourers, clean and well-dressed, had assembled in the Market-place fully three hours before that time. The Union men mostly came in with blue rosettes ... whilst the wives and daughters displayed the standard colour in ribbons and similar trimmings on their hats and dresses ...*

*... The evening meeting took place at six, and when it became known that G. Skipworth, Esq., of Moortown*

*House [South Kelsey] had consented to preside, the enthusiasm of the Union men got almost to the point of boiling over ..."*

The following issue of the Market Rasen Weekly Mail dated 18th April reported that between eight hundred and one thousand people had attended in the Market-place. It reported Skipworth's speech at length, the important section was as follows:-

*"... A good deal had been said about labourers' grievances, and he thought they had some foundation for complaint, not alone on account of being insufficiently paid for their services, but also for bitterness they had experienced from employers when they had the hardihood to form themselves into an Union for mutual support and defence. He could not understand the arbitrary principle of men being discharged - not because they were bad or disobedient workmen - but because they were inheriting a little more intelligence from their combination as members of the Union. He had told the farmers they were going to work in the wrong way, and that tampering with the free rights of their own men was, in the present day, not to be tolerated ..."*

G. Skipworth, who owned 5,542 acres with an annual rental in the early 1870s of £6,629, was noted as the only one amongst the local gentry to support the farmworkers' trade unions.

In 1880 (Market Rasen Mail) appeared further notices about emigration. On 31st January an advertisement appeared for the CUNARD ROYAL MAIL STEAMERS, sailing from Liverpool to New York and Boston every Monday and Saturday. The local agent was - John Sanderson, Market Place, Market Rasen

On 14th February two notices about agricultural emigration appeared. One read:-

CAPE GOVERNMENT  
AGRICULTURAL EMIGRATION  
To Agriculturists

*WANTED, to proceed to CAPE COLONY, several AGRICULTURISTS,  
Married or Single not over 45. Good references required. The advantages offered are:- (1) Land in the finest Agricultural and Grazing Districts of the Cape, at 10s. per Acre, the payment to be made in ten years at One shilling per acre per year. (2) A Free Passage for the Settler and family.*

*For further particulars and Forms of Application apply to WILLIAM C. BURNET, Cape Government Agent, 10 Blomfield Street, London, E.C.*

The Claxby farmworker could and did keep himself informed by attending, year after year, the Statute Hirings at Caistor and at Market Rasen. One at Market Rasen was reported as follows (2nd May 1874):-



“... so far as Market Rasen is concerned ... this annual gathering and holiday still maintains its popularity ... Any one on a tour of inspection in the Market-place on Wednesday night preceding the Statute, would have wondered where all the caravans and travelling houses, which were open to the public on the morrow, came from... Every available inch of space was eagerly seized upon early on Wednesday... How the proprietors of the various Market-place establishments would fare, it is

impossible to say; but if the noise of gongs, organs, drums, cymbals, and the strepor [sic] of a host of wide-mouthed and leathern-lunged competitors for public favour be any criterion of brisk business, the counting up of the pence ... must have afforded very satisfactory results. So far as exteriors went the shows were a degree more respectable than usual ... The hiring business of the Statute was only secondary to the amusement ...”

The Market Rasen Weekly Mail 2 May 1874

<p><b>CLAXBY</b> is a small village and parish, in the Northern division of the county, wapentake of Walshorw, Calator union and county court district, parts of Lindsey, rural deanery of Walshorw, archdeaconry of Stow and diocese of Lincoln, one mile north-east from Uselby station, 4 miles north from Market Rasen, 5 south from Calator, and 15 1/2 from London. The church of St. Mary is an old stone building in the Late Decorated style, restored in 1871, at a cost of £1,500: It consists of chancel, clerestoried nave, aisles, and western tower with pinnacles, and 5 bells, and south porch and contains six stained windows; also an organ, built by Nicholson of Lincoln; on the north side of the church, and about 14 feet from it, remains of a tessellated pavement were found in 1859. The register dates from the year 1556. The living is a rectory, with that of Normanby, gross joint yearly value £1,050, including 50 acres of glebe, with residences, in the gift of and held since 1869 by the Rev. Samuel Wright Andrews M.A. of Calus College, Cambridge. There are chapels</p>	<p>for the Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists. The Earl of Yarborough is lord of the manor and owns all the land, with the exception of the glebe. The soils are sand and black loam; subsoil, clay. Here are ironstone mines. The chief crops are wheat, barley and oats. The area is 1,680 acres; rental value, £2,000; the population in 1881 was 325. Parish Clerk, William Balderson.</p>
<p>Andrews Rev. Samuel Wright M.A., R.P. Rector Young Gerard Joseph, Claxby house Young John Joseph J.P. Claxby house COMMERCIAL. Bristow Shepherd, blacksmith Bristow William Charles, grocer, &amp; post office</p>	<p>Post &amp; Money Order Office &amp; Savings Bank.—William Charles Bristow, sub-postmaster. Letters through Market Rasen arrive at 9.45 a.m.; dispatched at 3.15 p.m. Market Rasen is the nearest telegraph office There is a school for boys &amp; girls built by the Earl of Yarborough, who also subscribes £10 yearly towards its support Mixed School, built in 1857, for 200 children; average attendance, 84; Edward Canty, master; Mrs. Mildred Canty, mistress</p>
<p>Burnett David, farm bailiff to G. J. Young Gall Thomas, shoemaker Hewitt James, ironer Hill John (exors. of), Pelham's Arms P.R. Hill John Bryan, farmer Malby George, wheelwright Marshall John William, farmer</p>	<p>Mundy George, farmer Mundy George, shoemaker Rickleth Thomas, farmer Sesmy Samuel, also maker Shepherd George, farmer West Yorkshire Iron &amp; Coal Co. Ltd. (John George Carr, man.); &amp; at Leeds</p>

Extract from Kelly's 1885 Lincolnshire Directory

6 THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CLAXBY

When the Archdeacon of Lincoln, the Venerable H. K. Bonney inspected St. Mary's church on 12th August 1846 he found nothing on which to comment unfavourably.\*

“... The chancel arch springs from Early English pilasters, on the mouldings of which are two grotesque heads, one of which is a human head with both hands stretching the mouth as wide as possible, the other with hands lifted up towards each side of the head and tongue hanging out of the mouth. The belfry is good and the chamber above pretty fair, ascended by a ladder which is crooked but firm; the chamber wants cleaning. There are three bells, which, with their frames, are in good order... There are the Commandments, King's Arms and Table of Degrees... The pews are panelled deal, the pulpit is oak-grained with a sounding board ... The church is well drained. The church yard is sufficient and there is sufficient church room. The Table and the rails are good...”

By 1871, according to the Stamford Mercury dated 23 June 1871,

“... The dilapidated condition of the church here having become a reproach the Rev. S. W. Andrews (then Curate, and now the Rector) some years ago made an attempt to raise funds for its restoration. This, however, was frustrated chiefly through the late incumbent being opposed to the scheme, but almost immediately upon his demise the good work was taken in hand, and brought to a successful issue...”

As we have already noted, in 1851 the usual attendance at church was about 60, there being one service each Sunday alternately morning and afternoon. The living, united with Normanby, was a very rich one being worth in 1856 no less than £844 a year. A comparison with the contemporary value of other local livings is instructive.

\* Bonney's Church Notes, being Notes on the Churches in the Archdeaconry of Lincoln, 1845 - 1848, edited by the Rev. N. S. Harding. Pub. Lincoln 1937.

Parish	Annual Value of the Living (£)	Total Population
Claxby with Normanby	844	411
Caistor	300	2166
Nettleton	500	524
Tealby	120	861
Market Rasen	223	2110
Cuxwold	306	68

There was no indication in 1851 that the church was in poor repair. By 1871 (as we have noticed) the church was reported as being 'dilapidated'. We have no evidence to account for the neglect of maintenance during these twenty years.

During the nineteenth century there were only four incumbents enjoying the Rectory of Claxby. They were:-

1794 - 1819	Richard Dixon†
1819 - 1820	Thomas Wilby
1820 - 1869	Richard Atkinson
1869 - 1905	Samuel Wright Andrews

A succession of Curates assisted the Rectors; it is difficult to appreciate the need for curates but their presence certainly enabled the Rectors to enjoy a comfortable and gentlemanly life.

The clergy in Claxby all lived in some style, as they would expect to do in the nineteenth century. The enumerators' returns for the four census reports provide details.

In 1851 the Rector was not resident when the census was taken, but his Curate's household was:-

*The Rev. Parkinson Younge, age 31, born at Walesby. His son Thomas, aged 8 and daughter Helen, 5 years old, had both been born in Tetford (Lincs.). Two servants lived in: a gardener, John Wattam, married, aged 31, had been born in South Willingham; the house-servant, Helen Wattam, aged 31, had been born in Hagworthingham.*

Twenty years later, in 1871, the Rector's household was:-

*The Rev. Samuel Wright Andrews, married, aged 47 (he had been born in Nottinghamshire and his wife, Annie, aged 41, in Lincolnshire.) Three servants lived in: Miss Catley (43) the housemaid; Miss Martha Good (17) the Cook; and William Clark (35) the Groom.*

In 1881 seven people lived in the Rectory:-

*Samuel Andrews and his wife Annie, the Rev. Edmund E. Dean, the Curate of Claxby and Normanby (aged 23), a footman, a cook, a housemaid and a kitchen maid.*

† There is a memorial in the chancel to the Revd. Richard Dixon, LL.B., "... many years Rector of this parish, who died March 7th, 1819, aged 58 ...". In the years 1801 to 1803 he added to his substantial income by acting as Curate at Kingerby

**CLAXBY-with-NORMANBY**, a pleasant village on a picturesque valley, 4 miles N. of Market Rasen, has in its parish 244 souls, and 1869 acres.

The hamlet of Lincroough is part of the manor, and covers of nearly all the soil. The Witherswick and Marbury families were formerly united here. Her father was an ancient Catholic family, whose name passed to the Townsall, and from them to the Claxby-Combes. There is a tombstone near the church, and some years ago, a piece of unworked pavement was dug up, composed of blue and white stones, supposed to show figures of about four inches by two. The Church (St. Mary) is a mansard structure, with a tower and three bells, and in its chancel is a monument with kneeling figures of John Witherswick (ob. 1705) and his wife and daughter. The rectory, valued in K.R. at £8. 10s. 16d., has the rectory of Normanby-le-Wold annexed to it, and the united living is now valued at £184, in the benefice of the Rev. Richard Atkinson, M.A., and patronage of the Rev. G. W. Andrews, the present vicar. The tithes were commuted in 1867, for yearly rent-charges amounting to £207 in Claxby, and £110 in Normanby. There are 592. 8s. of glebe in Claxby, and 45s. in Normanby. The Rectory and Claxby House are both mansions near the church; and about 1½ miles to the north, is **WOLF HOUSE**, a farm once belonging to a noble house, and long occupied by Mr. Gen. W. Ashurst, the father of agricultural history. Claxby is called **Claxby in Domesday Book** and described as being united with Normanby, and in the "History of Walsley." Some years ago, great efforts were made to get coal here, but the quality was so inferior, that the speculation was abandoned. The parish has an hospital in the Abbotswood at Kingerby, and has a noted fair-green called **Claxby Wood**, and several farms, called **Claxby Moor**. The School for the two parishes of Claxby and Normanby is supported by the land of the manor and the tithes, who have lately crossed upon houses for the tithes.

**CLAXBY PARISH.**

Andrews Rev. G. W. Vicar, M.A. rector,	Hamby Thomas, schoolmaster
Proctor	Shepherd John, blacksmith
Bristow Wm. shoemaker	Stary Samuel, gunsmith
Curry Edward, schoolmaster	Young John Jnr., Esq., Claxby M.C.
Deacon George, tailor	<b>PARISHERS.</b>   Marry George
Deacon Wm. vicar-general & blacksmith	Danson Wm.   Shepherd Frank
Hill John, timber dealer and vicar	Geosmore Robert, store keeper
Prebendary	Kerwin James   Chapman Edw.
Mundy George, grocer	Marshall John, Claxby Moor
Mundy Wm. grocer   Linton Mr. R.	Richard Thomas, Claxby Moor
Stoney Stephen, butcher	Foot and Carriers from Market Rasen

Extract from White's 1856 Lincolnshire Directory

In 1891 the household contained six people. The Rev. Samuel Andrews, then a widower of sixty-six, who was now a magistrate as well as the Rector; the Curate, Edmund Bull (aged 23), a housekeeper, two housemaids and a footman.

The total population of Claxby and Normanby-le-Wold was as follows:

1851	411
1881	467
1871	519
1891	365

The church underwent a major restoration in 1870 - 1871 and the county newspaper reported its re-opening:-

*"... the church was re-opened on the 8th. inst., after having been closed since March 1870. The service commenced with Holy Communion at 8.0 a.m. Before morning prayer at 11.30 there was a large assemblage of the neighbouring clergy and gentry. At about 10.30 the Bishop of Lincoln with all the clergy then present perambulated the grounds around the church, being headed by the choir singing hymns. In due time for the church service the procession started from the Rectory, the choristers leading and singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers', &c. ..."*

The report states that about two hundred people enjoyed lunch in a marquee; that James Fowler of Louth‡ was the architect responsible for the restoration and that the builders were Messrs. Barker and Smith of Lincoln. It continues :-

*“... The cost ... has been £1600, the Earl of Yarborough (proprietor of all the land except the glebe farm) having given all the new stone and the sand required for the building, in addition to a subscription of £350 ... Simultaneously with the restoration of the church, the Rectory house has been considerably altered and enlarged, so that now, environed as it is with lawn, garden, shrubberies, and groves of ornamental trees, it forms a truly charming and enviable retreat.”*

(Stamford Mercury 23 June 1871)

Competition for worshippers continued with the Wesleyan Methodists and the Primitive Methodists. A new Wesleyan Methodist chapel was built in 1904 on a new site. It would be interesting to know what the church-chapel relationships were at different periods, with different Rectors and Curates, in the 19th century.

In 1857 the Rev. S. W. Andrews preached in Caistor at the anniversary of the CAISTOR MATRON SOCIETY. In that year Mrs. J. G. Dixon was Patroness and George Skipworth (of South Kelsey) the President. Were children from Claxby and Normanby then present in Caistor for this 49th anniversary? We do not know. We do know, however that the Rev. S. W. Andrews spoke again at the anniversary in 1858 when the county newspaper reported that:-

*“... the Matron Society, the object of which is to encourage children in learning and industrial habits ... is supported by about 150 ladies ...”*

In 1858 about 700 children from Caistor and nearby parishes attended this anniversary (Stamford Mercury 9 July 1858).

THE MATRON SOCIETY had been founded in 1808 to encourage the growth and maintenance of Church Sunday Schools; it continued its efforts until after the First World War. Shortly after its foundation an Address to Sunday School Teachers was printed; this stated:-

*“... Much of the peace, comfort, and safety of the community, depend upon the character and habits of the poor ... To tame the ferocity of their unsubdued passions - to repress the excessive rudeness of their manners - to chasten the disgusting and demoralizing obscenity of their language - to subdue the stubborn rebellion of their wills - to render them honest, obedient, courteous, industrious, submissive, and orderly - should be an object of great desire with all who are engaged in the work of Sunday School Instruction ...”*

The Sunday Schools encouraged by this Society were, in fact, Day Schools held on Sundays - on the day on which

few children were at work: there were (at least in their earlier days) two sessions each Sunday, the first from 8 a.m. until noon, the second from 2 p.m. until 6 p.m.

Year after year the county newspaper reported these anniversaries, usually in very favourable terms. Not until 1881, reporting the seventy-second anniversary, did a critical report appear:-

*“... without any change in the old stereotyped programme, which so little agrees with the modern spirit of progress, or popular idea of usefulness, that it [the anniversary] becomes more and more the subject of derisive remarks. The weather was again inauspicious, and the number of poor children sent from the villages was fewer than ever, though plenty still to afford the pleasing sight of a crowd of them fed standing like swine with baskets of cheap buns and pails full of slops in the Market-place, and with music to sauce their repast.”*

Stamford Mercury 8 July 1881

An undated typescript by Miss Bristow shows that eventually:

*“Once a year we were transported by waggon and horses to the Service ‘Matron’s Meeting’ in the Caistor Church followed by sports.”*



Claxby Rectory and Church after 1871

Information about CAISTOR MATRON’S SOCIETY may be found in the following two booklets, published by Nettleton Branch of the Workers’ Educational Association in 1960 and 1992.

Rex C. Russell: [A History of Elementary Schools and Adult Education in Nettleton and Caistor: 1800-1875](#)

Rex C. Russell: [Aspects of the History of Caistor: 1790 - 1860.](#)

‡ Normanby-le-Wold church was much restored, by James Fowler in 1868.



## 7 THE YARBOROUGH ESTATE AND CLAXBY

By 1876 the Yarborough Estate comprised 55,272 acres with a gross estimated annual rental of £76,226. Claxby and Normanby together comprised 3615 acres.

The fact of Yarborough ownership is evident in (1) several estate cottages, of high standard for their period; (2) in the granting of leases for the building of two Methodist chapels; (3) in the building of the school for the children of Claxby and Normanby. One building still standing bears this inscription:-

*"This Shop was erected in 1878 by the Right Honble Earl Yarborough for his tenant JOHN SHEPHERD. He and his father have already been Blacksmiths at Claxby for 73 years and have worked for FOUR Generations of Mr. HARGREAVES' family at Normanby and for four generations of Mr. YOUNG'S of CLAXBY. Rebuilt 1948."*

Evidence of the Yarborough influence on their tenant-farmers in Claxby is apparent in the printed POLL BOOKS which appeared after every contested parliamentary election before the Secret Ballot was introduced in 1872. In these,

under each parish, appear the names of voters together with evidence of the candidate for whom they voted.

In the 1832 election the five voters in Claxby, the Rev. Richard Atkinson, John Young, gent., and three farmers - George Mundy, Benjamin Marshall, Christopher Stevenson - each gave one vote to the Yarborough candidate, the Hon. C. A. Pelman. The same five voters in 1835 did likewise.

In the 1841 election there were seven voters in Claxby, the five already named plus George Mundy, junior, and William Rickills. With the exception of the Rector all voted for the Yarborough candidate, Lord Worsley.

In the last election before Secret Ballot, that of 1852, there were seven voters in Claxby: five of these each voted for the Yarborough candidate, Sir Montague Cholmeley. They were Robert Gooseman, George Mundy, William Rickills, Frederick Shepherd and J. Young. The two who voted Tory (i.e. NOT for the Yarborough candidate) were the Rector (Richard Atkinson) and William Davidson.

In the 19th century one expects the tenant-farmers on a large estate to respect the wishes of their landlord, whether such wishes are expressed or not expressed.

## 8 CLAXBY IRONSTONE MINE - 'THAT GLOOMY CAVERN OF DISASTER'

In 1859 and in 1860 ironstone was found at Appleby to the east of Scunthorpe, Kirton Lindsey, Caistor (in Hundon hamlet), Nettleton and very soon after this in both Normanby-le-Wold and Claxby. There were, locally, high and unrealistic hopes that these discoveries would result in local industrialization and the local production of very much greater wealth. There were anticipations that these small

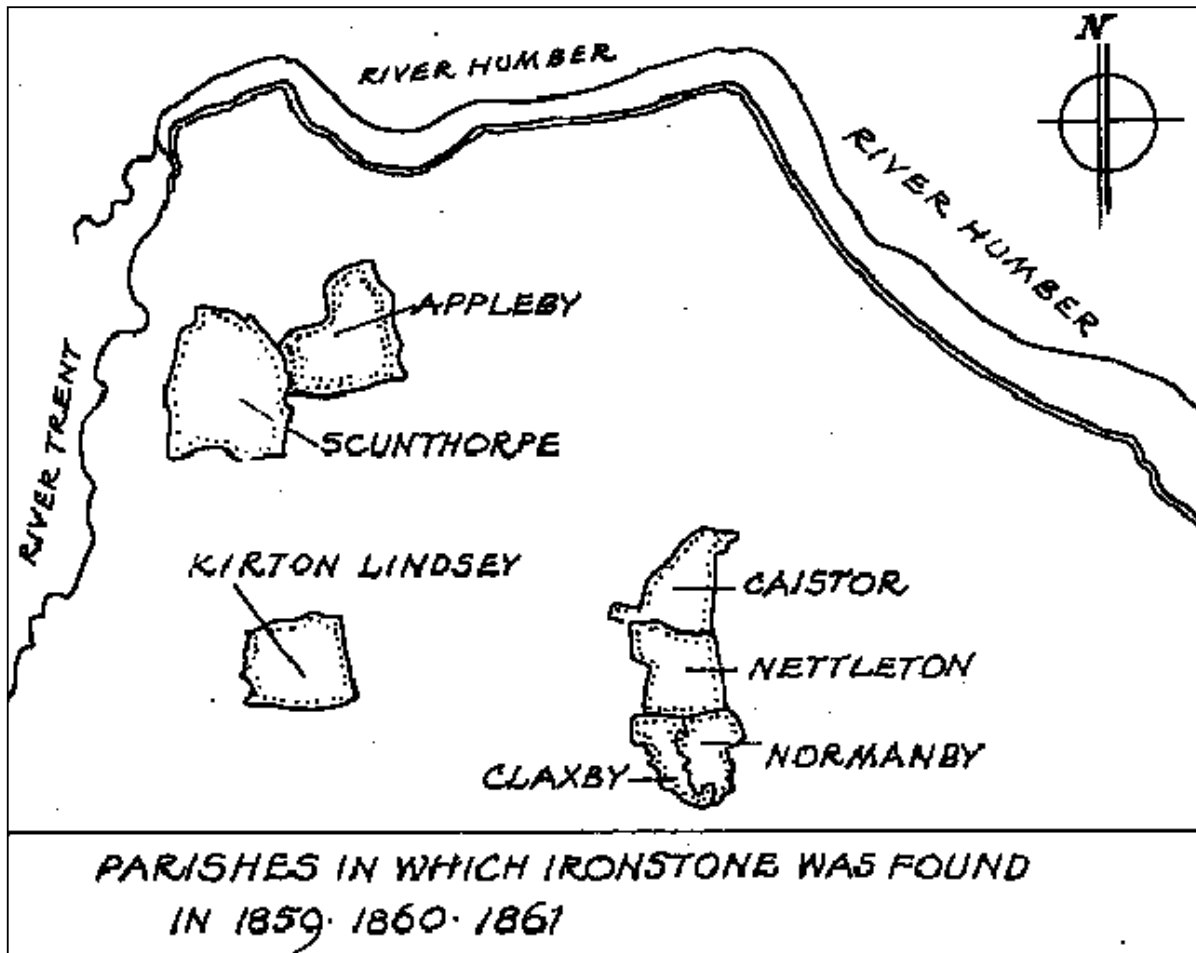
agricultural villages would become industrial towns of national importance. Such hopes never materialized, of course.

What were the populations of these villages in 1861 and how did they, in fact, develop? (Scunthorpe area populations are also below).

Population			
Parish	1861	1871	1881
Normanby	149	138	162
Claxby	262	237	357
Nettleton	524	536	545
<b>Totals</b>	<b>935</b>	<b>911</b>	<b>1064</b>
Kirton Lindsey	1948	2058	1904
Brumby	159	204	178
Scunthorpe	303	368	710
Frodingham	113	113	577
Crosby	214	225	288
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2737</b>	<b>2968</b>	<b>3657</b>
<b>Grand totals</b>	<b>3672</b>	<b>3879</b>	<b>4721</b>

The above figures show that Normanby's population increased a little as did that of Nettleton, but in this locality only Claxby shows a significant increase - and the Census returns reveal that this was due to an influx of ironstone

miners. The villages in the Scunthorpe area do have a major increase in population - mainly in Frodingham and Scunthorpe. It was, of course, only in the Scunthorpe area that the discovery of ironstone significantly changed these



parishes. This story has been related in *AN INDUSTRIAL ISLAND: A History of Scunthorpe* edited by M. Elizabeth Armstrong (Scunthorpe 1981). How can we find out about the ironstone mine and its impact on the parish in Claxby?<sup>1</sup> There are two main sources, the county newspaper, *The Lincoln, Rutland and Stamford Mercury*, and the enumerators' returns for the Census of 1871, 1881 and 1891. Hopes that *The Market Rasen Mail* (which began publication in 1856) would provide extra information on the mines were unrealised. That newspaper provided detailed national news for local readers and only very little local news in the nineteenth century.

Reports of the discovery of ironstone appear in the *Stamford Mercury* in December 1859 and January 1860. Under Kirton Lindsey in that newspaper dated 9 December 1859 we read:-

*"Very surprising rumours are being circulated in regard to the Lindsey iron works speedily to be established at this place. It would be strange if there were no truth in the statements, and more strange if all were true in the vast amounts of exaggeration with which our ears are daily*

*assailed. That this locality abounds with iron is ascertained beyond all doubt; ... As yet what has been done is preparatory, and in the way of experiment. In several places the ground has been bared sufficiently for the discovery of a profitable enterprise ... When fairly at work 'they say' 1000 hands will at least be required. But 'they say' is not an authority for too much confidence: suffice it that 'they say' is right to the extent of 500. This would be a boon to Kirton, notoriously desolate, dreary, and dead, and would revolutionize the shopkeepers in every direction and of every grade. It is fortunate that this iron is so near the railway. Sidings for waggons are at once to be proceeded with, and 'they say' 200 tons a day will be dispatched to blast furnaces somewhere until it is expedient to have them on the spot, as will be the case eventually."*

On the 20 January 1860 the same paper reported that the works at the Kirton Lindsey ironstone mines<sup>2</sup> had begun in earnest and the writer was led to believe that, within a few months, 500 men would be employed at the works. Six months later (under Brigg) we read:-

1 A little further information on Claxby mines may be found in *Lincolnshire Industrial Archaeology* Vol. 6, Nos. 2 & 3 (1971) and *Lincolnshire Industrial Archaeology Newsletter* Vol. 3, No. 2. (1968).

2 *Kelly's Directory of 1861* states, of Kirton Lindsey: "Here is an iron ore mine ..." George Graham: manager, Samuel Frederick Okey: proprietor. *Kelly's of 1868* repeats: "Here is an iron ore mine."

*“Lincolnshire has been hitherto considered purely as an agricultural county, but it is likely to turn out very rich in minerals, as in addition to the iron found at Kirton Lindsey, on the estate of R. Winn, Esq., of Appleby, another estate in the neighbourhood of Caistor is likely to turn out equally rich. We have just been shown specimens of iron ore likely to yield a very rich percentage ... and we should not be surprised in a few months to see a blast in full operation, as it is not unlikely where there is so much iron that coal may be found as well.”*

One week later this newspaper confirmed that iron ore

*“... has recently been discovered on the property of Mr. J. T. Chant, druggist, of Caistor. It is not of superior quality to the Kirton and Appleby material, but from the present researches made it is anticipated that the Caistor hills are much more productive.”*

After another week came this further report:-

*“All doubt is now set at rest as to the quantity and quality of iron ore dug up in and adjoining Caistor parish. ... Mr. J. T. Chant, in addition to his own land and the lands of R. Owston, Esq., of Hundon, has explored the lands at Nettleton belonging to T. J. Dixon, Esq., of Holton Park, and also the lands of Sir Culling Eardley, Bart., and has tested the iron ore found there both chemically and magnetically; ... the result shows that iron greatly abounds ... Mr. Chant ... has communicated the above facts to the owners of the lands, who it is hoped will bestir themselves to develop the advantages of such a discovery.”*<sup>3</sup>

The newspaper's correspondents were disappointed that progress was not faster but they still showed (misplaced) optimism. At Kirton Lindsey “The ironstone enterprise of this place is not so briskly followed up as was expected. New ground, however, has been commenced, and the yield is said to be very valuable. We are glad to see the arrival of several new trucks expressly for the undertaking. There are also other evidences that the work is to be prosecuted with greater earnestness, and will become permanent.”<sup>4</sup> It was felt that:

*“... a large portion of North Lincolnshire must one day become a manufacturing as well as an agricultural district ...”*<sup>5</sup>

Optimism was evident in 1861 and also in 1862, but the press reports have little real evidence on which to base these high hopes. In February 1861:-

*“With much gratification we record the commencement of*

*mining operations on the Hundon estate. A piece of the rock was bared on the 24th ult., and the ore is being carted away to the railway. Direct railway communication with the town [Caistor] is now urgently required, and the difficulties which stand in the way ... of this long-talked-of project are happily growing smaller by degrees. Other proprietors of land adjacent are expected to follow Mr. Owston's example, so that there is some prospect of the extensive mineral products of the district being developed; and according to the highest authorities in these matters the iron found here and at Appleby excels in quality any other yet found in the kingdom, and is equal to any imported.”*

And in July 1861:-

*“The minerals of the Hundon estate ... have been recently sold, and mining operations are likely to be resumed forthwith. Smelting furnaces, and a line of rails from the mines to North Kelsey station, it is confidently expected will be constructed as soon as the necessary preliminaries can be completed.”*<sup>6</sup>

In March 1862 the HUNDON MINERAL FREEHOLD ESTATE (comprising 181 acres, ‘with an extensive and valuable Bed of IRONSTONE’) was up for sale by auction. The sale notice included these particulars:-<sup>7</sup>

*“... a valuable and extensive bed of Ironstone, from 12 to 14 feet in thickness, is under the greater part of the Estate, which from analysis is found to be of extremely rich quality.*

*“A short Railway of three miles, of easy location, is only required to bring the produce into direct communication by Rail and Sea with France, and with the Ironworks of Newcastle and Durham, and by the new railway making from Barnetby to Doncaster with the West Country.*

*“Hundon is within a mile of Caistor, eight miles from Brigg, and about twenty from New Holland and the Port of Great Grimsby.*

*“Stone for burning excellent Lime is abundant on the Estate. Immediate possession may be had ...”*

Kelly's Directory of Lincolnshire for 1861 adds little to our information. There is no mention here (nor in the 1868 edition) of any iron-stone working at Claxby. Under Caistor it records “Iron ore, of excellent quality, has been found to exist in large quantities in the town and neighbourhood.” The 1868 edition adds “... a tramway is being laid to the beds at Nettleton,” it does not state where this tramway began and a report in the Stamford Mercury of 22nd November 1867 is of limited help in this matter.

*“On the 12th inst., the ceremony of taking up the first sod for a new branch railway to connect the iron diggings with the Hull and Lincoln line was performed by Dr. Chalmers [of Caistor] ... The new line will be about two*

3 Stamford Mercury 20 January, 8, 15 & 22 June 1860.

4 Stamford Mercury 13 July 1860 (Kirton Lindsey).

5 Stamford Mercury 27 July 1860.

6 Stamford Mercury 1st February 1861 and 19th July 1861.

7 Stamford Mercury 7th March 1862.

*miles long, and will reach the main line a few yards beyond Holton station. It is expected to be completed in a few weeks, when extensive excavations will be made, and the ore calcined before removal."*

Presumably these 'iron diggings' were at Claxby? Certainly work had begun in Normanby and Claxby before 1869 because a report in June 1869 mentions 'the iron mine'.<sup>8</sup> This report, headed Discovery of Antique Cells at the Normanby Iron Mine, tells of

*"... the discovery of five cells, or caves, evidently of great antiquity, in the hill at Normanby, in front of the iron mine." It continues:- "About 50 yards to the south of the adit by which the mine is entered, near the brow of the hill, the first of a series of mysterious cells was found by a party of labourers employed in quarrying the ironstone. Four others in the stratum of ironstone (which averages about 6 feet in thickness), about twenty yards apart, having for floors the green sandstone, were subsequently found. The cells varied in size being from ten to fifteen feet in width, and twenty to thirty feet in length, and had been reached where there was no subterraneous passage by perpendicular shafts about four feet square. At this part of the hill a shaft of twenty-five to thirty feet was necessary to reach the sandstone. The cells were walled with squares of the sandstone of about six inches - a species of masonry that must have been executed with great difficulty in such extremely hard material. No bones were found to indicate that they had been used for sepulture, nor were there any relics to indicate for what purpose or at what time they were made. Unfortunately the workmen paid no respect to these relics of antiquity, and they have all disappeared in the progress of the work. Various conjectures are afloat, but the probability is that they were Saxon places of concealment ..."*

Mining operations had started during or a little before 1869. (We have already stated that Kelly's Directory of 1868 makes no mention of workings at Claxby, but as the edition of 1876 also fails to record ironstone activity at either Claxby or Normanby this source is clearly not to be relied upon.)<sup>9</sup> Those newspaper reports which do exist reveal what was unusual - and therefore worth reporting - rather than day by day activity. The numerous accidents in the mines ('that gloomy cavern of disaster') are the items usually reported in some detail.

In December 1869

*"An inquest was held at the Hope Tavern, Holton station, on the 22nd inst., on the body of a miner named John Buxton, who was accidentally crushed in the mine while running before a truck laden with ore. The truck travelling too fast for him, he stumbled and got jammed between it and a post, and received an injury to the spine, which proved fatal the day after the accident ... Dr.*

*Chalmers, the company's surgeon, attended the sufferer promptly, but the case was a hopeless one ... Deceased has left a widow and several children, and was much respected among his fellow workmen, who raised a subscription for the widow and family ..."*<sup>10</sup>

The company mentioned was Frith & Co., who operated this mine until 1873 when the West Yorkshire Iron & Coal Co. Ltd. took it over: they worked it until its closure in 1885. This information is from the article in Vol. 6 (1971) of *Lincolnshire Industrial Archaeology*. This source states that the largest production was 70,000 tons during 1873: the ore was sent to Leeds, leaving the mine on a horse-drawn narrow gauge tramway, thence by a double incline, cable operated (the full truck descending caused empty trucks to ascend to the mine) to a mineral branch of the Manchester, Sheffield & Lincoln Railway which was one mile long. Construction had started on this branch on 12th November 1867, as reported earlier in this article.

In January 1870 there was still hope that a railway would be built from Grimsby to Caistor. Rumour asserted that the Earl of Yarborough together with Colonel Tomline (M.P. for Grimsby) and Mr. Thorold of Weelsby had made plans for this.

*"... The chief aim of the project is to bring the ironstone direct from the mines near Caistor to Grimsby, where the smelting works are to be erected. If, however, the line is not ... to be made available for passenger and general goods traffic, it will scarcely realize any hopes of benefit to Caistor ..."*

Neither the railway line nor the smelting works were ever constructed, of course. The mines grew at Claxby and miners moved into the area from other counties as the census reports show. This report appeared in the *Stamford Mercury* dated 4th November 1870:-

*"Claxby a mining village! What! ultra-rural and lethargic Claxby? Yes, strange as it would have sounded ten years ago, and will yet sound to many ... formerly well acquainted with the place and its sturdy opposition to all innovation .. but ignorant of the social revolution in progress thereat - it has now a mining population. Its green lane has been invaded by the builders, and its ancient hedge-rows demolished to make way for rows of dwelling-houses. Ten roomy and substantial cottages are already built and occupied by miners, a detached villa residence is in course of erection for the mining company's manager, and it is stated that the building of another ... ten cottages will be immediately proceeded with. They are urgently needed. Both lesser and lessees of the iron mine have reason to be satisfied with their profits: it is rich and inexhaustible in metal of a superior quality, but a continuance of successful working must ... depend upon skilful and experienced hands, to retain the services of which their domiciliary comfort and convenience must be*

<sup>8</sup> *Stamford Mercury* 11th June 1869. I am indebted to Eileen Mumby for copying this and some later reports for me.

<sup>9</sup> According to *Lincolnshire Industrial Archaeology*, Vol. 6, 1971, the mine opened in 1868.

<sup>10</sup> *Stamford Mercury* 31 December 1869.



*... cared for within reasonable distance of their work ...*

This report went on to inform readers of other changes in the village and to speculate on the future.

*Claxby "... now lives, having received an impetus from another cause than that of mining ... Some eighteen years ago the late patron and incumbent of the united Rectory of Claxby and Normanby, being then in delicate health and medically certified to die within the year, sold the living to the present Rector, who became curate, and whilst waiting in patience the event up to a year since, has held an anomalous and not very enviable position in the parish. Since coming into his own, to the joy of most of the parishioners, he has set about the much needed restoration of St. Mary's church ... and is also making considerable additions and improvements to the rectorial mansion. In all probability the new population will shortly furnish such an increase of Dissenters and of juveniles, that more chapel and school accommodation will be required. Trade in general will look after its own wants ... but great inconvenience to the transaction of business and proper entertainment of strangers already arises from the want of a public house in the village, and for this the lord of the soil should be petitioned to grant the remedy."*

In less than a year after this report the Pelham Arms inn had been built in Claxby. We know this because, on the 10th August 1871, an inquest was held there

*"... on the body of a man who died suddenly at the iron mine on the day previous ... Deceased had been only a day or two employed at the mine; his name was unknown, and there was nothing upon his person to aid in establishing his identity, beyond two addresses, supposed to be of lodging houses - one at Lincoln, the other at Boston ... The body was interred in Claxby Churchyard. The manager has made it a rule for the future that every workman engaged shall write his name, age and belongings in a register at the mine before he commences work."*<sup>11</sup>

In September the Miners' terrace was about to be extended by the building of five more dwellings. The Caistor builder, James Button, was engaged for this work.<sup>12</sup> Mr. Button had already built a first block of ten cottages, beginning work in March 1870, "... intended for occupation by the miners, to whom hitherto house accommodation within a reasonable distance has been a serious want, and in all probability a considerable village will soon grow up at this spot."<sup>13</sup> A press cutting (paper unidentified) in Grimsby Library carried the same news and added:- (19 March 1870)

*"... These mines will be placed in direct communication*

11 *Stamford Mercury* 18 August 1871.

12 *Stamford Mercury* 1 September 1871.

13 *Stamford Mercury* 1 April, 8 April & 25 May 1870.

14 *Stamford Mercury* 1 April, 8 April, and 25 May 1870.

*by tramways with Grimsby, and we are informed that Mr. Tomline's projected plan will open out this large iron field to the world, which, during the last 50 years, we have been supplying with the necessary material for its great mechanical contrivances and commercial interests."*

Accidents were frequent at the mine, and were regularly reported in the press. Osgodby School Log Book on 4 February 1870 has this entry:- "Many of the children absent on account of the funeral of a young man having met his death by an accident at the iron works." If the Log Books of Claxby School could be located we could learn much more of the mine, the miners, and their children at school. Accidents were reported in April and in May, 1870.

*"... Benj. Hunt and John Coulson ... were seriously injured by the falling in of a large mass just as they were about to remove their waggon full of ironstone. Both were crushed down and shockingly bruised from head to foot, one of them having a boot sole torn off and the foot severely lacerated. Miner-like in foolhardiness, we understand they had worked beyond the regulation distance before shoring up."*

*On Wednesday 18 May "... a miner named John Southwell was at work, when upwards of a ton weight of ironstone and clay fell upon him, causing severe internal injuries, as well as breaking a thigh-bone. The broken limb was set by Dr. Chalmers, the Mining Co.'s surgeon, under whose care the poor fellow is progressing favourably."*<sup>14</sup>

Accidents continued to happen and in May 1872 the Reverend N. H. Sumner, the Curate of Nettleton, wrote to the editor of the *Stamford Mercury* calling the Claxby mine "that gloomy cavern of disaster." His letter appears in later pages: before we read this we will look at the information on Claxby miners in the enumerators' reports for the Census of 1871.

In Normanby le Wold there lived in 1871 five ironstone miners: of these, three had been born in Lincolnshire, at Steeping, Sudbrooke and South Kelsey, whilst two had their origins outside the county at Dunton in Bedfordshire and at Tavistock in Devon. (The names are in Appendix One). Two miners lived in Middle Rasen (I am indebted to Tony Wilkins for this information). No fewer than thirty-four miners lived in Nettleton, whilst a few lived in Osgodby and one in Holton le Moor. Local memory suggests that there were still more mine-workers living as far away as Binbrook who walked daily to work and back. There is one head-stone in Claxby churchyard to a Binbrook miner -

In affectionate remembrance of  
William Keal  
of Binbrook  
who died at the Claxby  
Ironworks, July 21st  
aged 29 years  
1871  
In the midst of life  
we are in death.

To obtain a complete picture of the mine workers an examination of the 1871 and 1881 Census returns for all parishes in the locality should be made. Only then could we discover whether miners lived in Walesby, Tealby, Kirmond le Mire, Binbrook, Rothwell, Thoresway and other nearby parishes. Because the enumerators' returns for the Claxby census of 1871, 1881 and 1891 have been studied, we know that in Claxby itself in 1871 lived 44 mine workers and that this number had dropped to 19 by 1881. By 1891 there were no longer any miners in Claxby: mining had ceased.<sup>15</sup>

The frequency of serious accidents did not diminish in 1871 and 1872. In July 1871:

*"... John Foster, a miner, whilst engaged in throwing water to slake the calcined iron clamp outside the Claxby mine, accidentally fell into the midst of the burning mass and was shockingly burnt ... but though subjected to the most humane and judicious treatment lingered only in a hopeless state. John Dewhirst, whose accident on the 3rd at the same mine we reported, was on the 12th inst. removed to the County Hospital, where only, in the doctor's opinion, such necessary care can be had of his case as may tend to prolong life, complete recovery being impossible."*<sup>16</sup>

Public opinion was rightly shocked and the county newspaper made these comments<sup>17</sup>:-

*"The recent frequency of accidents to life and limb at the Claxby iron mine has naturally drawn public attention to the question - Is the safety of the workmen sufficiently or reasonably well cared and provided for by the company? Many of these men have already acquired a 'settlement', and any great increase of these accidents must bring about bankruptcy to their provident societies, with greater demands upon local poor-rates for relief. Formerly, whenever an accident occurred, the sufferers were invariably blamed for foolhardiness in having pushed their workings too far before placing the upright and transverse timbers in position to secure their own safety; and at length the company wisely employed a staff of workmen specially to attend to the timbering. After all we are told that the intentions of the former are sure to be frustrated whenever the latter are not sharply looked after, and hence a great responsibility devolves upon the manager. From the appointment of Mr. Jont. Robinson, as resident manager, more than a year ago, no serious accident occurred for many months together, which seems to have been fairly attributable to his sharp looking after the men's safety."*

However, accidents did continue in 1872: in February George Walker, a miner living in Caistor, was injured. In April Richard Maddison was severely bruised and crushed by

a fall of a mass of earth in the mine. In May the Curate of Nettleton wrote to the editor of the Stamford Mercury:

*"Sir - Another of our parishioners has succumbed to the injuries he received on the 25th ult. in that gloomy cavern of disaster, the Claxby iron ore mine. Thomas Baldock aged 23 died at Lincoln Hospital yesterday. Scarcely a month passes without a serious accident to one or another of the men working at this mine. What is the cause? Is the mine subject to Government inspection? If not - why? Would that some gentleman of position and influence in the neighbourhood would act the part of the poor miner's friend, by taking up this matter and initiating some means of preventing if possible a recurrence of these distressing, heartburning accidents."*

*Yours truly,  
M. H. Sumner, Nettleton, May 7th, 1872."*<sup>18</sup>

There is no evidence that any 'gentleman of position and influence in the neighbourhood' - and several such people lived locally - did act the part of the miner's friend. However, Mr. Sumner's letter did result in the following letter to the Editor from the West Yorkshire Iron & Coal Co. Ltd.

*"Dear Sir,  
Our attention has been drawn to a letter signed 'M. H. Sumner' which, if left unanswered might give rise to very erroneous opinions about the ironstone mines at Claxby. These mines have now been worked for 5 years and during that time have ... been very free from accidents, and when an accident has occurred it has generally been from the carelessness of the miner in not using proper precautions as to timbering, etc. well, after repeated precautions, this was the case with Thos. Baldock who was injured on the 25th ult.: he had hollowed too far under the stone (technically called 'holed') and had not taken the precaution to support the stone with timber, of which there is always plenty at hand. The stone began to fall and he got practically out of its way or he would have been killed on the spot. On this day (25th ult.) I was at the mines along with Mr. Mammoth, a well-known mining engineer of this district and left the inside of the mine ... not long before the accident. Leaving Mr. Mammoth and our steward inside they heard of the accident and went at once to the poor man's assistance. The mine is a very dry one and a good deal safer than most mines; indeed with ordinary caution on the part of the men, accidents would be of rare occurrence. It is the wish of the Directors that no expense shall be spared to render the works as safe as possible and Mr. Mammoth has expressed his great satisfaction of all he saw both in and out of the mine ..."*

*I am for the company,  
W. H. England."*

<sup>15</sup> Of the 19 miners in 1881 only five had been born outside Lincolnshire: two in Durham, one in Gloucester, one in Bedford and one in Yorkshire.

<sup>16</sup> Stamford Mercury 21 July 1871.

<sup>17</sup> Stamford Mercury 4 August 1871

<sup>18</sup> Stamford Mercury 10 May 1872.

Mr. England's bland letter called for a reply which the Stamford Mercury promptly printed:-

*"That 'gloomy cavern of disaster' the Claxby iron mine promises soon to have a list of killed and wounded equal to a hard fought field of battle. For some time past accidents have been alarmingly frequent. It was time that some notice be taken in the very way recently suggested by the Rev. M. H. Sumner of Nettleton. Mr. England's reply ... was astounding to most people, for its cool denial of facts. The company cannot be so easily exonerated. It is not the sufferers who are to blame for their foolhardiness. The company should provide sufficient men for the timbering to be in all cases done properly, and so prevent loss of time to the miners. Also watchful deputies numerous enough to ensure reasonable chance of safety to them whilst at work. The non-provision of stimulants and of bandages at or near the mine in case of accidents is also to say the least a strange oversight ... Correspondent."*<sup>19</sup>

Whilst no local gentleman of position and influence befriended the miners, the iron-ore miners themselves took steps to protect themselves. Some joined Friendly Societies (which gave monetary help in illness, accident and death and provided invaluable brotherhood). When one such society, the Snowdrop Lodge of the Free Gardeners, held their fourth annual festival on the 17th July at Caistor, "... About one-third of the members, who are principally ironstone miners, marched in procession through the town with a band of music, and dinner and the usual convivialities followed at the George Inn."<sup>20</sup> When a collection of £5. 13s. 9d. was made in Claxby Wesleyan Chapel around Christmas (a collection for Lincolnshire Hospital) "... of this sum £5. 3s. 11d. was contributed solely by the ironstone miners .."<sup>21</sup>

It was early in this year 1872 when tantalising reports suggested that mining operations were to start at Hundon again; "... borings are now about to be made" so as to establish the amount of iron in that estate, preparatory to another offer of terms from the would-be lessee or purchasers to the owner.<sup>22</sup>

1872 was the year in which the first Farmworkers' Trade Unions were started in Lincolnshire. That history appears in Rex C. Russell: *The 'Revolt of the Field' in Lincolnshire* (published in 1956) and in abbreviated form in the same author's *Three Lincolnshire Labourers' Movements* (1994). There is no evidence that the ironstone miners joined these trade unions but, two years before their start, there were reports of discontent at Claxby mine.<sup>23</sup>

*"A report has been widely circulated that the Claxby iron miners are out on strike. Such ... is not yet the fact, although there is reason to fear it may soon become so. The managers of the West Yorkshire Mining Company, by whom this mine is worked, have at length insisted upon*

*the men riddling the ironstone before sending it out of the mine, such extra work to be done without any advance of pay, and to this the men unanimously object. The iron is about equally distributed in a stratum of hard rock, and in loose clayey soil above and below it, which it is indispensable to remove. The company prefer the rocky metal on account of its being easier of carriage and less trouble to smelt ... at their distant furnaces; whilst hitherto it has been their practice to first clamp and burn the loose or earthy metal upon the spot. Old and experienced miners assert that to trample under foot and leave in the mine all that would pass through the riddle would be a sinful waste of the finest metal. It is hoped this dispute may at once be amicably arranged, since, owing to the character of the workings, liable at any time to cave in, and still more so if disused for a few days only, it is hard to determine which side would suffer most through a cessation of work."*

*"... we have been requested by the foreman of the ... mine at Claxby to say that the miners are required to leave the fine dirt and clay only in the mine. The small stone, free from dirt, is acceptable, and that no 'sinful waste' of metal could accrue from the Company's insisting upon its being riddled. Formerly the men had to load with gripes."*

*"Pending some fresh arrangements the miners ... have ceased work for the present."*

There is no report of the outcome of this dispute.

1873 opened with the news that the West Yorkshire Iron & Coalmine Co. were steadily increasing the numbers employed at Claxby: about 250 men were said to be at work there in February. James Button, the Caistor builder, built five more cottages for miners and the Stamford Mercury commented that there was still a great need of more dwellings near the mine: "... The major part of the workmen have to walk to and from it, the distance varying from three to four miles." There were further mine accidents in January and news of boring for coal at Otby - "The old residents at Walesby ... have for more than half a century had their traditions respecting the certainty of coal deposits in these parts of the Wolds. Should the tentative operations prove satisfactory, and a productive source be opened out, there is no doubt North Lincolnshire would hail the event almost as jubilantly as did the Israelites the manna in the wilderness."<sup>24</sup>

After 1873 newspaper reports of the mines are markedly fewer. In 1875 it was reported that "The greater facility with which the West Yorkshire Iron and Coal Company are able to procure the Greetwell ironstone has (for a time, it would seem) caused a very extended diminution of their operations at the Claxby iron mine, whereat little has been doing for some months past."<sup>25</sup> Two years later came report of

<sup>19</sup> Stamford Mercury June 1872.

<sup>20</sup> Stamford Mercury 26 July 1872.

<sup>21</sup> Stamford Mercury 27 December 1872.

<sup>22</sup> Stamford Mercury 2 February 1872.

<sup>23</sup> Stamford Mercury 26 August, 2 and 9 September 1870.

<sup>24</sup> Stamford Mercury 21 February 1873 (Otby), 7 February 1873 (numbers employed), 14 February 1873 (more housing), and 31 January 1873 (accidents).

<sup>25</sup> Stamford Mercury 12 March 1875.

**1881 CLAXBY CENSUS: Ironstone Miners**

Names	Married or unmarried	Age		Places of birth
Sparling Marris	U	40		Claxby
Thomas Saunby	M	40		Claxby
James Kibbell	M	39		Gloucestershire / Aldworth
William Ruddleham	M	36		Yorks / Masborough
Thomas Becks	U	24		Nettleton
Mumby Betts	M	31		Normanby le Wold
Henry Bellamy	M	34		Middle Rasen
James Cartwright	W	36	(Lodger)	Bedford/Millow
George Padley	M	37		Mareham le Fen
Richard Mundy	M	22	Watchman at Ironstone Mine	Claxby
William Robinson	M	36	Pay Clerk at Mine	Wragby
Joseph Brown	M	35		Durham/Stanhope
Wm. Becks	M	33	Labourer at Mine	Normanby le Wold
Wm. Chapman	M	41	Labourer at Mine	N.K.
John Wellbourne	M	32	Labourer at Mine	Barton on Humber
Alfred Dent	M	29	Horse-keeper at Mine	Tealby
Samuel Clarke		16	Pony Driver at Mine	Glentham
Thomas Smith		14	Furnace Boy at Mine	Glentham
John Geo. Car	M	45	Manager of Ironstone Mine	Durham/Hetton

Claxby Terrace = 20 households.

depression which included cessation of work in the mine: in February 1882:

*"Ironstone mining operations at Claxby have been almost NIL for some time past, but now it is said there will soon be a considerable increase in the number of men employed."*<sup>26</sup>

It is doubtful whether there was any increase in employment. The 1881 Census lists only nineteen miners at Claxby: the 1891 Census shows that there were no longer any miners in the parish: Claxby had reverted to an agricultural parish.

In White's Directory of Lincolnshire for 1882 one can read (page 82):

*"At Acre House, between Claxby and Nettleton, a bed of iron ore .. has been largely worked ... The ore ... yields, on analysis, from 28 to 33 per cent of metallic iron. The great value of this ore consists in its adaptability for smelting in admixture with the argillaceous ores of the coal measures. This useful bed of ironstone averages 6 feet 6 inches in thickness; the ironstone beds have been traced as far northwards as Hundon, and a thin seam extends southwards to Tealby ... The ore is worked by galleries driven into the side of*

*the hill, which require heavy timbering, as there is no good roof; the workings began in 1868, and a large quantity of ore was raised annually during the time of 'good trade'. With the recent great stagnation in the iron trade the amount has decreased, until in 1879 only 323 tons, valued at £49 were raised.*

*The occurrence of fragments of slag, with pieces of charcoal and pottery, all mingled together, indicates that this bed of ore was known and worked as far back as ... the Romans."*

White's Directory of 1892 repeats the above and makes no mention of any final date of mine closure.

The disturbed nature of the hillside at Normanby and Claxby is evidence of the former mines. Local memories too bear witness of the former mining community. Entries in the church Baptism Registers of Claxby and of Nettleton name the sons and daughters of miners and the church Marriage Registers of Nettleton record miners' marriages. Search in other Registers in nearby parishes would provide more information.

For more than eighty years after mine-working ceased the Miners' Terraces still stood in Claxby. Sadly they were demolished in 1972/3. Articles about this demolition appeared in the Grimsby Evening Telegraph dated 21 November 1972 and 25 January 1973; there were similar

<sup>26</sup> Stamford Mercury 21 December 1877 & 17 February 1882.



*The Miners' Terrace: from a painting by Joan Mostyn-Lewis*

news items in the Lincolnshire Chronicle, 26 January 1973 and in the Market Rasen Mail of 15 January 1972. The Rasen Mail article, especially is worth reading critically. It deals with 'The decline of Claxby' and has a little on the mines.

There is still much to be discovered about the history of the mines, and unless fresh documents become available the

full story will never be complete. We know nothing of the wages of the miners: we can guess that they were a few pence more than those of farmworkers - when the latter earned 2s. 6d. a day the miners may have got 2s. 9d. Nothing is known as to where the miners went after the closure of the mines. Did some go to mines at Greetwell, others to Scunthorpe? How many stayed in Claxby in new jobs?



*The rear of the Miners' Terrace: from a painting by Joan Mostyn-Lewis*

**APPENDIX ONE Some Ironstone Miners and other mine employees from the 1871 Census**

	Names	Married or unmarried	Age		Place of Birth
<b>A</b>	<b>Normanby le Wold</b>				
1.	Thomas Tole,	U	25	Lodger	Dunton, Bedfordshire
2.	John Hill,	U	32	Lodger	Tavistock, Devon
3.	William Houghton,	U	20	Lodger	Steeping, Lincs.
4.	George Bellhouse	M	39		Sudbrooke, Lincs.
5.	Richard Hill	U	24		S. Kelsey, Lincs.
<b>B.</b>	<b>Middle Rasen</b>				
1.	John Southwell	M	36		Northamptonshire
2.	Charles Bellamy	M	29		Middle Rasen, Lincs.
<b>C.</b>	<b>Nettleton</b>				
1.	George Evratt	U	29		Lincs. - Middle Rasen
2.	John Lincoln,	U	25	Lodger	Norfolk - Tibits Hall
3.	John Robinson	M	57	Lodger	Lincs. - Rothwell
4.	Francis Lacey,	M	31		Lincs. - Grasby
5.	Charles Musk,	U	26	Lodger	Derbyshire - Edall
6.	John Smith,	U	26	Lodger	Derbyshire - Staveley
7.	David Skelton,	U	40	Lodger	Lincs. - Caistor
8.	George Parker	M	23		Lincs. - Nettleton
9.	Samuel Frow	M	36		Lincs. - Nettleton
10.	Wm. Smith	M	25		On Ship Board
11.	George Padley	M	27		Lincs. - Mareham le Fen
12.	George Bilton	U	14		Lincs. - Caistor
13.	Jesse Wellbourne	M	35		Lincs. - Legbourne
14.	John Balderson	M	50		Lincs. - Caistor
15.	Joseph Balderson				Lincs. - Nettleton
16.	James Temple,	U	27	Lodger	Lincs. - Coningsby
17.	Samuel Temple,	U	17	Lodger	Lincs. - Coningsby
18.	James Lilley,	U	22	Lodger	Lincs. - Coningsby
19.	William Jackling	U	26		Lincs. - Nettleton
20.	Wm. Sturdy?		30	Lodger	Yorks. - Pickering
21.	Wm. Fox	U	15		Lincs. - Nettleton
22.	Charles Kidd	M	31		Norfolk - Thornag?
23.	Wm. Appleyard	M	42		Lincs. - Tattershall
24.	David Faith	M	25		Yorks. - ? Whorlton
25.	Robert E. Osgerby		13		Lincs. - N. Kelsey
26.	George Stordy,	U	26	Lodger	Yorks. - Pickering
27.	Edward Hand	M	28		Lincs. - Nettleton
28.	John Baldock	M	26		Lincs. - Nettleton
29.	Wm. Green,	U	36	Lodger	Yorks. - ? Seatonthorpe
30.	Thomas Clark,	M	37	Lodger	Yorks. - Ryehill
31.	George Cowley	M	31		Notts. - Rothamsall
32.	Charles Hand	M	30		Lincs. - Nettleton
33.	Jeffery Dinsdale	M	27		Yorks. - ? Hose
34.	Charles Pinder	M	32		Lincs. - Kirton

**D Claxby**

1.	John Baxter	U	13	Driver in Mines	Kirton
2.	Edward Baxter	M	34	Miner	Kirton
3.	David Hubbert	U	35	Miner	Hagworthingham
4.	Phillip Markham	U	24	Miner	Grasby
5.	John Markham	U	34	Miner	Grasby
6.	William Keale	U	30	Miner	Binbrook
7.	Thomas Saunby	M	30	Butcher & Miner	Claxby
8.	Joseph Paynel	W	50	Deputy in Mines	Gloucestershire
9.	Job Lowe	M	51	Miner	S. Staffs.
10.	George Baker	U	38	Ironstone Labourer	Sausthorpe
11.	Charles Mower	U	28	Ironstone Labourer	Utterby
12.	John Robinson	M	33	Labourer in Iron Works	Claxby
13.	William Jackson	U	35	Labourer in Iron Works	Langtoft
14.	Richard Bowman	M	42	Engine Fitter	Yorks. - Leeds
15.	John Bowman	U	20	Miner	Yorks. - Hull
16.	George Marshall	U	24	Miner	Claxby, Lincs.
17.	Benjamin Booth	U	30	Miner	Boston?, Lincs.
18.	William Godbold	U	27	Ironstone Miner	Littleport, Cambs
19.	George Breckley	U	27	Ironstone Miner	Scotland - Edinburgh
20.	Thomas Bassan	U	30	Ironstone Miner	Norfolk - Lynn
21.	Tom Lincoln	U	25	Ironstone Miner	Norfolk - Lynn
22.	Jonathan Robinson	M	49	Mine Agent	Durham - Weardale
23.	Thomas Hitchcock	M	50?	Miner	Yorks. - Bromsgrove
24.	Henry Bellamy	M	29	Miner	Middle Rasen
25.	John Saley	M	38	Miner	Staffs. - Wedsbro'
26.	Ted Hanson	U	17?	Miner	Leics. - Leicester
27.	William Jenkinson	M	36	Miner	Yorks. - Bradford
28.	James Watson	M	36	Miner	Cambs. - Wisbech
29.	John Foxley	M	66	Ironstone Miner	Warwicks.
30.	William Lacey	U	67	Miner	Walesby, Lincs.
31.	Joseph Selby	M	43	Ironstone Miner	South Kelsey, Lincs.
32.	William Peniston	M	29	Miner	Lincs.
33.	John Stephenson	U	16	Driver in Mines	Burringham, Lincs.
34.	Thomas Blewitt	U	22	Miner	Cornwall
35.	John Foster	U	28	Miner	Fulbeck, Lincs.
36.	John Coulbeck	U	37	Miner	Cambridge
37.	Wm. Whiting	M	44	Miner	Gloucester
38.	James Baldock	M	49	Miner	?Lincs. / Barkwith
39.	Ezekiel Hayward	M	32	Ironstone Miner	Staffs.
40.	Edward Palmer	M	30	Miner	? Shropshire
41.	Wm. Birchnall	M	35	Miner	Yorkshire
42.	John Rimmington	W	27	Miner	Durham
43.	Wm. Hart	M	26	Miner	Yorks. - York
44.	Nathan Palmer	M	32	Miner and Primitive Local Preacher	Yorks. - Kelby

**APPENDIX TWO - Population Growth & Decline: Normanby & Claxby**

	NORMANBY	CLAXBY	TOTAL
1801	77	136	213
1811	86	159	245
1821	96	184	280
1831	122	205	327
1841	129	220	349
1851	149	262	411
1861	138	237	375
1871	162	357	579
1881	142	325	467
1891	139	226	365
1901	128	237	365
1911	106	202	308
1921	107	206	313
1931	108	203	311
		NO CENSUS IN 1941	
1951	99	180	279
1961	87	173	260
1971	85	145	230
1981	56	162	218

Normanby smaller in 1981 than in 1801. Consistent decline in population from 162 in 1871 down to 56 in 1981 - a loss of 106 people.

Claxby: a little larger in 1981 than in 1801, but decline of 195 from 357 in 1871.

Combined population The highest population was reached in 1871 (579); the population in 1981 was 218 - a decline of 361.



**APPENDIX THREE - Claxby: The Evidence for Population Movement: Census Returns Compared**

Where had Claxby Parishioners been born?	1851	1871	1881	1891
Total Population	262	357	325	226
Number born in Claxby	104 - 39.7%	97 - 27.2%	107 - 32.9%	91 - 40.3%
Number born elsewhere in Lincolnshire	140 - 53.4%	144 - 40.3%	181 - 55.7%	116 - 51.3%
Number born in other English counties	15 - 5.7%	90 - 25.2%	33 - 10.1%	17 - 7.5%
Number born outside England	NIL	2 - 0.6%	NIL	NIL
number illegible and not known	3	24 - 6.7%	4	2

**Number born in Lincolnshire (excluding Claxby) in 1851 - 140**

These had been born in 71 different Lincolnshire parishes: these parishes:-

Tealby, Normanby le Wold, Grimsby, Tetney, Walesby, Cadney, Caistor, Nettleton, Binbrook, Holton-le-Clay, Kingerby, North Kelsey, Market Rasen, Benniworth, Epworth, Owersby, Holton-le-Moor, Rothwell, Searby, Scotter, South Willingham, South Kelsey, Tetford, Welbourne, Wootton, Worlaby, Limber.

(In each of the above parishes more than one person living in Claxby in 1851 had been born.)

In each of the following 44 parishes ONE person resident in Claxby in 1851 had been born.

Aylesby, Bardney, Barnetby le Wold, Beesby, Billingham, Brigg, Caenby, Cherry Willingham, East Halton, Elsham, East Barkwith, Friskney, Hagworthingham, Helpringham, Hykeham, Humberston, Goltho, Gainsborough, Goxhill, Kelsey, Keelby, Kirton Lindsey, Little Coates, Louth, Middle Rasen, Ludborough, Ludford, Marsh Chapel, Marston, Mintage, Kime, Osgodby, Owmbly, Scartho, Scotherne, Scunthorpe, Sixhills, Somerby, Swallow, South Reston, Thornton, Waddingham, West Torrington.

The 1871 Census Returns reveal that the 144 people who had been born in Lincolnshire - but not in Claxby - had originated in 75 different Lincolnshire parishes.

In the 1881 Census the 181 persons born in Lincolnshire but not in Claxby, originated in 79 different Lincolnshire parishes.

The comparable figure for 1891 was 65 Lincolnshire parishes.

**More evidence for the movement of Claxby parishioners.**

The Birth-places of all Married Couples	1851	1871	1881	1891
Total number of married couples	38 - 100%		55 - 100%	35 - 100%
Both partners born in Claxby	NIL		NIL	NIL
One partner born in Claxby	17 - 44.7%		13 - 23.6%	10 - 28.6%
Neither partner born in Claxby	21 - 53.3%		42 - 76.4%	25 - 71.4%

## APPENDIX FOUR Examples of Emigration Notices (from the Stamford Mercury)

December 26th, 1873.

*“Free Passages to New Zealand. Free Passages are granted by the Government of New Zealand as under:-*

*To Married and Single Agricultural Labourers, Navvies, Ploughmen, Shepherds, Mechanics, etc.; also to Female Domestic Servants, as Cooks, Housemaids, Nurses, General Servants, Dairy Maids, etc.”*

March 6th, 1874.

*Assisted Passages to S. Australia*

*Emigration to Adelaide, South Australia*

*Assisted Passages*

*“The Government of S. Australia grant Passages to the following persons:-*

- 1. Artisans, Agricultural and other Labourers, Miners and Gardeners under 50 years of age.*
- 2. Single Female Domestic Servants, or Widows (without children under 12) not exceeding 40 years of age.*

*Subject to the payments as under:-*

*For Males or Females, under 12 years of age, £3 each; over 12 and under 40, £4 each; over 40 and under 50, £8 each. Persons paying their own Passage receive a Land Warrant of the value of £20. Handbook descriptive of the colony gratis on application ...”*

July 21st, 1876.

*“FREEHOLD FARMSTEADS IN  
NEW ZEALAND.*

*Manchester Special Settlement, Province of Wellington.*

*Free Passages to the Lands of the Corporation are granted to Farmers, Farm Labourers, Rough Carpenters, Navvies, and others. - Apply to Emigrant and Colonist Aid Corporation (Limited), 25 Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, London, S.W.”*

June 15th, 1877.

*“Free Emigration to New Zealand-FREE PASSAGES will be given during the Summer and Autumn months to Female Domestic Servants, Farm Labourers, Shepherds, Bricklayers, and Carpenters. -Apply to the Agent-General for New Zealand, 7 Westminster Chambers, London, S.W.”*

January 7th, 1876.

*“FREE EMIGRATION TO  
NEW ZEALAND.*

*FREE PASSAGES are granted by the Government of New Zealand as under:-*

*To Married and Single Agricultural Labourers, Navvies, Ploughmen, Shepherds, Mechanics, etc.; also to Single Female Domestic Servants, as Cooks, Housemaids, Nurses, General Servants, Dairy Maids, etc.*

*For terms and conditions apply personally or by letter, to the AGENT-GENERAL for NEW ZEALAND, 7 Westminster-Chambers, London, S.W.; or to Mr. Wm. BANKS, Secretary Amalgamated Labour League, 5 Witham Street, Boston.”*

February 4th, 1876.

*“FREE EMIGRATION TO  
QUEENSLAND.*

*Free Passages are granted by the Government to Female Domestic Servants of all kinds, who are quite free to engage with whom they please at the best wages they can get. Wages £25 to £50 a year, all found. Free Passages given to Agricultural Labourers, whether married or single. Wages £30 to £50 a year, with board and lodging. Assisted Passages to Mechanics on payment of £4. Wages as under:- Blacksmiths, 12s. to 14s. a day; Carpenters, 12s. to 14s.; Shoemakers, 9s. to 10s.; Shipwrights 10s. to 12s.; Tailors 9s. to 10s.; Miners 10s. to £1. The above need not want work a single hour after landing - Apply personally or by letter to AGENT GENERAL for QUEENSLAND, 32 Charing Cross, London, S.W.; or to W. Banks, 10 New St., Boston; C. M. Hodgett, Post Office, Horncastle; T. Watnough, 6 Bank St., Lincoln; Jas. Newman, Long Sutton; and Hy. Watkinson, Free Press Office, Spalding.”*

July 18th, 1879.

*Public Notice.*

*“TO CANADA for FOUR POUNDS*

*Reduction in Fares by the Beaver Line.*

*EMIGRANTS can now be booked by the splendid and powerful Steamers of the Canada Shipping Company at the reduced rates of Four Pounds to CANADA and FIVE GUINEAS to the UNITED STATES.*

*For further particulars apply to ...”*

## 2.

## LIFE IN 20th CENTURY CLAXBY Elizabeth Holmes

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In 1900 Claxby's population was about 235. There was a schoolmaster, a blacksmith who shod horses and made and mended a range of metal agricultural equipment, a wheelwright, an important trade when most goods were transported in wooden wheeled wagons of various sorts, a post office, which incorporated a grocer's shop and patent medicine vendor, and a bootmaker. Much of the land was still owned by Lord Yarborough who rented it out in large and small holdings. The church was the only other landlord. Tithes were paid to the Rector who had one of the wealthiest livings in the diocese and who was also rector of St Peter's, Normanby le Wold, employing a curate to help him. The two villages were much more closely associated than they are today. Many Claxby men worked for the two big farmers in Normanby. Non conformists in Normanby attended one of the two chapels in Claxby, fund raising was often carried out on a combined basis and there seems to have been a great deal of socialising.

Some of the families living in the parish in 1900 have names familiar to us now such as Bristow, Cade, Maultby, Saunby, Sharp and Surfleet. The principal residences in the village were the Rectory, occupied by Rev Andrews since 1869, Claxby House, home of George Joseph Young, a farmer who also farmed in Kingerby and The Cottage in Boggle Lane lived in by Edward Canty retired schoolmaster, his wife and children.

Most people worked in agriculture either directly on the land as labourers, wagoners, farmers and cottagers, or in related occupations such as blacksmith or wheelwright. A few worked for the railway as platelayers, crossing keepers or signalmen. Most women probably worked as domestic servants. There is no record that any gentlemen lived in the village although G J Young of Claxby House had been described as such in earlier directories. Most people walked to work or lived on the job. Some people were lucky enough to own bicycles and the Great Central Railway stopped at Claxby and Usselby station.

There were two Methodist Chapels, Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist and St Mary's Church. The school which had opened in 1859 and was built for up to 100 had about 63 pupils, aged from five to 14 and probably had two or three teachers. The headmistress was Miss Fanny Canty and she had two sisters Miss Alice and Miss Nellie Canty both of whom taught in the school at times. Whether or not all three sisters taught at the same time is not clear. They were all daughters of the last schoolmaster.

The village would have looked rather different from today. The first houses coming down Normanby Rise would have been the semi detached cottages now called Sunnyside and Windyridge, although they were probably flat fronted. There were only a few houses along Mulberry Road, which was metalled, but not tarred, and had no footpath. A

significant number of the villagers lived in the Terrace, also known as Miner's Row, two blocks each of 10 terraced houses located on Pelham Road. All of the Terrace and some other cottages have been demolished.

There was a water supply to the main part of the village, piped from a cistern just below St Peter's Cottage to five pumps spread across the settlement. Some houses also had a well in the garden. The Terrace had just one tap serving all twenty households supplied from a nearby spring. Isolated farms and cottages, in the parish, but not close to the village, had to rely on streams, or wells. The railway crossing keeper's house had no water supply. It was brought on a daily basis by railway wagon until very recently. There was no sewage system and no septic tanks, just outside lavatories and buckets. Lighting was by candle or oil lamp and of course there was no radio, television or telephone. Even daily papers, expensive luxuries, were only for the very well off. Most people took their news from the local weekly paper which printed both national and international news as well as the purely local.

Claxby wasn't unique anymore as it had been when the ironstone mine was open. With its closure Claxby had reverted to being one of a number of rural communities, relying for its living on agriculture. Its concerns were similar to those of the rest of the wold farming villages, and the same issues affected its future. Food prices, availability of agricultural goods from overseas and many national and international events had a profound effect on its prosperity. It is therefore necessary to place the development of the village in its regional, national and international context.

In 1900 the British Empire was somewhere near its zenith and, in need of men to govern, develop and rule, it gave the opportunity to a wide range of Britons to seek an alternative life. We have already seen in previous chapters advertisements for settlers to go out to the original colonies of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa and people from Claxby had already taken up the challenge. The Market Rasen Mail reprinted in 1907, part of an article in an Australian paper about George Coulson, son of the late Mr T Coulson of Claxby and in 1912, Joseph Ellis who had emigrated to Canada returned to marry Charlotte Brown at St Mary's Church and take her to Toronto. The Armed Forces gave another escape from the rural life. On 28 April 1900 the Market Rasen Mail printed a letter from Private E Bellamy, of the Lincolnshire Regiment, who had friends in Claxby. He was serving in Quaggersfontern, South Africa and described the poor conditions under which he was serving. In a footnote the paper said that 'his mother had five sons, four joined the army, one drowned in the Nile in the Sudan campaign, one had completed his time and was living in Ashby and two were still serving Queen and country'. Therefore although the village was isolated, many

of its inhabitants would have had a keen interest in the wider world.

Even at the beginning of the century Claxby was seen as small, sleepy and remote. Market Rasen had grown in the railway age and was the market town for the district, with a weekly livestock and grain market. It was the local shopping centre for items not available at the village shops although there was already a tendency for people to travel to Lincoln. There was a bewildering variety of associations in the town both cultural like the operatic society and more mundane like the pig club and the various friendly societies. The Market Rasen Mail, started in the mid 1850s, regarded itself as the spokesman for the area and reported in detail on local council meetings and the activities of the churches and chapels. As it does today it recorded the happenings in the local villages. Many villages such as Binbrook, Tealby and Osgodby had regular articles. Claxby was mentioned from time to time. Clearly it was not a regular provider of news although a few of its inhabitants such as the Rector and Gerard Young of Claxby House were influential in the town.

Although conditions for the agricultural worker had improved since the beginning of the previous century, life for all but the well off was still hard. The agricultural slump which had begun in the previous century did not start to lift until the First World War and then only for the duration of the war. Families were large, serious illness and early death not uncommon and there was no state support for the worker who fell on hard times. From 1908 the introduction of Old Age Pensions eased the position of some of the poorest. Those not covered even by this restricted support had the dubious alternative of seeking out-relief from Caistor Poor Law. The criminal law still dealt harshly with those who committed small misdemeanours although the threat of transportation had gone. In 1905 John Rowell, a signalman at Claxby, found guilty of trespassing in search of rabbits was fined 25/- and 4/6d costs, a very large sum for a working man, and in 1911 a rag gatherer who stole a man's cloth jacket and 1/4 lb of bread and jam at Claxby was sentenced to 6 weeks imprisonment with hard labour.

Only three years after that prosecution the country faced up to the First World War. This sucked thousands of men off the land and out of industry. This war was the first when, in order to keep the country fighting, it was acknowledged that women had to take over at least some of the jobs their menfolk had left in order to go to the front. As in all recent wars it also acted as a catalyst for the rapid development of new techniques. Mechanisation had certainly already begun, but the First World War saw the development of tanks in Lincoln and the introduction of tracks to move them over difficult terrain. Aircraft saw rapid development both in technical innovation and reliability as did motor vehicles. The development of the combustion engine had a profound effect on life in the twentieth century.

The slump which followed the Armistice in 1919 and lasted until the late 1930s greatly affected people's lives. Wages were low, opportunities for development were limited and landlords were reluctant to improve their land or introduce new techniques because they saw no prospect of a decent return for their investments. The national strike in 1926 was triggered by the demand from coal mine owners

that miners take a cut in pay because of economic depression. Agriculture was also deeply affected. Mechanisation and the introduction of new crops therefore, came slowly into the very traditional and largely impoverished wolds farming communities.

Electricity came into the villages more slowly than into the towns, where it was commonplace by the late 1920s. It arrived in Claxby in 1936 although there were only 8 subscribers initially. Before that radio and crystal sets, easily built by the technically minded, and powered by accumulators, were putting people in direct touch with national events through the British Broadcasting Company which was transmitting from the 1920s. It also allowed the listener to become familiar with the great artists and celebrities of the day. Before this few people had heard their sovereign or Prime Minister speak; they wouldn't have recognised their voices. Telephones too began to be used in this same period, the earliest known subscriber in Claxby was W C Bristow in 1932.

This same W C Bristow was also involved with developing coach tours and holidays. He was a local Thomas Cook. More of him later.

The Second World War finally confirmed and made irreversible changes that had been initiated in the first war and then aborted or delayed because of the slow growth of prosperity in the rural areas. The role of women started to change much more profoundly and swiftly. Mass transport, the wider availability of further and higher education, the break down of hierarchies and an increasing variety of employment opportunities all contributed to life changing into that with which we are familiar today.

However the country didn't immediately recover after the Second World War. People were weary, life was drab, rationing continued for another 10 years for some items. Labour became increasingly scarce in the country as the relatively higher wages in industry, the lack of decent public transport in small villages and the modern attractions of urban life tempted the farmworker. Caistor RDC campaigned for much of the 1950s and 60s to improve public transport in its area. For several years after the war farmers relied heavily on prisoners of war to get the harvest in. Taxation, inflation and the scarcity of domestic labour made the life of the upper classes less comfortable and caused the abandonment and demolition of some of the larger houses in the area. The Chief Planning Officer for Caistor RDC stated in 1955 that the villages were in a state of flux because of the mobility of farm labour and of mechanisation. In common with other rural communities the population continued to decline; Claxby recorded its lowest level in 1971 when it fell to just 145.

By the 1970s a fundamental change in the make up of the village had occurred. In 1900 over 90% of the community was dependent on agriculture for its living. By the 1970s this figure had dropped significantly and many people living in the village were travelling daily to work in the nearby towns and in the Humber Bank industrial and chemical plants. Without access to detailed census returns it is not possible to be entirely accurate but recollections of long term village residents suggest that perhaps only 30-40% of villagers were associated with agriculture. Certainly a survey

carried out by Alex Randall in 1996 found that only about 23% of households in the village had even one member associated with agriculture. The age makeup of the village had also changed. There were fewer children in each household and more retired people than there had been earlier in the century. By the end of the century, therefore

commuters and the retired constituted a significant proportion of the community and children represented a much smaller part of the total. Claxby had, in effect, become a commuter village, few inhabitants had even a remote connection with agriculture.

## 2 VILLAGE ORGANISATION, HOUSING AND SERVICES

In 1900 the total population of the village was about 235, having fallen from 357 when the mine was in production. It continued to dwindle until 1971 when it fell to just 145, before making a modest recovery. The village looked different. The street layout was the same as it is today but there were big greens at the corner of Mulberry Road and Normanby Rise and at the Pelham Road/ St Mary's Lane junction. At this latter junction stood the original Wesleyan



*Wesleyan Methodist Chapel circa 1900*

Methodist Chapel still very much in use in 1900. There were far fewer houses on Normanby Rise; just the Primitive Methodist Chapel, the two semi-detached cottages, Sunnyside and Windyridge, two semi detached cottages now together called Delves Cottage and Langham House. Along Mulberry Road there were two pairs of semi detached cottages, the Blacksmith's House and at the end two houses standing opposite each other. Round the corner there was only Valley Farm before one reached the corner of St Mary's Lane where Corner House stood with the Methodist Chapel on one corner and a cottage on the other. There were also four cottages on Boggle Lane one of which has been



*Lloyds Farm*

demolished, one at the Rectory, one partway down St Mary's Lane also demolished and there were farmers, workmen and their families living on the substantial farms in the parish. Some outlying cottages have also disappeared. Lloyds Farm and a cottage beside the road leading to Claxby House Farm were occupied well within living memory. The most densely populated area was the Terrace, twenty houses altogether, beyond the school (Viking Centre). All the houses and cottages, except the Rectory, were owned and rented by the Yarborough Estate.

The footpaths played a significant role in the movement of villagers. They were used for getting to and from work and school rather than primarily for leisure as is the case today. However, conversations with villagers who were children before and after the war suggested that the young people at least roamed at

will over the fields and hillside and paid very little attention to the footpaths. There have been changes in the routes of some of the footpaths. The path that currently follows the hedge parallel to Claxby House Farm up onto the Wolds once went diagonally across the field on the village side of the hedge. Some have disappeared, a footpath used to run from Valley Farm to St Mary's Lane past a now demolished house beyond the Barn.

There were several centres of activity; the school, the church and the two chapels, two grocers shops, and the blacksmiths and wheelwrights workshops. The latter two would have been busy during daylight hours with horses being brought for shoeing, agricultural tools being made and mended and, at the wheelwrights, wagons being mended and other carpentry work being done. As was usual in those days the carpenter was also the village undertaker so whenever someone died there would have been a coffin to be made and all other arrangements for the funeral to be completed.

Probably the most important place for hearing gossip and generally finding out what was going on would have been the Post Office and shops. The village had two shops and a Post Office for the first fifty years of the century. In 1900 according to Kelly's Directory William Charles Bristow, John Bristow's great uncle, was the sub Postmaster but he

was also the grocer, patent medicine vendor and the annuity and insurance officer. The sub post office/shop was beside John Bristow's present house. John also believes that there was a bootmaker within the Post Office/shop. Kellys records that Trevor Robert was the bootmaker but doesn't list his place of work. John Surfleet remembers a small cobblers shop in the grounds of Saywell's house in the late 1920s but whether this was as well as or instead of the one at Bristows corner has not been established. By 1905 Shepherd Bristow, the blacksmith had taken over as sub Postmaster and the post office had moved to his house, now The Old Smithy. The post office continued there for many years, latterly run by Gladys Bristow who also sold sweets. Shepherd Bristow was also the grocer, patent medicine vendor and insurance officer. By 1909 although Shepherd Bristow still had the post office there were two new shopkeepers, William Crawford and Alfred Shepherd. Alfred Shepherd was probably a relation of Shepherd Bristow. That shop remained in Alfred Shepherd's hands until 1919 when Aaron Bristow took it over. William Charles Bristow, John Bristow's father, had taken over by 1926. Whether or not the shop ever moved from Bristows house at the corner of Mulberry Road and Normanby Rise to the smithy is not clear but seems unlikely.

The other shop was in the Terrace. William Crawford's wife, Mary, took over from him when he concentrated on farming and by 1922 Harold Sharp was listed as the shopkeeper. By 1933 Harold had handed it over to Cyril, his brother and Cyril's wife, Michael Sharp's mother ran it. George Surfleet, John and Motley Brant and others remember the shop in the Terrace. They used to slip down there to buy a pennyworth of sweets. Sometime around 1947 Bill Thompson took it over and later moved it to South View in Boggle Lane. The shops would have sold a wide variety of those goods available at the time which would have included food, clothes and possibly some small ironmongery and electrical items. Bristows shop closed in 1949/50 soon after W C Bristow retired and moved to Elvin Garth. His daughter, Christine ran it for only a short time. Arthur Maultby whose uncles had two farms in the village recalls that the shop in the Terrace had a wider range of items than Bristows shop but Eileen Wilmot nee Willey remembers lodging her ration book at Bristows during the war. It is probable that each shop simply served those living nearest. Goods would have been sold loose by weight. Kath Bunford came to work in Bill Thompson's shop in 1953 and later married him. She remembers that they sold butter, lard and cheese by weight, slicing it off large blocks. They had no refrigeration in the 1950s. They also sold sugar, flour and biscuits and other dry goods by weight rather than by the packet. The shop provided some drapery items, knitting wools and paraffin which was supplied either in 5 gallon drums or in smaller quantities into the customer's own container. Bill also had a grocery round which covered many local villages including, Normanby, Rothwell, Thoresway, Caistor, Nettleton and Moortown. They sold goods on credit and accepted payments by weekly instalments as people often couldn't afford to pay for everything they needed. It incorporated the Post Office in 1961 when Gladys Bristow retired. Bill and Kath had each

been doing a post round in and around the village for the last several years so knew the routines well. They had to collect the post every morning from Claxby station until it closed in 1960 and from Holton le Moor station thereafter, carrying it back by bicycle. Bill covered the villages on the other side of the railway line. Kath's round took her all round the village, up the hill to Normanby and along to Nettleton mine. She bought a scooter but it wasn't powerful enough to carry her and the post up the hill so she used to walk beside it with the engine running. Later she bought a motor bike and that could cope with the hill. It apparently upset the Post Office as she was told that she should walk. She wasn't even provided with a bicycle. This provoked some correspondence in the Rasen Mail. 'Threepenny post' said it was a nonsense and if she had the gumption to provide herself with a motor bike she should be allowed to use it.

In addition to the shops in the village a number of travelling shops called here. They had probably been coming for years, some even before the advent of motor transport. In 1962 there were apparently 27 tradesmen coming to the village each week but this would have included some coming more than once. Residents of the village recall the following:

- Maurice Abbot, knitting wools, shampoos and hair spray;*
- Ken Barr, coalman of Claxby;*
- Bates, milkman of Market Rasen;*
- Sid Beaumont, fishmonger (probably after Jack Train);*
- Briggs, ironmonger and paraffin sales of Caistor;*
- Burns, bakers of Market Rasen who became Starbucks, came twice a week;*
- Burrell, chemist, of Market Rasen, paraffin washing powder and make up;*
- Co-operative, grocers of Market Rasen*
- Cottinghams bakers and grocers of Market Rasen, came twice a week;*
- Harry Douthwaite used to come round on a bicycle;*
- Mrs Hall, haberdashery and drapery (as Miss Tomlinson she had been a teacher at the school until she married and had to resign);*
- Hewitts, grocers of Osgodby;*
- Horsefield, ironmonger and paraffin sales;*
- Leaning, butchers of Tealby, came twice a week;*
- Mounceys, grocer of Tealby;*
- Melbourns, grocer, of Walesby;*
- Noons, grocer, of Glentham;*
- Robinson and Marshall, grocer of Market Rasen*
- Roy Pickering, greengrocer, of Osgodby;*
- Smiths, coal merchant of Grimsby;*
- Tasker, butcher, of Market Rasen;*
- Jack Train, fishmonger (in the 1940s/1950s);*
- Wilkinson, coal merchants of Claxby Station;*
- Wilkinson, milkman of Osgodby.*

By the late 1960s life was becoming difficult for village shopkeepers. Despite the grocery round and the Post Office

Bill could see that a village shop was becoming an uneconomic proposition. People had become more mobile, had developed a taste for a wider range of goods than a small shop could possibly stock and were using the village shop for top up items only. On 31 August 1973 the Thompson's decided that they could continue no longer and closed the shop and post office. The village appeared to be without a sub post office for some months or even a year or so after that as pensions were paid for one hour each week at the village hall. The Post Office re opened sometime before November 1975 at 4 Cherry Lea run by Mrs Welch. She and her husband returned to Northumberland in 1980 and the PO was taken over by Mrs Brumpton who later moved it to 2, Chapel Bungalows. It moved again to 2, Wold View in the early 1990s where it became a part time office. The Scotherns at Wold View finally closed it in June 1994. The Post Office couldn't find an applicant to take it on.

The mobile shops suffered from the same difficulties as the village shops and they too stopped trading around the same time that Claxby shop closed. The last one to give up was Roy Pickering. He carried on until the 1980s or even later. Of course the village does still have a milkman 3 days a week and other deliveries are made but these are usually to order only.

In the early years of the century the great majority of the men in the village would have been working in agriculture in some form. Hours were long. In winter virtually all the daylight hours on Monday to Saturday would have been spent at work although farmers may have given a half day on Saturday. In summer farmworkers worked from 6.30am to 5pm Monday -Friday, possibly a half day on Saturdays and longer during harvest. Stockmen would have had to see to their animals on Sundays as well. A significant number of men worked for the railway. There were platelayers, signal men, crossing keepers and a station master who lived at Claxby and Usselby Station. In addition some men worked at Nettleton Mine which paid better wages than did agriculture.

Sunday was the only time when agricultural workers had any leisure. For most of the village Sunday would have meant going to church or chapel at least once and probably twice and the children would have attended Sunday School. Lincolnshire had embraced Methodism very heartily and Sunday School for children was an important institution. More about the church and chapels can be read in the chapter on Religion.

Outside school hours there would have been plenty of children about, the average attendance at school in 1900 was 63 so we can assume the total number on roll was higher. Some of these came from Normanby and a few from Usselby, although some Usselby children attended Osgodby School, but the majority were from Claxby. Of course schooling finished at age 14 so their older brothers and sisters would still have been hard at work when the school closed for the day.

The village was run very much as it is today. In 1900 parish councils were relatively new institutions. In Claxby the parish councillors were Gerard Young JP, Chairman, farmer of Claxby House, George Maultby, farmer, W C Bristow sub postmaster, Thomas Rickels farmer, and T

Coulson. The clerk to the council was G E Canty, son of Edward the retired schoolmaster. It had been elected annually until 1901. Thereafter elections were held every three years. The parish council was responsible for nominating the overseers and the parish constables, repairing gates and stiles across footpaths and negotiating with Caistor Rural District Council for services. It also had representatives on the school board of managers and on the Bell's almshouses management committee which supervised the almshouses at Kingery. The RDC was responsible for housing, water, although there were complications in the case of Claxby and Normanby, health, roads, the poor rate and workhouse through the Board of Guardians. Gerard Young was Claxby's representative on Caistor Rural District Council. He was succeeded in 1909 by Mr J Hewitt who was a stalwart of the Wesleyan Chapel. There appeared to have been a fairly robust attitude to parish council elections and councillors changed quite often. By 1901 W C Bristow and T Coulson were replaced by Fred Sharp, wheelwright and Shepherd Bristow, blacksmith. Elections were by show of hand in those early days. Only if a candidate requested did a ballot have to be taken. The parish records show that beaten candidates did sometimes ask for this but there is no evidence that such ballots gave any different result.

The water supply for Claxby and Normanby was a problem for at least the first half of the Twentieth Century. In 1912 Caistor Rural District Council said that Claxby had a continuous water supply from water impounded in the hills and piped to its destination. This may have been installed at the end of the nineteenth century. Before that water came from five pumps scattered through the village or from open wells. Pollution in the piped water had allegedly been reduced by piping it from the spring to the reservoir. The bed of the reservoir had been laid in concrete. This reservoir also supplied Normanby by a hydraulic ram and there were occasions when there was not enough water for both villages and Normanby, at the top of the hill, was deprived. The Caistor RDC report also said that twenty houses in Claxby Terrace had a good supply of water. This amounted to one tap for all twenty houses from a nearby spring and it contained small red worms. Past residents of the Terrace can remember seeing them wriggling in the bottom of the enamel buckets they used to collect the water. Even this limited water supply was to the main part of the village only. In 1914 the RDC was concerned about the supply of water to five houses somewhere near the Market Rasen to Caistor road. Some of the unlucky occupiers there had to fetch water from the beck, others from wells. It was still concerned in 1965 when the very same houses were reported as having defective water supplies! The crossing keepers house and presumably the station masters house at the railway crossings were supplied daily by the railway.

In 1939 the Medical Officer for Caistor RDC said that the water supply from the reservoir, derived and piped from springs, contained bacillus coli from a stream used by cattle which flowed into the reservoir. At least some Normanby residents collected their drinking water from the Walkwell which was thought to be clean. The Medical Officer said Claxby had no water rate and no fund existed for the maintenance and extension of the water system. He

suggested that it be taken over by the RDC. No improvement had been made by 1945 when Normanby was very short of water. More Claxby households had been connected than in the original agreement when Lord Yarborough provided the supply. The hydraulic ram was adjusted to send more to Normanby, thus depriving Claxby. Sometime after this, probably in 1948 it appeared that the main part of the village was connected to a mains supply. The Terrace had to wait rather longer. In 1948 Caistor RDC announced plans to improve their supply to one tap for every two houses. In 1949 the Medical Officer of Health, announced that this supply had been found to be unsuitable for drinking and recommended that the Terrace should be connected to the council water main. This must have happened because in November 1962 the whole village was without water for two days when a pipe fractured at Otby. It is surprising given the concerns of the Medical Officer that there had not been more illness in the village. There are no references in the records used to any serious outbreak of typhoid or other illness related to bad water. The problem of the water supply was solved by the mid 60s when Claxby was connected to the mains. However, even as late as the 1980s there were complaints about poor water pressure.

Sewage took even longer to be satisfactorily organised. In the early part of the century there was no inside plumbing or sewage. You went to the bottom of the garden to the outside privy summer and winter, day and night. In some villages there was a scavenger or night soil worker who cleared away the excrement. There does not appear to have been such a person in Claxby. In 1933 the Medical Officer complained of wet middens and scavenging and said there was no reason why water closets shouldn't be installed in all houses. He was well ahead of his time as far as most rural areas were concerned. In Claxby outside privies survived until well after the war. Kath Bunford remembers they used the outside privy at South View when she came in 1953. The school managers were discussing the installation of water closets at the school also in 1953. Langham House still had a privy when Jim and Rene Barton moved there in 1962. The installation of septic tanks helped but they didn't entirely solve the problem as they discharged supposedly treated effluent into minor watercourses and the surrounding soil. The parish council was pushing both Caistor RDC and Lindsey CC for improvements to sewage disposal in 1959 and said some progress had been made. However the parish council minutes regularly recorded worries about effluent in Boggle Lane and in the fish ponds behind the Rectory. There was an open septic tank alongside Wold View until the late 1980s. Plenty of people in the village still remember the smell! Only in 1993 when the water treatment plant was built on the edge of the park was it possible to abandon septic tanks. However as the Anglian Water Board charged for connection from the boundary of each property to the property itself, some householders chose not to do so, although all new houses had to be connected.

Up to the Second World War there had been no refuse collection. Each household was responsible for its own waste. There was far less rubbish in the way of tins, packets, bottles etc, but animal scraps and other food waste however

meagre must have attracted pests, particularly rats. Rats were a constant problem and exercised the local authorities. In 1951 the *Rasen Mail* reported that Bernard Brewer of Middle Rasen, visiting Claxby, heard a scuffling in an outhouse. He looked inside to find a rat trying to get out of a trap. It had four babies nearby. He went into the house to find the cat only to discover that she was nursing four kittens and unable to attend to her ratting duties. The *Mail* didn't report the final outcome. Rat weeks obviously helped to control rat numbers but constant attention was needed rather than a one week a year campaign. The bounty of 2d per tail introduced by Caistor RDC was believed to be successful for several years and carried on through the Second World War when the *Mail* reported that by March 1943 the total count of tails was 58,235. Experts however, were less sure. They thought that the same money spent on scientific measures would eradicate them. Nonetheless the project continued until after the war by which time about a million tails had been collected and the scheme closed. Scientific measures, if introduced, didn't appear to have been much more successful because rats continued to be a problem. In 1968 the *Mail* commented on the high numbers of rats and at the end of the century they still returned each year becoming most visible in the Autumn.

Some villages employed a scavenger or refuse collector but this had not been the practice in Claxby. During the Second World War the need to recycle metal led the government to encourage the collection of tin cans. This had not been particularly successful. In 1946 the parish council discussed the need for a refuse collection service and asked for a local scavenger to be appointed by the RDC. 'Getting rid of tins is a problem'. Although Caistor RDC said in 1947 that it had to postpone any waste collection in Claxby it did continue to offer a tin can collection service because in 1948 it said that if villagers did not use it in sufficient volume the council could not continue. It had apparently been running a rudimentary system on an ad hoc basis. Villages were given prior warning when a lorry would come. In 1949 the RDC introduced a scavenging or refuse collection service to all the villages in its area. At the time only 3,000 of 13,000 households had such a service. In 1953 a fortnightly refuse service was agreed for the Caistor RDC area. This was upgraded much later to a weekly service when Claxby Parish Council, no doubt together with other parish councils, complained that ratepayers were paying the same rates as those in the towns and receiving a worse service. In addition over the last few years of the century West Lindsey District Council developed a limited recycling service which in all probability it will be required to expand to meet targets agreed with the European Union.

In addition to trying to seek improvements in water, sewage and refuse collection the Parish Council also took a keen interest in other matters. In 1946 it joined the campaign to challenge the announcement that the school was listed for closure. The history of this battle and the unsuccessful rematch in 1969 is included in the chapter on education.

In 1948 the Parish Council tangled with the Assistant Medical Officer of Health who visited the school with a political poster on his car. They considered that while on



County Council business and receiving a petrol allowance he should refrain from promoting a particular party. Dr McCredy, no pushover, said he had every right to put what he liked on his car, he hadn't sold his soul to the Council and the election was not in Claxby's division. Presumably the posters remained.

In the 1970s a series of applications for planning permission for two pig units and one rabbit unit were fought by the parish council. At the time of the first application, that by Cotswold Pigs Ltd, the parish council did not even have the right to be informed of plans affecting the village and its protest came after permission had been granted. Nonetheless it did try to have the permission revoked but

proceed. The last planning matter in the twentieth century to seriously exercise the parish council was an application to build a number of houses in Normanby Rise. There were site meetings and many in the village attended District Planning Committee meetings. In a modified form these plans were finally accepted.

The provision of housing did not appear to have been a problem until the Second World War. Claxby had reduced in size when the mine closed so there were probably some houses unoccupied from time to time. The census of 1891 showed that only five of the twenty houses in the Terrace were occupied. There were also references in the Market Rasen Mail to houses in Claxby being occupied by people



*Aerial Photograph of Claxby in 1964 courtesy of Grimsby Evening Telegraph*

without success. The parish council learnt from this experience and it was also helped by a change to planning law which did allow for parish councils to be consulted. In 1978 it was able to persuade the West Lindsey District Council to refuse permission for a further unit in the parish. This campaign was lively. Local television came to film the public meeting when buckets of pig slurry were produced to demonstrate the smells that the parishioners wished to avoid. The refusal stood despite an appeal. A few years later the parish council opposed an application for a rabbit rearing unit. Again the District Council rejected the application but this was changed on appeal. At the time this caused considerable dismay in the village because of the way the District Council handled the appeal. Subsequently modifications to the plan were negotiated and in the event the units were not erected. The West Lindsey planning committee returned to the village in 1990 when an application was submitted to convert Claxby House into an hotel, and to build three houses. This caused a considerable division between people in the parish. The planning authority agreed the hotel and one house but these did not

working in other nearby villages because those villages had no houses. This is not to say that the housing was satisfactory. In 1906 Claxby was among a number of villages listed as having poor housing and in 1913 the RDC ordered sanitary improvements at one house in Claxby. As houses had no sewage system the nature of this improvement is unclear. Most houses belonged to the Yarborough estate until 1919. They were well built on the whole and fairly



*Chapel Bungalows*



built in 1989. In the 1990s, Darby, renamed Croft Ambrey, and the Red House finally completed housebuilding in the twentieth century. The sketch map shows the various stages of building in the village from 1900 to 2000. The Coach House was the first public house in Claxby for nearly 100 years. There had been an ale house called the Pelham Arms at the junction of the A46 and the Claxby Road. This was closed sometime before 1905 and probably before 1900. The publican had combined the job with that of farmer. The ale house no doubt took a much greater part of his time while the mine was open and its closure may well have been hastened by the closure of the mine. In 1948 Mr Wordley applied for an off beer license and was supported by the parish council but for some reason it didn't proceed. In 1988 Sue and Ian Forster made the brave attempt to open a pub and restaurant in the refurbished stables of Claxby House. It went well for a time and there are records of several private and public events being held there. In particular the Coach House league for indoor cricket stimulated the reformation of Claxby cricket team. More of this in the Sport and Leisure chapter. Sadly after only a few



*The Terrace*

years the Coach House closed and was converted into a private house.

The Terrace had been under threat since 1959 when Medical Officer for Caistor RDC said that the cost of bringing them up to standard was more than they were worth. In the early 1960s there was a considerable furore when the Council in effect declared it a slum. This generated letters in the Mail saying how well looked after they were. This was no doubt true but the external condition of the houses was deteriorating and they had no inside plumbing, no hot water and only one tap for every two houses. Younger people were not prepared to put up with these conditions even if the rents were low. Although the Council decided they must be demolished they had no alternative accommodation for the tenants currently living there so immediate closure was not possible. It was decided that no further tenants could move in and that existing tenants would be accommodated as soon as suitable housing was available. The Terrace therefore mouldered away for several more years and the last photographs show it in a derelict state, gardens overgrown, slates off and windows broken. It must have been very depressing to live there at that time but even as late as 1972 when only three were

occupied the tenants said they were sad to be leaving. The Terrace was finally demolished in 1973.

The first stirring of modern technology to come into the village was the gradual introduction of the motor car, motor cycle and motor bus. This is covered in the chapter on transport. Nearly as influential was the coming of the radio. It is impossible for us to understand how amazing this invention must have been at the time. Although many people in villages such as Claxby were not isolated in as much as they had weekly newspapers, were able to travel long distances by railway and had family overseas, the immediacy that radio brought would have been completely new. In addition it gave people the opportunity to hear dance bands, plays and classical music of a quality that they were unlikely to hear locally, although it must be recorded that the Market Rasen Orchestra and the Choral Society were producing music of a fairly high standard. Wireless broadcasting by the British Broadcasting Company began in 1922. Notes on broadcasting were being published in the Rasen Mail from 1924 and the BBC was already talking about a second radio channel. Listening initially would have been very much for the enthusiast, dependant on the use of crystal sets, cat's whiskers, complex aerials and head-phones, much as the early users of computers had to be knowledgeable and willing to put effort into using the equipment. Very soon the development of better sets allowed the wireless to be available for anyone who could afford it. Crystal sets cost about £1 and could be built by a knowledgeable amateur. Valve and mains sets were rather more expensive. Without electricity, users in Claxby would have needed an accumulator set, a form of battery that was recharged by Bristow's generator.

The first written record of wireless being available in the village was in 1925 when W C Bristow advertised in the Market Rasen Mail; 'Claxby Calling. Any kind of wireless receiving set installed'. Later the same year W C Bristow provided a wireless loud speaker so that dancing could take place to a band broadcasting from the Carlton Hotel in London. This was repeated in 1926. Nora Maddison recalled that her family had one of the first wireless sets in the Terrace. She remembered that a crowd collected in their house to listen to it for some important occasion. By 1937 radios were within general reach of the working classes. In November of that year J H Robinson of the Terrace was found guilty of working a wireless without a licence and fined 10/- and 2/6d costs. He would also have had to pay 10/- for the licence, a not inconsiderable amount when an agricultural labourer's average weekly wage was only £1 14s 7d. There are no other references to the wireless and we can only assume that villagers steadily acquired sets as their finances allowed. The availability of electricity would have stimulated demand. Kitty Combs (nee Cade) and her sister remember that they had a radio powered by an accumulator in the 1950s.

From being a novelty before the First World War the electricity supply industry developed swiftly in the interwar years. Between 1926 and 1933 the Central Electricity Board built power stations linked to a national grid which made electricity available to industry and domestic consumers across the country. The alternative source of electricity was

a generator and we know that Bristows had one as they recharged accumulators. John Bristow also remembers that the Rectory had a generator which it used for lighting. In 1927 the Caistor RDC set up a committee to look after the interests of its District because powers were being sought to supply electricity to Lincolnshire. However, in 1929 the Rasen Mail commented that electrification was in the larger towns but not rural areas. It was not until 1935 that plans, put forward by the Yorkshire Power Company for Nettleton and Claxby were approved. No doubt Nettleton with its mine was an attractive target for the electricity company. In 1936 the Mail announced that with the switching on of electric light in Market Rasen the scheme to supply current to the villages from Caistor to Market Rasen was complete, with the exception of Tealby. However the following year the supply company pointed out that it was uneconomic to extend the supply further, presumably to Tealby, because of the poor take up by subscribers. Claxby had only eight establishments connected a year after electricity had come to the village. There is no easily accessible record as to who were the earliest users. St Mary's Church was connected by early May 1937. Local businesses such as the blacksmith, the wheelwright and the garage would have had good reasons to be connected. It is also reasonable to assume that the better off households subscribed before the less well off. The unknown costs of this new form of power may have been a disincentive to those with little money to spare. The restrictions of the Second World War slowed down the spread of electrification to domestic users and even by 1955 only 79% of premises in rural areas were connected to the grid. The school still didn't have electricity in 1953. But by 1961 a furniture sale in the village mentioned a deep freeze cabinet and television so the use of electrical appliances must have been fairly common by then, although there were at least two houses in the village without electricity in 1962. Power cuts were very familiar to the village from the earliest days. They warranted articles in the local paper and were, on occasion, for days rather than minutes or hours.

The introduction of the telephone followed a similar pattern. Telephones were available in towns before the First World War. In Claxby the first mention is in 1932 when the Rasen Mail reported that William Charles Bristow was connected. In Kelly's Directory of 1933 both W C Bristow and Shepherd Bristow blacksmith and sub post master were listed for the first time as having telephones. At that time they were still sufficiently unusual in Market Rasen for the Mail to be welcoming individuals and businesses onto the system and listing all the telephone subscribers in the town. The list was fairly short. In 1937 Fred Sharp the wheelwright, carpenter and undertaker was connected. By 1938 the Owersby Moor exchange was upgraded. It enabled subscribers within about a 15 mile radius to dial automatically. The numbers were changed from 2 digits to 3 and all subscribers were visited by the Post Office to have the new system explained. There can't have been many subscribers if the Post Office was able to visit them individually. There are no further references to telephones in the Mail but it is reasonable to assume that after 1945 more houses were connected. Villagers may have had to exercise patience. Well after the war there were delays of several

months between applying to the Post Office, the monopoly supplier, for a telephone and having it installed. Those without a phone would have been able to use the public telephone after 1938 when it seems that Claxby's was installed. In 1939 the Mail had a leading article on the need for every village to have a public telephone so for once we were ahead of the trend. By the end of the century it was unusual to find a house without a telephone and the lines were also used for links to the internet while many people preferred to use their mobiles rather than the land line telephone. The public call box may have a limited life.

Television was the last pre Second World War invention to spread through the country. Although the BBC had been broadcasting TV programmes from 1936 the service was suspended for the duration of the war. Mains electricity was absolutely essential so it would have been out of reach for most Claxby households much before the mid 1940s. In addition reception here would have been poor. The size of the local population would not have encouraged the rapid building of transmitting stations. However by 1955 the Market Rasen Mail was reporting that both television and radio were new factors in the pending general election. In 1963 people were complaining about poor reception and the Belmont transmitter commenced operation in December 1965 and there was speculation that the BBC might begin its second channel by Christmas 1966. Kitty Combs and Pam Whitwell, (nee Cade) both of whom lived in Claxby from 1946 remember watching TV at the Sharps and Maddisons in the 1950s.

In 1936 the last remnant of Claxby mine was finally destroyed. There had been a gigantic wheel on the hillside, probably in Normanby parish but visible for miles around. It had been used to bring the wagons up and down the hill from the mine to the railway. It was destroyed for scrap iron.

After the school closed in 1971 the village decided that an attempt should be made to acquire it for use as a village hall. The schoolroom had been regularly used for many village



*The Viking Centre after modernisation*

functions over the years. A committee was formed of representatives from the Parish Council, Parochial Church Council, Mothers Union, Hillside Club, Womens Institute and the senior and junior youth clubs. Fund raising began immediately. Whist drives, a bonfire and tramps supper, coffee mornings, fireworks, a jumble sale, and fete all raised a substantial sum. The Committee obtained grants of £500, electric heating was installed, car access was made and repairs to the toilets were carried out. Unfortunately this initiative took place just when many village activities were

becoming less viable, the shop closed, people had their own transport, commuters started living in the village and taking little part in village functions. Despite almost continuous fund raising over the next few years by 1977 the committee decided it was not sensible to carry on. Both the Hillside Club and the youth club had closed and the hall was not being used enough.

The following year West Lindsey District Council bought the building to turn it into a hostel using grants from the Silver Jubilee appeal. It was renovated and in 1981 when further money was available it was equipped with sleeping and cooking facilities so that it could be used for study groups during the week and youngsters at the weekends. Bookings were disappointing although in 1983 a German



*Claxby Village Hall*

youth group used it. Over the years the facilities became too basic for modern taste and in the 1990s a further large grant was obtained to enlarge and modernise it. This was successfully completed but it continued to attract fewer groups than had been hoped. Great efforts have been made to market the centre and it is to be hoped that it will prove to be viable.

When the Women's Institute closed in 1992 the Parish Council decided after discussion at a Parish Meeting to buy the old WI room for use as a Village Hall. It needed considerable refurbishment and a separate committee was formed to organise the purchase and renovation work. Major fund raising was required and a number of events were organised including a very successful bonfire night party. The proceeds of the 1995 centenary celebrations were allocated to the refurbishment fund. In early 1994 the deeds were transferred to the parish council and the 'new' village hall was brought into use. It still needed plenty of work, which has been carried out over a number of years.

The history of Claxby is a long one. It was known in the 1850s that there were Roman remains in the area. The village has been lucky that one of its long term residents has taken a great interest in the distant past of the area. Joan Russell, previously Mostyn Lewis has walked the fields for many years looking for pottery and other indications of habitation. One of her most interesting finds was on Trevor Lyle's farm where in the early 1970s she found a Roman kiln about 9 inches below the surface. It had been protected by being on an ancient hedge line and therefore not subject to ploughing. The site was fully excavated and the kiln removed to Lincoln where it was on display for many years. Joan has found many other fascinating remains, many of which are held by the Lincoln Museum Service.

Over the whole of the century the weather has had a profound effect on the village. Farming despite being increasingly hitech is still greatly dependent on the weather. Modern techniques for lifting and drying crops have helped but snow, frost and rain as well as drought still leave the farmer worried. Other aspects of village life were also affected by severe weather. School attendance was frequently poor because of bad weather especially when children walked to school from a wide area. Drought caused concern over the water supply at various times, heavy rain and subsequent flooding washed away the washdyke bridge and isolated the village from Market Rasen for a time but snow has had the most dramatic impact. The most well known winter is that of January and February 1947. The village was cut off for six weeks, the school didn't open as the teachers couldn't reach the village. Villagers pulled sledges across the fields to the railway station to collect bread, and groceries and as fast as they shovelled the snow away it blew back again. As Phyllis Surfleet said, 'you didn't waste even a scrap of bread as you didn't know where the next loaf was coming from'.

Even before then the village had times when it was cut off for several days at a time. Michael Sharp remembers a snowplough pulled by two horses but that could only cope with a depth of snow that horses could get through. In the winter of 1947 the snow nearly reached the telephone wires. There were other winters after 1947 when getting in and out of the village was a problem. 1957 and 1962/3 are remembered by villagers and in the late 1970s there was one occasion when the village was cut off for at least three days. When Nettleton Mine was active the road from Market Rasen to Nettleton up Normanby Rise was kept open as far as possible to allow miners to reach work and ironstone to be brought out. It was because of the mine that the washdyke bridge was repaired promptly. During and after the war POWs used to help keep the roads cleared.

The village has seen more changes in the twentieth century than in the previous 200 or 300 years. In 1900 the village was dependant on the land, all, except the Rector, were tenants of the Yarborough estate, a great majority went to church or one of the two chapels every Sunday and leisure time was spent mainly in the village. Normanby and Claxby operated as a single entity for many activities. Most villagers did their shopping in the village and depended on weekly newspapers for information. Most children had all their education in the village. Bicycles, horses and the railway were the only form of transport. Very few people had holidays away from the village. The annual Sunday School outing was the only chance for most to go further than Market Rasen or Caistor. Despite the inevitable arguments and feuds the village together with Normanby was a tightly knit unit dependant on each other for pleasure and for support in time of trouble.

By 1999 the village population while recovering from its lowest level had not reached the 235 that it was in 1901 but nearly every house had at least one car, mains water and sewage, electricity, radio and television. There was no shop or post office, no school, no travelling shops and no railway station. Very few villagers were dependant on the land for their living and the elderly represented a much larger

proportion of the total population. There were no village based associations or clubs and the only casual meeting place was the one remaining place of worship, the church, attended by perhaps 5% of the village on a regular basis. People looked for entertainment outside the village, going as

far as Hull and Sheffield for an evening out and all over the world for holidays.

People who can remember life in the village in the 1920s and 30s and even as late as the 1950s say that they were more contented then but how many would want to change the comforts we now enjoy for the contentment of earlier years?

### 3 AGRICULTURE

In 1900 farming was still labour intensive and the hauling was carried out by horses. Most farmers followed the traditional Norfolk four course rotation of crops; wheat followed by a root crop, usually turnips, then barley undersown with a grass ley cropped by the sheep. In this time honoured fashion the land was kept clean and manured, the barley was sold for malting and the wheat for bread. The sheep ate the turnips in the field, the horses and other farm animals ate lifted and chopped roots and the surplus cereal Oats were also grown for feed. Sheep, the 'Golden Hoof' of Lincolnshire, had for several hundred years been a major source of income to the wolds farmers and Claxby with Normanby was part of that tradition; indeed in 1922 the Market Rasen Mail, when reporting that Herbert Maultby had been fined 5/- for allowing his dog to stray, said he was the second largest sheep owner in the district. Cattle rearing for beef was also important. One local farmer, John Byron of Normanby le Wold had a well known herd of Lincolnshire Red Shorthorns. There probably were other beef herds in the village, Mr Maultby bought a Lincoln Red Shorthorn bull at Lincoln for 20 guineas in 1914 and John Wildsmith of Claxby House bought a bull in 1916 for 36 guineas. There were no large dairy herds in the district. Farmers and some smallholders kept a milking cow or two for their own needs and probably sold milk to other villagers. Certainly in the Yarborough estate sale documents of 1919 several of the smallholdings were recorded as having two and three standing cowhouses. It was reported in the Market Rasen Mail that the local medical officer of health was concerned at the lack of fresh milk in the area but Claxby was not singled out as being especially deprived. Pasture for the cattle and sheep must have been a significant proportion of the use of the land but potatoes and carrots were grown on the flatter lands around the village. Pigs were routinely kept but not usually in substantial numbers, although Mr F H Baker at Fir Park Farm just outside the parish, kept pigs on a significant scale fairly early in the century. Most villagers and virtually every cottage had a pig sty where they kept one or two animals for their own use. As in many other villages Claxby had a pig club, an insurance and mutual support organisation. Each member contributed a regular sum and was compensated if his pig died or had to be put down because of foot and mouth disease or swine fever. The club seems to have been established in the First World War when there was pressure to increase food production. Michael and Mary Sharp have part of a rule book for the pig club dated 1916

Poultry also seemed to have been a small scale enterprise in the early days of the century, more the preserve of the farmer's and smallholder's wife than of the farmer himself.

Some women from the area went to Lincoln by train to sell their eggs and other produce, and no doubt sold also at Market Rasen market but there is no written record of the latter.

Horses provided the main hauling power both on and off the farm although the railway was used for hauling longer distances. Horses were slow and to get through the work on a decent sized farm twelve to fifteen horses would have been needed. They had to be looked after, fed, watered, cleaned and all the tack given careful maintenance by the wagoners. John and Motley Brant remember twenty horses and five or six wagoners at Normanby in the 1930s. Wagoners were basic to the needs of the farm. They ploughed, cut hay and cereals, hauled goods both on and off the farm. They were carefully graded, first, second, third etc and paid in order of seniority. In 1923 first wagoners wages were £30-£35 pa while fourth wagoners received only £12-£14 pa. Single wagoners were accommodated in dormitory conditions with a woman, often the first wagoner's wife to cook and clean for them. Sometimes they were given a cottage but often they lived above the horses or in another outhouse of the farm. Traditionally wagoners were allocated a pig, either one to each man per year or one to two men as their principal meat source and pork was much eaten. Margaret Brant remembers wagoners setting off for work on a breakfast of warm milk and pork fat cubes! Discipline was firm and Bill Woods who was a wagoner at Thoresway, and who lived in Claxby in retirement, remembers having to be in his quarters by 9.30 each evening and 10pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Although the horses were only worked for a limited time each day, they had to be fed, watered and harnessed up each morning, and groomed, fed and watered each evening. In addition the tack had to be cleaned and mended. The hours for the wagoners, as for all farm workers were long. Bill Woods used to get up at 5am, muck out, groom and feed his four charges, then go to breakfast himself before harnessing up. They had to be setting off by 7am. They worked until 2.30pm with a half hour break. The horses were walked back to the farm, unharnessed and cleaned down. The men then had their dinner after which they fed their animals. Evenings were spent cleaning harness and polishing brasses. In the summer they might walk to a neighbouring farm to socialise with their opposite numbers. They didn't drink on those occasions. They couldn't afford to. The first wagoner supervised the others and in some cases oversaw the breaking in of young horses. Some young horses would have been bred locally. After the first world war Maurice Brant bred Percherons, but some came from elsewhere and certainly from the outbreak of the First World War, when thousands of horses were taken for the front, young horses were

imported from Ireland. John Brant whose father took over Normanby Lodge in 1919, said they arrived at Claxby railway station and were herded up the hill to be trained and broken on the farm. This would have caused some excitement in the village. In 1925 John's father was fined for allowing two horses to stray in Claxby. They could have been escapees from the drive up the hill.

There were many other tasks to be carried out on the farm and large numbers of men and in some cases women were employed at different seasons. When Bill Woods worked as a hedger at Stainton le Vale he spent nearly all his time in winter plashing and keeping the hedges of the estate in good heart. There would have been similar tasks to be carried out in Claxby. Farm labourers helped see to the animals, hoed and singled the growing crops, cut and stacked hay, cut, stooked and threshed the corn, cleaned the ditches, mended fences, maintained the farm buildings. The whole landscape would have been peopled in a way we don't see today. Any farm of reasonable size would have employed a significant number of men, John Brant remembers twelve to fifteen and Motley up to eighteen. Despite the number of permanent farm workers seasonal labour was in demand, particularly at harvest. In the early days of the century, before binders were common, twenty men would be needed to gather and stook the cereal crop and then stack it in the yard. Women usually bound the sheaves and they and the children then gleaned the field. The cutting and threshing was not carried out simultaneously as is the norm today. Farmers had to wait their turn for the steam threshing machines and this could mean a delay of several months. The Market Rasen Mail reported an argument that got out of hand between two Claxby men while threshing at Mr Byron's farm at Normanby in March 1900. This was clearly five or six months after harvest. This delay gave other problems, particularly with rats. Mr Baker of Fir Park Farm at Usselby writing in 1945 believed the rat problem was still caused at least in part by unthreshed grain left over the winter. By then farmers were obliged to net their stacks to minimise rat damage. Rats were clearly a great trial to everyone and the Market Rasen Mail reported on the fluctuations in the rat population over the first 50 years of the century. Rat Weeks were held each year when everyone set about killing as many as possible and in the 1930s and 40s Caistor RDC in common with other local councils paid a bounty of 2d a tail. Local boys in particular earned some pocket money from this. Motley Brant can remember feeling very aggrieved when someone took his rat tails off him! Market Rasen UDC were slower to offer a bounty and when they did insisted that the complete dead rat was given up. Perhaps they worried that people might cut off the rat's tail and let it lose again.

Some workers stayed with their master for many years but others were hired on an annual basis. Each spring hiring fairs were held in local market towns and those who wished to move to another employer or had been told to move, negotiated with potential employers for a year's work. The hiring fairs or Statutes were also an opportunity for people to meet and socialise. Stalls were set up in the market place and fairground rides were enjoyed. The Rasen Mail commented in most years on the events. In 1904 it said that

bicycles were much used by farmworkers. As they cost between £6 15s and £12 12s they represented a significant investment for a farm labourer. In 1917 the Mail commented that the attendance was very high considering the times and in 1921 it said that hiring of female servants was no longer done in the open but through the registry office or privately. It also said that not much business was being done for male workers as they were seeking better than Wages Board rates and the farmers were unwilling to pay. By 1927 the Mail said that despite a good attendance, not many were engaged and farmers were preferring to operate through newspapers or privately. It also commented that the roundabouts were well patronised. Slowly the fairs were changing to entirely social events and the spring fair in Market Rasen today is the direct descendant of the hiring fairs. The clearest record of the use of annual contracts in Claxby comes from the fluctuations in school numbers each spring. This is recorded in the chapter on Education.

In addition to permanent workers, seasonal workers were needed for the potato and beet harvests. Both crops were picked by hand and in very wet weather they were also dug by hand. The Irish were regarded as the best and hardest workers. There was a population of Irishmen in and around Caistor who moved round the farms negotiating better piece work rates than the locals could obtain. Whether this caused resentment is not recorded. They had perks as well and this convention lasted well into the Second World War. In 1944 Richard Brennan, an Irishman living at Claxby, was charged with the theft of three blankets and cooking utensils, property of the British Sugar Corporation at Bardney. His defence said it was customary for farmers in Lincolnshire to provide Irishmen with blankets and other articles at harvest time and the arrangement was an individual matter between master and man. Blankets might be retained for the whole season before return.

Potato picking by hand lasted well after the Second World War. Michael Sharp remembers picking as a boy and many will recall their mothers helping in the fields. The Rasen Mail reported in November 1951 that 'boys and girls returned to school after two or three weeks potato picking. Some have made up to £10 each'. Early potatoes which bruised easily and fetched a far higher price were picked by hand much later than main crop potatoes.

In addition to men employed directly by the farmers there were many others whose livelihood depended on the land, such as rabbiters, and mole catchers. Craftsmen such as the blacksmith and wheelwright also derived the bulk of their income from agriculture. In Claxby the Bristows and the Maultbys followed by the Sharps had filled these respective roles for many years and were to continue well into the 20th century. The boost to their income from shoeing pit ponies and maintaining transport in Claxby mine had long disappeared by 1900 although Shepherd Bristow made shoes for army horses in the First World War.

There were some limited changes on farms during the First World War partly, no doubt because of the shortage of labour. There was no conscription until 1916 but there were great pressures on men to answer the call for 'King and Country'. After 1916 there was a general call up of all able bodied men, the upper age limit gradually increasing

throughout the war and the physical requirements reducing. Although agriculture was a reserved occupation, men whose main livelihood was not dependent on the land had to get exemptions from call up and this did not seem easy to obtain; a Claxby man was granted a 3 month delay in his call up, the critical factor seemed to be that he kept two registered boar pigs. Another Claxby man was refused exemption; he had applied on the grounds that he kept 6 acres of rural land, was the postman and made horse shoes for the army.

Food was in short supply, rationing of meat, tea, butter and margarine was introduced in the latter stages of the war and maximum price orders were imposed on a variety of foodstuffs. A man was charged with allowing potatoes to be damaged by frost as late as 1919. Some products were given special consideration. Eggs were much sought after. Egg production fluctuated seasonally and as they were regarded as important for the wounded a voluntary organisation was established to collect eggs from small producers, those who in time past would have sold a few locally. In Claxby Gladys Bristow undertook this collection as the Market Rasen Mail duly recorded. In July 1917 she collected 133 eggs, in November 65 eggs, the following January 87 eggs. It rose to 94 eggs in March and the collection apparently continued until March 1919. Some of the eggs collected in the area were marked with the name and address of the giver or packer and some of the wounded wrote in thanks.

Farmers must have been under pressure to maintain production and this was problematical with a depleted workforce. Some less essential jobs probably simply didn't get done, others were carried out by boys too young for the call up or by older men. Women were probably used more although there is no written record of this in Claxby. However Nora Maddison nee Saunby was a casual farm worker, singling beet, picking potatoes and pulling and topping beet in the 1920s and 30s. No doubt there were others. Some farmers must have considered mechanisation. The Market Rasen Mail recorded that the first use of a steam tractor in the area took place in Walesby in 1918. It also reported that the Ministry of Agriculture made tractors available on loan and in 1919 there was a sale of these tractors locally but there is no record of one being used in Claxby. Before then steam threshers had been familiar but they were stationary beasts, brought to the farmyard each year and then removed. Steam tractors in the fields must have been an extraordinary sight. However whatever innovations farmers might have planned had to be put in abeyance as farming suffered a serious and long term slump after the war ended.

Immediately after the war economic pressures had a profound effect on the ownership of land in several parts of Lincolnshire as the great landowners sold off land to pay death duties and recover losses in the face of falling prices. Lord Yarborough sold off substantial areas including most of his land in Claxby and Normanby. The records of the sale on 17th September 1919 show he sold 3,510 acres comprising '11 Farms, 5 Excellent Small Holdings, Cottages and Gardens, Arable Enclosures and Fertile Lands' This was a once in a lifetime opportunity for the villagers to own the homes they had lived in for many years, something their

parents had never envisaged. It also gave the local tenant farmers the chance to establish themselves and give better guarantees for their children's future. However the economic pressures that forced the sale also seem to have made it difficult for the purchasers to survive. A significant number of properties bought at the sale changed hands in the few years immediately after. Some farms, like Grange Farm fell out of production altogether. Presumably not everyone could cope with the difficulties of the times. Generally things did not improve until the Second World War

Despite this some developments were seen in the introduction of mechanisation on farms but it seems to have been very limited. John Surfleet didn't use a tractor and drill until 1941. He also remembers horses being used on many farms in the area in the late 30s and 40s. He was using a horse drawn binder in 1947. It appeared that horses were still fairly common on the land while motor engines dominated road transport.

In addition some changes appeared in the cropping and management of farms. Sugar beet became a more significant crop. In 1928 there was speculation in the Rasen Mail that there was sufficient beet being grown in the area to justify a second sugar beet factory in Brigg. The first, at Bardney, had been opened some years before. The number of dairy cows increased and there was a growth in poultry farming. Before the first world war the number of dairy cows seems to have been fairly small. Even in the 1920s and 30s Ernest Bristow kept only two cows and sold milk for 1penny a gallon. But during the later interwar years there was a modest build up of numbers and by the outbreak of the second world war there were small herds on several farms in Claxby. John Surfleet was milking cows at Moat Farm in the late 1930s and there was apparently sufficient milk produced to justify a milk collection service. Certainly in 1944 the Rev Austin Lee when complaining about the lack of fresh milk for village children said there was a TT tested herd in the village.

Chickens also were being kept on a larger scale than had been common earlier in the century when it was the preserve of the farmer's wife to make some money for herself. In 1926 Mr Chappell was taking 14 dozen eggs to market when he met with his accident. It is recorded in more detail in the chapter on transport. Certain local farms had built up significant flocks. Both John Surfleet and John Bristow were employed collecting eggs among other jobs at Moat Farm just before the Second World War.

Pigs however with the exception of Mr Baker's unit at Fir Park Farm still remained the preserve of the smallholder. In 1923 the Claxby pig club reported receipts of £46 6s 4d and £7 6s 6d paid out for pigs lost. It was still operating in 1948 when it decided to resume the payment of annual subscriptions which had been suspended for some years because of the low payouts and the small number of pigs lost. The decision was made in the light of the high price of pigs at the time. Even in 1954 the Market Rasen Mail still referred to pig killing time in the villages.

In addition to their other concerns, farmers also had to cope with the same animal diseases that cause such misery today. Foot and mouth disease was common in the early years of the 20th century and it was dealt with in the same



way as today, slaughter and movement restrictions. There were warnings of a widespread outbreak in January 1921 and foot and mouth restrictions caused the Market Rasen Christmas Fatstock Show in 1923 to be postponed. Further outbreaks occurred in 1932, 1934, 1939 and 1942. This last outbreak was particularly critical because of the shortage of food. In addition because of the need to maintain a blackout the slaughtered animals had to be buried in quicklime. Outbreaks continued after the war but this area escaped the major outbreak in the mid 60s.

In addition to foot and mouth, sheep were prone to other ailments and were required to be dipped. For Claxby this took place near the Washdyke Bridge. The regulations were rigorously enforced. Charles Hewson of Claxby was fined 10/- in November 1915 for not sending in his declaration under the Sheep Dipping Order on time. Pig owners also had to deal with swine fever which regularly ravaged the herd. There was an outbreak of the disease in January 1921 when foot and mouth was also about and the Market Rasen Mail reported regular outbreaks throughout the century. People tried to escape the draconian regulations instigated to control these diseases. The Market Rasen Mail recorded several instances of smallholders being fined for not burying animals quickly enough or failing to report animal movements or suspicious symptoms. There were also occasional outbreaks of anthrax, a terrifying disease which can be fatal to humans. The Mail records two instances in the 1950s in Spilsby and North Willingham and sixteen cases in Lindsey in one month in 1956. In addition to these diseases there were other problems that animals faced that are not usual today. Motley Brant recalled a foal dying of lock jaw and of two horses having to be shot in the aftermath of a fire in the stables.

As if this were not enough farmers and their men were also routinely prosecuted for misdemeanours. The Market Rasen Mail regularly reported that Claxby farmers like their counterparts in other local villages were fined for allowing animals to stray. Mr J H Wildsmith of Claxby House fined 5/- in 1923 for allowing two steers to stray onto Normanby Road said they were heifers and he would defy anyone to keep them in! (Mr Wildsmith had lost five sheep to a lightning strike in 1914). Herbert Maultby, fined 5/- in 1924 for allowing two beasts to stray showed his frustration by paying in threepenny pieces. Farmers and shepherds were also prosecuted over their dogs. All dogs had to be licensed except for certain working dogs whose owners had to apply for exemption annually. Woe betide those who forgot; hauled up before the magistrate they had to pay their fines of 5/- or 10/- and costs. The RSPCA had inspectors in the district and they also regularly prosecuted for cruelty to animals. In 1902 John Martin farmer of Claxby was fined 10/- and 4/6d costs for cruelty to a horse by working it in an awful condition. It was lame on all four legs and the off foreleg was deformed. The RSPCA continued to be watchful as motor transport took over and as late as 1933 a Co-op carter was fined for cruelty.

Farmers, therefore and their workers had a difficult time for much of the first forty years of the century despite occasional years when certain crops seemed to be offering better returns. Poor incomes had slowed down innovation

in agriculture although the signs of progress were there for those who looked. Mr F H Baker, a farmer who lived in Usselby inundated the Market Rasen Mail with information he had obtained from his journeys around the world funded by the profits he said he made on his farm. He was particularly influenced by the time he spent working in the United States. He imported several practices in the keeping of pigs on a large scale from America and reported that he made a good return in many years when other farmers were struggling. Despite the farmers' difficulties and conservatism, at the outbreak of the Second World War certain crops such as sugar beet unfamiliar or even unknown in 1914 were being grown in the area, dairy and poultry farming was more common and some farmers were using tractors on a significant scale. The war was to prove the catalyst for profound short and long term changes in agriculture.

In 1940 the government introduced strict controls on all aspects of agriculture. Keen to avoid the inadequacies of the food supply of the first world war, the state imposed central control on the feeding and slaughter of animals, quotas of basic foods that each farm must grow and took over unfarmed land through local War Agriculture Committees. Pasture land unploughed for centuries was to be brought into arable production and farmers were given the incentive of guaranteed prices to increase and maintain output. In North Lincolnshire three thousand acres of grassland were to be ploughed, sugar beet and potatoes were to be the main root crops and farmers were to try to be self supporting in animal and poultry food stuffs. This latter seemed to have disastrous consequences very quickly. In the winter of 1940 the Market Rasen Mail reported that sheep were dying. Bad storms meant that they were unable to graze and cake was not available. This may have been made worse by the clerk responsible for issuing permits for cake not understanding the urgency of the need. In addition, acreages of peas for canning and beans for horse and pig food were to be increased and flax was to be introduced. Flax acreage increased phenomenally, from a thousand acres at the beginning of the war to five thousand acres at the end. A flax mill was built south of Lincoln. Flax was found to be an ideal crop for newly ploughed pastures as it was not much affected by wireworm. It was, however a dirty and difficult crop to harvest and if laid had to be pulled by hand.

Although regular farm workers could be exempted from the call up there was still a shortage of men to work on the land, partly because farmworkers could still volunteer and partly because farmers relied on seasonal and casual workers who were subject to call up and of course farmers were expected to increase yields. Learning lessons from earlier wars, in 1939, the state set up the Womens Land Army. One wonders how many local farmers viewed the phenomenon of young active women carrying out all the work that had traditionally been seen as the prerogative of men. Many Land Army girls had a hard time establishing themselves but they seem to have been accepted as inevitable by the majority of farmers. Indeed in 1944 the Land Army couldn't meet the demand for dairy workers and set up a training school at Ingleby. This was admittedly the one area of farm work where women had been accepted for many

years so it may have been more of a comment on the unprecedented increase in the local dairy herd. There were certainly some members of the Land Army living and working in Claxby. In 1946 a Miss Merle Flintoft, daughter of a local family and aged seventeen reported vandalism at Claxby School. She was described as a land girl and was on her way home from milking.

Casual workers were also in great demand and as early in the war as the summer of 1939 farmers were applying to use Southern Irishmen, who were not subject to the call up, and one farmer was bringing out two loads of women from Grimsby to Caistor. Later in the war prisoners of war were used extensively. Large numbers of Germans were brought onto local farms from North Willingham and late in the war there were Italians at camps on the A46 at Usselby. Farmers continued to rely on POWs until well after the war. They anguished in 1948 when it was reported that 5,300 German POWs were going home from Lindsey alone. They could expect the help of only a few hundred voluntary workers from Europe.

Difficulties in getting sufficient rations for feeding pigs and poultry apparently led to some farmers at least cutting down their herds and flocks. There were apparently only limited supplies of foodstuffs for pigs and those farming on a large scale simply couldn't obtain sufficient scraps. In 1944 Mr Baker in Usselby said he was selling his pigs and as late as 1946 the Claxby pig club, worried about the small rations for village pigkeepers, joined the Small Pigkeepers Council as a means of obtaining extra meal for keepers of 2 or more pigs. Despite the restrictions on rations for poultry, egg production in the area increased considerably. The egg packing station at Usselby was reporting that it processed 250,000 eggs a week in 1942. After the war it was managed by W C Bristow. Then it was an even larger operation, collecting eggs from local producers and grading them before dispatching them the same night. In 1953 it also established its own flock of 4,000 birds. Several Claxby women worked there; Phyllis Surfleet, Betty Owen, Alice Sharpe and Margaret Clark as well as Christine Bristow. In 1956 when it was taken over it was described as being at the centre of one of the largest egg producing areas in England. In addition to egg production Claxby also had chicken fattening units. Arthur Maultby, whose family farmed here for the first 40 years of the century, recalls lines of double cages in the paddock behind Langham House at the beginning of the war.

Pressure to maintain and increase food production continued well after the war. The country was desperately short of foreign currency and needed to use it for oil and other materials which it simply could not produce. Rationing of many food items continued well after the war. Meat didn't come off ration until 1954. The imminent end of Marshall Aid in 1951 caused much concern in the local press as farmers were finding it difficult to attract sufficient labour and therefore worried about maintaining high levels of production. There was a suggestion that local farmers took over the operation of a hostel for farmworkers on a not for profit basis but they declined to do so. However guaranteed prices increased farm incomes considerably and farmers were able to invest in mechanisation to offset the labour shortage to some extent. Sheep numbers which had

been falling for many years increased again, the dairy herds and poultry flocks grew and agriculture saw a more secure future. It was at this period that the various marketing boards were at their most influential. There was even a tomato and cucumber marketing board. Agriculture was still seen locally as the most important industry even though it was employing much less labour. The Market Rasen Mail devoted a large part of each edition to farming matters.

From the 1960s onwards, mechanisation and a more researched based approach to farming together with the use of artificial fertilisers, herbicides and fungicides caused major changes in farming. The entry of the UK into the Common Market also had a significant influence on the range and quantity of crops grown. Farmers, as would any businessmen, responded to the stimulus of the artificial control of prices. Huge increases in production of those crops with high guaranteed prices led to attempts to control output by quotas. Quotas and the option to buy and sell them encouraged farmers to trade in pieces of paper. This encouraged the more financially aware in the farming community and prompted the acquisition of more sophisticated management skills among a few. Those who couldn't handle these new demands, especially the smaller farmer fell by the wayside. The alternative approach, organic farming also required management and marketing skills and access to capital to tide them over while the farm adapted to Soil Association standards.

In the 1990's the modification of the Common Agricultural Policy in an attempt to restrain its cost was, in the UK, exacerbated by the effects of BSE and other food scares. These demanded resilience, flexibility and even greater management and technical skills. Again the larger farmer was more likely to handle these challenges. Landholders in Claxby were no different from those elsewhere. Changes that began in the 1960s with the introduction of more sophisticated techniques and machinery speeded up as the century came to its end. Fields grew larger and farms both larger and more specialised. The era of the mixed farm seemed to be coming to an end. In Claxby the land was consolidated into a few good sized holdings. The last dairy herd in the village was sold in the late 1990s. Sheep and beef cattle were still a familiar sight but the survival of the sheep flock far into the twenty first century is believed to be questionable. Pigs ceased to be kept in small units and were reared in large numbers in the open by the end of the century, with the exception of the specialist breeding unit at Cotswold Pigs. Arable farming assumed a pre-eminence that would have been unbelievable at the beginning of the century. The only crop not harvested in one operation was rape and this was cut when green and left to dry and ripen for two weeks before combining. Artificial fertilisers were spread on the basis of a soil analysis for each hectare of land, located with the Global Positioning System, fungicides were sprayed within an accuracy of 8 centimetres. Tractors and other farm machinery increased in size and sophistication. The most sophisticated could even be monitored for malfunction by satellite by the manufacturer while in use thousands of miles away. The rate of technological innovation will continue to increase in the twenty first century.

## 4 TRANSPORT

In 1900 there was very little to indicate the immense changes the century would bring to transport. Claxby had a railway station which had been inaugurated in 1848 but for most people that represented occasional journeys only. There were two carriers in the village, Mr Shepherd and Mr Crawford, who undertook trips to Market Rasen. Villagers essentially relied on walking although some had bicycles and the fortunate few had horse transport of their own. In all but the wealthiest households, the horses were needed for the farm and were not available to ride or drive for pleasure. The internal combustion engine had yet to make its appearance in any meaningful sense. It would be a good twenty years before people saw cars and buses on the road in any numbers. The roads were metalled but not tarred. In Lincolnshire the practise was to lay chalk and limestone on the tracks and roads and pour sand on top which was then watered. Without doubt they were dusty in summer and muddy and slippery in winter. They were also gated. There was a gate on Normanby Rise just above the playing field. In 1910 Caistor Rural District Council said Claxby had narrow and dangerous roads where work should be carried out. It also said that the gates should be removed. John Brant and John Bristow can remember the gate so no action was taken at the time! It was probably finally cleared away in the 1930s. There was also a gate on the road to Claxby House Farm. The footpaths were well used and the villagers were interested in maintaining them. In 1901 the parish council drew the attention of the surveyors to the very bad condition of the footpaths in the village especially that from the school to the Terrace. In December of the same year, Thomas Rickell, charged with obstructing a public footpath in Claxby with a sheep net, said that he didn't know he was causing an obstruction and commented on three trees still across the footpath from "windy Saturday" the previous August. Justice appears to have been done, the case was withdrawn on payment of costs.

Children walked to the village school in Pelham Road (now the Viking Centre) from the whole of the parishes of Claxby, Normanby and Usselby. For some this was several miles each morning and evening in good and bad weather. The school log books frequently commented on poor attendance caused by bad weather; on 16 April 1913 only 24 children were registered out of a total roll of 46 because it was very wet and on the 15 January 1914 only 9 attended because of a severe snow storm. Children didn't have plastic mackintoshes or wellingtons. They probably covered themselves with sacking and hoped their boots were waterproof.. Again on March 10th 1916 the log book records 'very stormy weather during the past week. The road on the hill and in the moor being nearly impassable the distant children have been absent every day. Two weeks later on 28 March there were gales and heavy snowfalls and only 15 children were present. We have no similar record as to whether their fathers were able to get to work but since they probably weren't paid if they didn't appear they would have made every effort and of course some would have been living on their master's land.

There were bicycles in the village from early in the

century. In August 1901 Miss Eve Bristow eldest daughter of Shepherd Bristow, blacksmith, won 10/-, a substantial sum, for the best decorated bicycle at the flower show and gala at Messingham. One wonders whether she cycled there and back. The Market Rasen Mail, reporting on the May Hiring Fair in 1904 commented that bicycles were much used by farm labourers. Bicycles must have given ordinary folk much more freedom than their forebears had enjoyed

Bicycle riders regularly came up against the law. Riding without lights was the most frequent offence. The magistrates at Market Rasen fined Thomas Hutchinson, labourer of Claxby 5/- for such an offence in August 1919. Tom Chapman also a labourer of Claxby had to pay 10/- for riding without a rear light a year later and other Claxby residents were caught and summonsed over the years. There were also accidents. One recorded by the Market Rasen Mail in 1934 concerned Thomas Bycroft of Claxby, cycling with his son to Thoresway. Apparently he had changed bicycles with his son because of doubts about the brakes. He was thrown off the bike, landed on his head and subsequently died in Lincoln Hospital.

Bicycles may have been important for personal use but horses remained the prime means of moving goods locally at least until the late 1920s. They were used in close relationship with the railways which hauled most goods long-distance. At Claxby station from 1868 Wilkinson Brothers ran a coal haulage business. They had their own railway wagons coming into sidings at Claxby from where they hauled to consumers by horse wagon. Wilkinsons bought their first lorry, a second hand thirty hundredweight FIAT between 1919 and 1921. They sold their business in



*One of Wilkinson's railway wagons*

1955. Horses were used in pairs, threes or fours to pull wagons but there were also ponies and traps. Horse drawn carts were common on the roads, often travelling in small convoys. The wagoners normally did not drive them, they walked beside the lead horse. In most cases therefore there were no driving reins or only reins to the lead horse. It was of course dangerous to try to drive a pair or more if there were reins only to one horse and this was a punishable offence. On occasions a wagoner, lazy or tired, hopped up behind his horses and was duly caught and charged by the police. In 1902 James Brown, servant, Claxby, was summonsed for riding without reins on a wagon on Station

Road Claxby. In 1913 a Police Constable saw a wagon and three horses with no-one in charge and saw Thomas Rowell wagoner of Normanby riding in front with another wagon. He was fined 5/- and 4/6d costs and as late as 1938 Leonard Bushell a farm worker of Claxby was fined 7/6d for a similar offence. The owner's name and address had to be painted on each vehicle and this was a frequent cause of trouble with the law. In 1919 Fred Cant platelayer, Claxby, was fined 7/6d for failing to have his name and address painted on his cart. Even as late as 1932 Charles Crompton of Claxby was fined 5/- for 'allowing a cart to be on the highway without having the owner's name and address thereon' although the magistrate did say it was a very old fashioned case. The law also required lights on wagons. In 1908 George Drifill labourer, Claxby was fined 1/- and 4/6d costs for driving a spring cart in the village street without a light and in 1920 Sarah Cant of Claxby was fined 5/- for driving a pony and trap without lights on Caistor Road, Kirkby cum Osgodby. She said the candle had burnt out and she had no more with her. Drivers and riders of horses out after dark must have relied on their animals to find the way as there were no headlights.

Inevitably there were accidents and some were tragic. In 1904 William Crawford whose parents lived in Claxby was killed in an accident in Grimsby while driving a team of four horses. In 1913 David Woodforth aged 15 with three others was returning with three wagons of cake from Holton Station. As it started to rain, he clambered on the front of the wagon to get his coat and fell, the wheels passing over him. He died before he could be taken to the hospital in Market Rasen. The foreman reported to the inquest that the boy was sober having had two glasses of beer at 10am and two at 2.30pm, the roads were greasy and the horses quiet. In 1914 three wagons laden with wood and belonging to Mr Byron were coming down Normanby Rise at St Peter's Cottage when the brake shoe on the second wagon slipped forcing it onto the back of the first wagon. The horse had to be shot and the wagoner suffered a crushed arm.. Some accidents, while not so serious to life and limb, still caused problems among the farming community. In June 1926 Joseph Chappell, a farmer from Claxby claimed £10 1s 5d for damage to harness, trap and goods from John W Simpson from Moortown. Mr Simpson's labourer was driving a float carrying hurdles. The horse bolted when two partridges flew over and he couldn't hold it. It collided with Mr Chappell's trap which tipped over onto the pony. Mr Chappell lost fourteen dozen eggs. The labourer said Mr Chappell was driving in the middle of the road which was denied. Mr Simpson had to pay out the full amount plus costs

The motor car and motor cycle seem to have made a relatively late appearance in Claxby. There is one tantalising reference in the Rasen Mail that, in 1917, the auction of Rev William Andrews effects included a Ford coupe. The first firm evidence is when W C Bristow, reminiscing in the Market Rasen Mail many years later recalled that he had bought his first car in 1921. In 1923 J H Wildsmith was fined 10/- for not having proper lights on his motor car; he had headlights but no sidelights. In August the following year the Market Rasen Mail reported that the Claxby and

District Motor Bus journeyed to Wembley. It started at 6.45am and arrived in Berkhamstead at 5.30pm stopping five times for refreshments. The following day it conveyed the passengers to Wembley and returned to Claxby on the third day. It cost £1 per person and must have been successful because the journey was repeated in September carrying 14 people. This time several of the party went to Wembley on the Friday night for the torchlight tattoo. The evening finished with the audience of 125,000 singing Abide with Me and the National Anthem. What an adventure! If Claxby had a motor bus in 1924 it seems likely that there were a few more cars or motor bikes in the area before that than records suggest. Fred Grantham, electrician of Claxby had a motor bike. He was accused of driving it to the danger of the public at the Oxford Street crossing in Market Rasen in 1924. Fortunately for him the case was dismissed. By this time it is noticeable that non locals were being regularly summonsed for motoring offences so it appears that significant numbers of vehicles were on the roads and that people were travelling some distance.

The roads must have become all the more dangerous with horses and horse drawn vehicles competing for road space with bicycles, motor cars, motor bicycles, motor buses and motor lorries. Claxby soon had experience of this. In July 1926 Mr Maultby, cycling to catch the post at Mr Sharp's corner, collided with a motor car driven by Austin Lee the son of the Rector. The powers that be clearly had no doubt as to the guilty party. The comment in the Market Rasen Mail said Mr Maultby ran into the side of the car so he was evidently cutting the corner! The poor man was taken home and attended by Dr Torrens. In the following year Mr B Bristow with Mr Brant on the pillion had one side of the back forks on his 5hp Omega motorcycle collapse coming down Normanby Hill. It rendered the back brake useless and the bike hard to steer. Mr Bristow was forced to drive into the bank and was scratched and bruised. Mr Brant dislocated the bones in his hand and foot and was unconscious for a time. One has to wonder about driving standards as there were a startling number of accidents affecting Claxby people. There was of course no driving test at this time. In 1928 the Rev. Lee and Mr S Sharp, driving home from Lincoln via Stow, were in collision with a van near Ingham. The car was wrecked and the van badly damaged. The occupants were knocked partly unconscious, shocked, bruised and shaken. The Rev Lee was 71 at the time so had obviously come fairly late to driving. He died later in the year and the report said he had not recovered from his accident. The following month, Mr W C Bristow hit a badger in his car, the force of the collision sending him into the ditch, fortunately with no injuries.

The most tragic case in these early years, recorded in 1938, was that of Mrs E Smith wife of the Rector who was thrown out of the car and died of her injuries. The Rev Smith and his sister in law were less seriously hurt. Even stationary vehicles caused trouble; Eric Smith son of the Claxby station master broke his right forearm trying to start his motor lorry. Of course accidents didn't only happen in the early years of the motor car. In 1954, Aubrey Alan Smith of the Terrace, Claxby drove a lorry loaded with a tree that caught a van going the other way. He was fined £5 for

carrying a load likely to cause danger to other road users. Normanby Hill has been the site of regular accidents. Just before the war a Laws lorry carrying pop had its brakes fail just below St Peter's Cottage. There were broken and unbroken bottles of pop all over the hill. The local children were delighted! In 1974 two boys, Neil Surfleet and James Scott were cycling down the hill in the dark and met a stray beast. They collided as they tried to avoid it and James Scott had a nasty case of concussion with a cracked skull, temporary loss of taste and loss of hearing in his right ear. In winter the hill was even more notorious. The writer well remembers coming down it sideways in her car and smashing into a lorry which itself had skidded across the road at Normanby Halt in the 1970s and others must have had similar experiences. It was not the fault of the conditions when the largest vehicle ever to be stuck on the hill, a steam engine came to a halt in May 1966. Mr Ray Drakes had bought it from Lindsey County Council and collected it from Claxby station yard intending to drive it to Humberston. All went well until it stopped above Normanby Halt. The whole contraption started to roll backwards. He managed to steer it into the bank where it stayed causing much comment until the repair could be carried out. Luckily there were no injuries.



*Ditched steam roller*

Owning a car was still pretty rare in the 1930s and many people were happy to use the motor bus provided by Mr WC Bristow. The story of the Claxby and District Motor Bus Company demonstrates the way in which people of fairly average income living in rural communities became able to visit the rest of the country and even abroad. Mr Bristow owned a car which he used as a taxi. In 1924 when he undertook the trips to Wembley he had a motor bus, bought in about 1923. By 1927 he had bought a FIAT bus, called it the Lindsey Rambler and had built a garage with petrol pumps at the corner of Mulberry Road and Normanby Rise. He used the bus to run regular market day services to Market Rasen via Walesby, Tealby and Willingham, Saturday services to Grimsby and the school run to De Aston at Market Rasen and from Market Rasen to Caistor Grammar School. By 1930 the Market Rasen Mail was reporting on a successful Devonshire Holiday run by Mr Bristow and in 1931 he was granted a licence for all his existing services and excursions and tours to all places previously visited. He was also granted permission to put



*The Lindsey Rambler*

down and take up passengers at Market Rasen and Walesby. Objections to this application, from the Lincoln Road Car Company and the Great Central Railway Company were dismissed. A further application in 1932 to run a series of excursions was also opposed by the railway company on the grounds that he would pick up passengers outside a four mile radius of Claxby. Comments reported in the Market Rasen Mail suggested that the railway's real concern was that the bus service would offer a later return home than the railway. By 1936 Mr Bristow was applying for an additional seventeen excursion licences mainly relatively local but including the Royal Show and the Yorkshire Show. He had support from Tealby, Market Rasen Urban District Council and Lt Col Heneage MP. The Lincolnshire Road Car Company objections were overruled.

The second world war brought immediate petrol rationing and therefore the slowing down of the spread of motor transport. Petrol had to be used for the running of essential businesses and services and the law leant hard on those who abused this. A farmer was fined heavily in Market Rasen. He converted a trip to the market, which was permitted, to a shopping trip which wasn't. He was seen parked outside several shops in King Street.

This shortage of petrol also led to the resurgence of horses being used, certainly on the farm and probably off it as well. Draft horses fetched high prices throughout and after the war. In March 1940 the Market Rasen Mail reported that heavy horse prices were rising and in February 1942 at a sale at Messrs Maultby Brothers' farms in Claxby a mare made 91 guineas, a filly 71 guineas and all horses made upwards of £50. The Fordson tractor also made £90.

The war gave women the chance to undertake jobs not open to them before and transport had its share of pioneers. Even in Claxby the old ways were going. In March 1940 the Market Rasen Mail reported that Miss G M Bristow was the first local woman to secure the official permit to drive a Public Service Vehicle. It also mentioned that Miss L A Drayton had been driving the school bus albeit without an appropriate licence. A week later it had to apologise as Miss Drayton apparently did have her PSV licence. Bus journeys, particularly excursions must also have been much restricted compared with before the war.

After the war the growth in the numbers of motor vehicles resumed albeit slowly. New cars were in short supply. One had to order a car, and there wasn't much

choice as to colour, and wait several months or even years for delivery. Petrol continued to be rationed until well after the war. Despite this the Claxby and District Motor Bus Company resumed its coach holidays, advertising tours of Devon and Cornwall in 1950 and extended them abroad later in the decade, venturing to Switzerland and taking De Aston pupils to Paris for the rugby. However health and safety regulations at home were becoming more restrictive. John Bristow, who had taken over from his father, was told that the petrol pumps at the garage could not be used because they swung over the footpath. Unable to find a solution acceptable to the authorities he decided to close the business down in 1965. Even before this he had withdrawn his market day services in 1963 as they were losing money. This suggests that by this time car ownership had reached a point where most people would rather use their own transport than the local bus.

Caistor RDC campaigned throughout the 1950s and well into the 1960s for improvements in public transport in rural areas and enlisted the help of its MP. Sadly this proved unsuccessful. The Lincoln Road Car Company said it simply wasn't profitable. Subsidies would have been required and it wasn't one of the government's priorities. In any case some experiments locally did not generate much response. As Bristows had found most people wanted to use their own cars to their own timetable. At the end of the century things were much the same.

The railway was no more successful. At the beginning of the century it was pre eminent in long distance goods haulage. Claxby was served by the Great Central Railway Company which was amalgamated into the London and North Eastern Railway in 1923 although it continued to be called the GCRC for some years thereafter. Wilkinson who had the coal business based at Claxby and Usselby Station also hauled building materials and other goods that arrived by train to a number of nearby villages. It was also important for passengers, especially for group outings. Women of the surrounding villages also used the train to take their produce to the weekly market at Lincoln. This was disrupted in 1921 by a strike which stopped the trains. Wilkinsons started an 'emergency run' for the women, collecting them in the morning and bringing them home again. They probably picked them up nearer their homes than the train could do. If the train was under that sort of competition by 1921 it was not surprising that throughout the 1920s when Mr Bristow was establishing his bus company, the railway was nervous of any erosion of its position. Well before the war the Market Rasen Mail was showing concern at the lack of passengers on the railway and warning 'use it or lose it'. Locally Claxby was where the axe was to fall first. In 1959 British Rail, the successor of the LNER announced that it was to close Claxby and Usselby Station. This would save just £430 a year in running costs and £2,000 refurbishment costs for the station buildings. The Caistor RDC and the Parish Council fought a vigorous campaign supported strongly by the MP, Marcus Kimball. Sadly the protests had no effect and the station closed in March 1960. The signal box remained open. It was of course now isolated and perhaps this gave rise to a ghost story which featured in a BBC programme. In 1968 Aubrey

Clark a relief signalman was found dead by natural causes in his signal box by the guard of the early morning tank train. His colleague had a couple of unnerving experiences after that which he could only relate to Aubrey Clark. This was supported by a woman motorist who saw a scooter, Aubrey Clark's mode of transport, pass across her at the railway crossing where there was no road. When the signal box



*Osgodby School Outing at Claxby and Usselby Station*

closed in 1989 the Mail wondered where the ghost would go. Nickerson Coal Company, the successor to Wilkinsons failed to get planning permission for two houses on the station site in 1966 so the station may have been demolished by then, making it all the more spooky.

In 1972 a tragic accident occurred on the railway at the Grange Farm crossing. At that time the only access to the farm was from the A46 across a private level crossing. A young family living at the cottage were killed when their van was struck by the 9.30pm London to Cleethorpes express. The Parish Council meeting a few weeks later decided to wait for the outcome of the enquiry before asking what further safety measures could be instituted.

In the years immediately following the withdrawal of bus services and the closing of the station, travelling shops helped to fill much of the void. In 1962 there were apparently 27 tradesmen coming into the village. The managers of the school caused a furore in the Mail as they tried to persuade each of these tradesmen to contribute 10/- toward the maintenance of the school. In the 1970s Alice Nickson remembers a baker, butcher, grocer, fruiterer and the co-op visiting at least weekly and Michael and Mary Sharp recall also a fishmonger and hardware van selling paraffin. A list of all the travelling shops is included in the chapter Village Organisation, Housing and Services.

Car ownership widened gradually. In an interview in the Market Rasen Mail in 1962 W C Bristow thought that people needed a car. Eileen Wilmot who lived in Claxby House remembers she didn't have a car for her own use until 1972 although she could borrow her father's or husband's for the day if she took them to work first. By the 1980s when most people in the village worked elsewhere some form of transport was essential. To reach Market Rasen a bicycle was sufficient although it was uncomfortable in bad weather but to go further and to be able to return in less than a day was

very difficult. Motor bikes, scooters, cars and vans were more favoured although this often still left the wife at home without transport. At the end of the century few households in the village had only one car. With both husband and wife working and often adult children at home it was more common to have one vehicle per person and young people learnt to drive as soon as possible. The few who didn't drive

relied on taxis or friends or the daily bus, introduced on an experimental basis. Unfortunately this didn't come through the main part of the village and didn't connect with any other services, rail or road in Market Rasen. Another experiment, a weekly bus laid on by Morrisons of Scunthorpe had few takers. It is clear that people are very reluctant to give up any of the convenience that a car brings.

## 5 EDUCATION

For most people in the early 1900s education meant elementary school from the age of five to twelve or fourteen. For a few who passed the qualifying examination, Grammar Schools offered a classically based academic course to age sixteen or eighteen at which time the very fortunate could move on to university. Grammar School had to be paid for. Elementary schooling had only been free from 1891 so free education for five to fourteen year olds was still something of a novelty. Claxby had been fortunate to have had a school from the 1850s and also to have had a schoolmaster of considerable competence who attracted pupils from outside his catchment area. The Market Rasen Mail, recording reminiscences of Miss Bristow, said that the Lusby children walked from Walesby and the Sharps came from Holton le Moor. Their parents must have held him in high regard. By the beginning of the 20th century however he was retired and two and possibly three of his daughters had taken over the school, Miss Fanny Canty as headteacher and Miss Alice and Miss Nellie as assistants. The school log books are available only from 1913 so information for the first twelve years of the century is very limited. Kelly's Directory for 1900 said that there were 63 children in the school and this figure diminished over the next ten years or so. It is therefore quite likely that all three sisters were teaching in the school at the turn of the century and that as numbers fell a third teacher could no longer be justified. In any event in 1915 Miss Fanny Canty left the school to take over as headteacher at Holton le Moor as the headteacher there had joined the army. Miss Alice took over the headship at Claxby and in 1916 there is mention in the log book of Miss M H Canty, the assistant mistress taking the children on a nature walk. In 1918 Miss Fanny returned, but only for a year. On 1st 1919 July Miss Alice signed herself into the log book as headteacher again. Her eldest sister appeared to

have retired a week or so after her 62nd birthday. Miss Alice and Miss Nellie continued until 1928. Miss Nellie appeared in a school photograph dated around 1922. They served the school long and well. An HMI Inspector reporting in 1928 said 'the head teacher and her sister are both retiring after long periods of faithful and earnest service during which they have impressed their refined personalities upon the school to a marked degree'. Miss Alice was 65, Miss Nellie 62. George Surfleet, who was at the school from 1927 remembered a Miss Canty. He said she was quite a disciplinarian, as she probably needed to be to keep control of over 30 pupils aged 8 to 14, many of whom would rather be out in the fields or workshops. In an interview with a correspondent for Lincolnshire Life around 1912 Miss Fanny Canty said that the specialities of the school were carpentry and paper folding. She believed that Claxby was the first school in Lindsey with a mistress in charge to teach carpentry.

Although the school had only two rooms, the larger one had a moveable half screen. It was therefore feasible for two teachers to operate in the one large room. This probably occurred when the mine was in production and the population was at its highest. This could well have carried over into the twentieth century when the three Canty sisters were teaching. There was one further period when numbers rose sharply. In 1932 to 1937 numbers rose to 77 and a third teacher was appointed. Motley Brant who started school in 1935 remembers three teachers including Mrs Curry and Miss Fisher. He also remembers that there were three fires in the school so clearly the original plans had assumed a three class school. Some old pupils can remember the larger classroom being divided into two classes albeit with only one teacher. According to the school records, pupils studied the three 'Rs', history and geography, music, needlework, nature study and drawing. There was mention of paper folding but not of carpentry in the log book. There was also a strong emphasis on religious education which all pupils apparently studied whether Anglican, Methodist or anything else. An inspector from the church visited annually to hear the pupils rehearse their catechism and to question the children on their knowledge of the Bible. They usually passed with flying colours as this extract from the report of 1918 shows, 'the inspection showed ample evidence of careful teaching and training. The children were reverent and answered well in parts of the catechism, prayer book, old and new testaments. The written work was unusually accurate'. The Rector or often his curate attended the school regularly, although some curates were less than reliable, to take assembly and ensure the religious teaching was



*Miss Nellie Canty with one of her classes*

satisfactory. The level of music knowledge expected of teachers and pupils in such a small isolated place was surprising; the inspectors report in 1924 says 'the seniors have voices of good quality and render their songs well but sight reading of music with elementary ideas of staff notation theory needs more attention'.

All the pupils were taught everything, boys certainly learnt needlework or craftwork. Michael Sharp can remember making rugs as late as the 1940s and both he and George Surfleet recall the nature study walks to the Platts, the woods and up on the Wolds. The only exception seemed to be in homemaking which the more senior girls were taught in small groups at the head teacher's house. The school log book records that in June 1914 Ruth Chapman and Annie Barker went to the teacher's home to learn home making and cookery and this continued for several years. Nora Maddison, a pupil from 1919 to 1926, well remembers going to the 'Teacher's House' to learn how to scrub floors, brick by brick, clean silver and brass, cook and many other household tasks. Her needle work classes included cutting out and making up night dresses. There was a sewing machine in the classroom but most of the work was done by hand. By 1929 the log books comments on 10 lessons for the senior girls in mothercraft given by the school nurse. The visits of the nurse and doctor seem to have been of long standing, certainly both were attending from 1913 when the available log books begin and may have dated from 1908 when an act of parliament gave local authorities the right to set up a school medical service. In addition the brighter, older pupils helped teach the young ones for perhaps one lesson a day and the more able were taught quite advanced maths such as algebra in the final years. The teachers must have been in some difficulty to keep all abilities occupied up to age fourteen. Nora Maddison for instance had passed her entrance exam for the grammar school, but because her grandfather couldn't afford to send her, had to stay at Claxby school until she was fourteen.

The resources the staff had were quite small. The yearly estimates for 1914-1915 showed £5.10s 0d for books, stationery and needlework materials and 6/6d for limewashing the out offices and porch and sweeping the walls of the schoolroom and classroom.

Getting to school posed problems for the pupils from time to time. For a long time into the century they were expected to walk to school not only from Claxby but also from Normanby and Usselby. They didn't necessarily use the roads; footpaths criss-crossed the parishes and no doubt the children took the most direct route. Footpaths and tracks across fields would succumb quickly to bad weather and on the whole winters were more severe then. The School log books record many days when few children turned up and sometimes they were so wet they were sent straight home again. Even summers could be wet and stormy. In July 1914 on two separate days only 28 and 29 respectively of the possible total of 44 children turned up and this happened again in 1916 when only 19 pupils attended. Usually however these were isolated occasions. In winter bad weather caused poor attendance more regularly but only rarely did it force the school to close, although in the bad winter of 1947 the school did close down for about

6 weeks. The teachers lived outside the village and couldn't make it. It was not until 1961 that transport was made available for children living in Normanby.

Epidemics had a more serious effect on attendance, on occasion causing the school to close for a week or more. These were much more common in the 1900s to 1930s before any wholesale immunisation was available (except for smallpox). The first year for which we have records of the school, 1913, showed that the school closed for two weeks in March for chickenpox, and for five weeks for whooping cough and ringworm from 21 May to 30 June. Such interruptions occurred at intervals of three to six years until the Second World War when although poor attendance because of sickness was noted it didn't seem to lead to the closing of the school. Influenza, measles and mumps all ravaged the school at various times. Five weeks were lost to mumps in February and March 1925. To try and protect themselves from these long closures, schools were very quick to exclude children with infectious complaints. In 1919, 1920 and 1927 children with impetigo were excluded and in 1929 three with scabies. Teachers were not immune to illness and in a small school of only two or three staff this had a serious effect. Indeed in December 1920 the school had to close because both teachers were sick and when one was absent for a long time as Miss Tomlinson was with scarlet fever for 6 weeks in 1930 the pressure on the other teacher must have been considerable. Supply teachers were sometimes sent but were not always much appreciated. On one occasion a young man "of no particular ability" was brought in from Lincoln to help.

Children were absent for other reasons and the school attendance officers were kept pretty busy although Claxby's record, with one exception in the 1930s, was good. Many parents kept children at home to help with siblings and to work on the farm or smallholding. This despite the fact that the school holidays were linked with harvest and potato picking times. Holiday dates were not set centrally. It was left to the school managers, in effect the Chairman, no doubt prompted by the local landowners and farmers, to announce when the school would break up for harvest. This was anytime in August or September for the grain harvest and usually October for potato picking. The Rector would attend to announce the closure of the school with immediate effect. No chance to plan a holiday. Even later in the century although holiday dates might have been agreed with the education office they still fell at the traditional times. As late as the 1950s children had holidays to help with the potato harvest.

Parents who kept their children away from school were prosecuted although it is likely that the school turned a blind eye when there was a serious crisis at home. No doubt the school attendance officer also issued warnings before considering prosecution. Nonetheless the Market Rasen Mail routinely reported such cases in schools in the district and in December 1925, W J Marsh a labourer living at the Grange, Claxby was fined 10/- for neglecting to send his children to school. His four children had only managed to record 252 attendances out of 452. Unfortunately this didn't deter him. He was fined a further 10/- in December 1926 when his children had only managed 363 out of 804



attendances. The Mail said that the children were treated well at school and given warm cocoa. Not everyone thought education for all was a good thing. Reminiscing in the Mail in 1938 one elderly farmworker said, perhaps with his tongue in cheek, 'they get such a good education that they don't want to tackle any kind of work' He himself had only gone to school in the winters. He spent the summers 'tenting cows along the local lanes'.

The school seemed to have been lucky in its staff for the early part of the century and certainly they stayed for many years giving the children great stability. Sadly, after the Misses Canty left in 1928 the school suffered from a high turnover of head teachers. Miss Vickers took over the headship with a 'monitress' who was replaced by Miss Emily Tomlinson. Miss Tomlinson stayed for 9 years with a long absence in 1929/30 with scarlet fever. Miss Vickers however only stayed for 2 years and two temporary headteachers, Lily Drayton and Jessie Saynor, filled in successively until a permanent headteacher, Miss Curry, arrived in October 1932. In May 1933 the school attendance officer said it had the poorest attendance record in the district. Some absence was due to whooping cough but most was for trivial reasons and he threatened some parents with a summons. By this time the number on roll had rocketed to 77 so it is hardly surprising that the two staff were having problems. The

school inspector's report in September 1933 commented on the deterioration in the school but expressed a hope that with the arrival of the new headteacher matters would improve. He gave some details of what he found 'The infant room, with accommodation for 17 held 28 and the main room held 43. The children were under good control and well disposed to work. There was evidence of more than average mental power and the present deficiencies are due to bad grounding in subjects of fundamental importance. When the headteacher took over she ordered new stationary. It took six months for it to arrive.' This may not have been the fault of the education authority or even the supplier. Miss Curry recorded, no doubt with great frustration that a requisition she sent to the Rector on 30 September 1933 arrived at the Education Office 16 May 1934.

The rise in numbers justified a supplementary teacher who arrived in October 1933. In the next two years there were two temporary teachers who between them covered only part of the time. Phyllis Fisher arrived in July 1935. By this time the school roll was falling and when Miss Tomlinson left in 1937 she was not replaced. Miss Fisher, later Mrs Walker, continued at the school for several years with some breaks for maternity leave and illness and is mentioned in the log book until 1949. There were other assistant teachers who stayed for some years including Miss



*Claxby School 1949*

*Back Row left to right, Michael Sharpe, Muriel Rose, Eddie Prosser, Pearl Robinson, David Smith, Joyce Carter, Douglas Embleton, Neville Fieldsend, Jennifer Hather, Brian Smith, Mary Jacklin, Charles Cade, Hazel Surfleet, John Robinson*

*Middle Row, Desmond Smith, Michael Owen, Annie Carter, John Cade, Betty Brumby, Michael Carter, Billy Hather, George Brumby, Kathleen Clark, David Prosser, Betty Owen, David Clark, Roy Jacklin*

*Front Row, Colin Brumby, Freda Rose, Pat Carter, Terry Carter*

Dales from 1950 to 1956 and Mrs Barton who started in 1964 and effectively remained until the school closed in 1971. Headteachers with some exceptions lasted less well. The school had eighteen changes of head in the forty three years between Miss Alice Canty retiring and the school closing and this includes eight years by Mrs Curry, seven years each by Miss Cooper and Mrs Evans and five years by Mrs Norman nee Robyns. This compares with only three headteachers from 1850 to 1928. The school may have also had the help of occasional or specialist teachers. Miss Esther Downman who died aged 92 in 1960 was reported as having been 'one of our school teachers for years'. She may have been a needlework teacher but her name appears nowhere in the school log books.

Pupil numbers fluctuated widely within the year as children moved in and out of the area with their parents. Each April when the statute hirings took place in the local towns, a proportion of farmworkers moved to new employers. This must have caused serious disruption to both the pupils and the school. If the numbers of pupils leaving and joining were about the same the school roll would be unchanged and we would not be aware of the difficulties the school was coping with. However in some years there were big changes; in 1915 and 1921 there were five extra children after Easter, in 1923 fifteen new children appeared and in 1932, the year in which the school leaving age was raised to fifteen, the number of children on roll suddenly jumped from around fifty to seventy seven. By no means all of this would have been due to the extra year's tuition. In 1937 children over eleven moved to the senior school in Market Rasen other than those who passed the qualifying examination who went either to De Aston which was a boys' grammar school or Caistor Grammar which was mixed. Twenty children therefore left in the Summer of 1937. The fluctuations diminished thereafter although numbers did rise in 1939 when fifteen evacuees arrived from Leeds. Imagine what a different world these children from the industrial heart of a large city met in a small isolated village. Information in the years after the war is less comprehensive but it seems that numbers in the school fell to twenty seven in 1944, rose to thirty two in 1948 and hovered between twenty and thirty until 1961 when they rose steadily to fifty three in 1964 before dropping again to the mid twenties when it closed.

Until 1937 the great majority of children started and completed their education at the elementary school. A few passed the qualifying examination for the Grammar School either in Market Rasen or Caistor. Girls were at a considerable disadvantage. De Aston was a boys only school and Caistor Grammar was mixed. Girls, therefore, had fewer places to aim for. The Market Rasen Mail in 1944 commented that girls had only a one in four chance compared to boys. This imbalance remained until 1972 when De Aston became co-educational. In 1974 it became comprehensive and the old senior school was closed. The school log book records some but probably not all of the children who went on to a grammar school. The first record is in 1937 when Leonard Maultby went to De Aston, in 1941 Motley Brant also went to De Aston and in 1943 his brother John followed him. In 1943 Daphne Embleton

went to Caistor Grammar and in 1946 four children passed the qualifying examination; in 1947 two boys went to De Aston, in 1949 Jennifer Hotter passed the examination for Caistor Grammar and in 1961 two more boys went to De Aston. The very first record of examination success was in 1915 when Sam Sharp and Ben Bristow passed the examination qualifying them to begin a pupil teachership. At that time a student could learn to be a teacher 'on the job'. Sam Sharp passed the Cambridge Senior Exam in 1920 and went on to become a headteacher at St Michael's School Louth and the organist at St James, Louth.. Ben Bristow left the district to teach in north London.

The school started to come under threat of closure in 1946 when it was listed as being due for closing. The managers and Parish Council mounted a strong resistance campaign. This was the first evidence of any resistance to authority and it was successful in the short term. It probably caused the headmistress to leave prematurely. As soon as the school was listed she applied for another job in the



*Claxby School 1970*

*Back Row, left to right, Mrs Barton, Helen Johnson, Mark Wilmot, Sarah Cade, Pauline Wheatley, Linda Wallace, Neil Surfleet, Mr McNeish*

*Middle Row, Mary Bristow, Lesley Swan, Jane Johnson, Michael Wallace, Mark Borrige, David Thompson, Nigel Borrige*

*Front Row, Diane Johnson, Kate Tolliday, Sally Johnson, Deborah Smith, Lynette Sharp, Adrian Smith, Donna Sharp*

Cotswolds. The listing may also have been an excuse for the only piece of serious vandalism recorded up to that time. All the windows were smashed over a weekend. The school had to be closed for a day for repairs to be carried out. There was nothing missing and no sign of entry. The threat of closure returned in 1964 but was again postponed. Finally, in 1969, when there were only twenty two pupils on roll, the threat returned yet again. This time closure seemed inevitable. At a public meeting in October no objections were raised against the closure but only about the teaching arrangements at Holton Le Moor where the children were due to go. The process of closure continued and in December 1971 Claxby School closed after over one hundred and fifteen years. It had given its pupils an adequate and frequently a good basic education. It introduced them to music, encouraged them

to look at the world around them and gave them some practical domestic skills. It taught them the tenets of the Christian faith and it seemed to have received children from a fairly wide social class. Its closure had a significant influence on the village. Mothers (it was nearly always mothers then) no longer walked the village streets, taking the children to school or met with friends while waiting for school to close in the afternoon. Children now left the village at five. No longer was the school the focus of activity. It was a body blow for the village

An effort was made in 1922 to set up an Evening School in the village school. English and commercial arithmetic were offered on Mondays and Thursdays. Classes were open to those over fourteen. There is no record of how popular or successful this experiment was. There were no adult education facilities in the village at the end of the century but for those with transport opportunities were available in Market Rasen and other towns in the area.

## 6 LEISURE, ENTERTAINMENT AND SPORT

In the early years of the 20th century people seem to have spent most of their leisure time in the village. Of course they hadn't the means to leave very easily, only the wealthiest families had horses other than heavy horses and bicycles did not appear to be commonplace nor were they ideal in bad weather. The railway could have been used to get to Market Rasen and elsewhere but there is no record that it was much used for leisure. Of course villagers did leave the parish, Samuel Jordan of Claxby was fined 2/6d for being drunk on licensed premises, the Red Lion Market Rasen. He admitted to having had a glass or two adding that it was a slippery night! People went out of the village for other celebrations, John Robinson of Claxby travelled to the Lincolnshire Show in July 1900 to receive a prize in a rather bizarre competition open to labourers having brought up and placed out to service the greatest number of children without having received parochial relief and not having occupied more than half an acre of land. He won second prize; he had seventeen children, brought up sixteen and put thirteen out to service. One wonders what the first prize winner had achieved! Probably one of the highlights of the year for many of the young people would have been the annual Sunday school outing, usually to Cleethorpes or Mablethorpe. Market Rasen also had two celebrations a year. The Hiring fair in Spring was a social event, with stalls and fairground rides. Many families would have attended whether or not the man was seeking work. In September Market Rasen also had its feast. The school log books note that attendance was usually down on feast days. Both the hiring fair and feast day remained in existence in modified form at the end of the century. They had continued to be popular and attract villagers for more than a hundred years. It was at the successor of the Hiring Fair in 1945 that Philip Surfleet was tragically killed. He had attended with a friend and although the story at the inquest was confused the coroner thought that he had stood up in the swing boats and had been tipped out.

The lack of transport, long working hours and for most,

In 1925 the School Managers decided to adopt the Lindsey County Council free library scheme and in November the Mail reported that the free library was open for half an hour on Monday evenings at the Institute room. Despite its home being the WI room the library seemed to have been under the control of the school. There are records of Miss Canty leaving the school during daytime to oversee the exchange of books by the County Council. The County authorities must have been satisfied with the take up of the service because in 1953 a speaker at the WI monthly meeting described the measures taken to provide villages with a comprehensive library service and said that the amount of reading in villages was increasing. There were still records of the books being changed at the WI rooms in 1959. This must have been about the last time the exchange occurred. In 1960 a mobile library service started which continued to the end of the century. It was attended faithfully by a small number of people who were concerned that low usage might lead to the service being withdrawn.

little money could have led to a very impoverished life for villagers but the regular reports of events organised in the village tell of a community enjoying itself and supporting itself whenever possible. Many of the events recorded were associated with the church and the chapels. The Market Rasen Mail had frequent reports of socials organised in the Methodist halls and schoolrooms. On New Years Day 1900 Mr and Mrs Hewitt, staunch Methodists who lived at Langham House gave members of the Wesleyan choir and their friends, forty in all, a splendid sit down supper followed by an evening of singing and games. This was an annual event. The Church of England wasn't to be outdone in the matter of great suppers. In 1902 the Rector Canon Andrews entertained his choirmen and bellringers to a 'splendid supper of good old Christmas cheer, roast beef, and plum pudding after which they adjourned to the servants hall for singing, smoking and handbell ringing'. On the previous Tuesday the 'esteemed vicar' had entertained the choir boys and girls to a sumptuous tea. In June the same year he hosted the Market Rasen Girls Friendly Society Festival at the Rectory.

Many of the social events were concerned with raising money for the chapels or for other official charitable causes but sometimes they were the result of a tragic local event. In 1901 there were no state benefits, only poor relief, which separated men, women and children in the workhouses so anyone who had had an accident or whose family were ill would have been very apprehensive. In February of that year Claxby had a social event in the Schoolroom to raise money for the widow and children of William Lowery of Holton le Moor and other villages did likewise. £2 9s was raised in Claxby. This wasn't a one off either. In 1909 the Market Rasen Mail reported 'The ringers of the bells in Claxby parish wished to mark in a practical form their sympathy and respect for F Sharp, one of their members who recently received serious injuries in an accident. They organised a social gathering to raise 'pecuniary benefit for the loss and expense sustained by his inability to work'. A hundred of his

friends and neighbours from Claxby, Normanby and Owersby participated in a social gathering of songs, piano playing and solos. Mr Osgodby of Owersby brought the house down with his amusing songs. Bagatelle and other games and dances ended the evening. Liberal subscriptions were sent by the chief parishioners and £4 15s 6d was given by the Rector to Mr Sharp'.

Some events were of a serious nature. In December 1900 Mr Storey of Holton gave a lantern lecture on Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress and the life of Dr Livingstone. Some were more mixed; as part of harvest celebrations in 1901 Mr Cooper of Market Rasen lectured on the life of John Oxtoby, a locally famous Methodist preacher, but this was followed by the sale of fruit and vegetables and a bran tub after which everyone sat down to a coffee supper.

All of these events were well attended and some went on until quite late. In 1921 an invitation dance organised by the dance committee in the schoolroom enjoyed twenty one up to date dances until midnight. Socials, dances, entertainments and particularly whist drives were the staple of the village and frequently these were run in association with Normanby le Wold. Over the years a great deal of money was raised for various good causes, Gladys Bristow organised an annual whist drive for the Lindsey Association for the Blind for many years. The football club and the cricket club raised funds through whist drives and dances. The Women's Institute had regular whist and beetle drives and throughout the first forty or fifty years of the century the Hospital Association relied on such events to meet their quota. In 1915 a social raised £7 7s on behalf of the Belgian Relief Fund 'a record for any local gathering of a like nature'. The collection was sent to Mr B S Rowntree in York. One wonders why this was as there were refugees in the area. Nettleton had raised a substantial sum for clothing for Belgian refugees in the Caistor Union District. It may have been because a village woman, Sarah Littledike, worked for the Rowntrees in York. The school was used for many of these events as was the Wesleyan schoolroom and after 1924, the WI rooms, now the village hall. All of them included supper or some other opportunity for eating. The women of the village must have been kept busy supplying the wherewithal.

Some of the entertainments were very ambitious. The Market Rasen Mail reports a number of such events. In May 1907 there was dancing, recitations, waxworks, a piano solo and songs all on the same occasion and in 1923 a fete offered bowling for a pig and cockerel, skittles, guessing the weight of a cake, a flower stall, tennis tournament and athletic sports. All of this was followed by a concert of vocal and instrumental music by the Market Rasen Orchestra and a whist drive. In 1925 the lucky participants were dancing to music broadcast by the BBC. Cinderella was performed in 1926 to an audience of 260 in aid of the RNIB. By 1930 the entertainment included farce, a sketch, songs, monologues, dialogues and a fairy play. Who was left to form the audience when so many must have been performing?

The village was no doubt also able to enjoy vicariously a private party organised by Austin Lee, the brilliant, controversial son of the Rector Rev. N Lee for the Countess

Tasha Pahlavi a notable Russian beauty when guests from Edinburgh and Cambridge as well as from the locality enjoyed charades and dancing in the Rectory. This was echoed just after the second world war when Kathleen Ferrier was entertained at the Rectory by Corinne Brant's parents.

National events, royal weddings, coronations and jubilees gave a good excuse for village celebrations. There must have been a village celebration for the coronation in 1902 of King Edward VII as there is a photograph of a very large gathering in the Park but there is no report in either the Rasen Mail or parish records. The first record of such a celebration was in 1911 for the coronation of George V. A church service in the morning was followed by a full programme of sporting events in the afternoon and tea. These were joint celebrations with Normanby and Usselby. The total expenditure was £23 10s 5p and the balance was sent to Market Rasen Cottage Hospital. There is no further mention of festivities for national events until 1937, although the school had a day's holiday for the wedding of Princess Mary in 1922. There may have been celebrations for the Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935. The Parish Council called a public meeting to discuss the matter and invited Normanby villagers to attend. However although the log book said that the school closed for two days there is no record of what events took place. The schoolchildren also had a day's holiday for the wedding of the Duke of Gloucester in 1935. Edward VIII abdicated before his coronation, but the village did make something of the coronation of his brother George VI in April 1937. The parish made a door to door collection to raise funds and in May held a splendid day of festivities. It began with a ring of 720 doubles on the church bells. A service was held at 2.30pm and then everyone went to the sports field for children's sports (this would have been either near the station or behind the Rectory). Tea for the children in the Wesleyan chapel and for two hundred adults in the school should have been followed by adult sports but heavy rain postponed these until the Tuesday evening. Coronation mugs were given to each child and the day finished with community singing and games. School holidays were given in 1948 for the King and Queen's silver wedding and for the birth of Prince Charles but the next reported village celebration was in 1953 for the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. There are a number of people who can still remember this. The weather was awful so it was held in the 65 foot long barn at Grange Farm, Normanby. Bristows coaches transported people up the hill. The barn was lavishly decorated. Celebrations began as usual with a packed service this time at Normanby church. The children were given souvenir mugs, took part in a fancy dress competition and then 260 people sat down to a ham and tongue tea. Because it was so wet the bonfire was set alight with waste tractor oil and then everyone settled down to dancing and watching television until midnight. Mr Brant was quoted 'it was a thundering good do. The rain didn't upset us one bit. Even our bonfire burned so brightly it lit up the whole district'. The school children had three extra days holiday. In May 1960 the Claxby and Normanby Social Club held a wedding day party with races for the

children, side-shows, refreshments and dancing to celebrate Princess Margaret's wedding to Anthony Armstrong Jones. In 1977 for the Queen's Silver Jubilee the village had a garden party for the children which many adults attended in the garden of the Old Smithy. Each child was given a crown piece from the parish council, presented by Joan Mostyn Lewis. Trevor and Penny Lyle had a party for the village for the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer in 1981 when all children were given a crown piece especially struck for the occasion.

In 1995 the village celebrated the centenary of the parish council. A week long series of events began with a fete, continued with a village walk, a talk on the history of the villages of Claxby and Normanby by Rex and Joan Russell and a musical evening led by the Market Rasen and District Choir and ended with a barbecue hosted by Trevor and Penny Lyle. The church had a flower festival lasting the whole week and a quarter peal of Bob Doubles was rung on the church bells.

Finally, to mark the millennium the village held a tree planting ceremony in the playing field in December 1999 when the village Millennium oak and five old Lincolnshire fruit trees were planted. In addition two local landowners agreed to plant a number of native trees in the hedgerows. Some residents joined with Normanby le Wold for a bonfire on the playing field on New Year's Eve, an echo of the close links between the two villages over the previous two hundred years or more. At the request of the majority of the village Claxby's own party was held over until the summer of 2000 when a roast pig supper and party was held at Lysaghts Social Club.



*Millennium Tree Planting Ceremony*

Probably the event that gave Claxby the most publicity in recent years was the exhibition held in 1968. This had two precursors. In 1963 the Women's Institute displayed fine embroidery on vestments used in Roman Catholic churches in North Lincolnshire. Miss Young who had won a papal medal for her work gave a talk and the art needlework class of the Grimsby College of Further Education were invited to supper at the WI. In 1966 a much more ambitious exhibition was conceived principally by Mrs Smith the then president of the Claxby and Normanby WI. This consisted of examples of a range of modern stitchcraft together with some silver work. In addition there were flower displays in the church. The Market Rasen Mail commented that 'it exceeds anything of a similar kind attempted in Lincolnshire for many years'.

This must have whetted the appetite of many in the village to try an even bigger exhibition and 'Claxby 68' was born. As this included many who were not members of the WI it could fairly be called a village event. The exhibition was divided into sections and one person in the village was responsible for preparing each one, for instance Joan Mostyn Lewis took responsibility for the Victoriana exhibition. This was staged in the cottage now refurbished and called Corner House Farm. It was then dilapidated and hadn't changed for many years. The men's, women's and children's clothes were displayed on dummies arranged in lifelike positions together with Victorian accessories. But this was only part of the exhibition. There was a large display of embroidery, pre reformation catholic vestments, jewellery, ceramics, copper and silver work. The Market Rasen Flower Club decorated the church. Their theme was the Resurrection and incorporated a Noah's Ark nearly 70 years old. The exhibition was a major event in the county. Traffic police were called in to organise the numbers of people expected to attend and there were two policemen on point duty, probably for the only time in Claxby's history. The opening was by Mrs Nicholson of the London School of Fashion Design and over 4,000 people attended during the four days that 'Claxby 68' was open.

There was one further similar event in 1973 when Mrs Smith organised exhibitions of painting, embroidery and flowers but although successful it was not on the same scale as 'Claxby 68'.

Many of the social events of the first sixty years or so of the century were instigated by or associated in some way with the church or chapels. By the late 1950s they were playing a far smaller role in the life of the village and clubs started to be formed. In the 1960s and 70s the Claxby and Normanby Social and Sports Club organised regular socials or dances for the village. These were usually held in the school and were well attended. Sometimes there was dancing to the Optimists and sometimes to taped compilations of dance music. This was arranged by Bill Thompson who had set up the Optimists, a group comprising himself on saxophone, Peter Surfleet on trumpet and Tom Johnson on drums. He also made the tape compilations and played the organ. He and his wife brought drinks, crisps and ice cream so that the dancers could sustain their energy. Bill was a great supporter of the village. At one time he even bought a demountable building he hoped to erect as a village hall but, unable to find a suitable site, had to sell it after a few years. The dances were popular for a time but by the end of the 60s that generation had children to care for and so were unable to go out as readily. The next generation were either not sufficiently numerous or simply looking for different diversions and the social club fell into disuse.

Also in the 1960s there were sufficient interested youngsters to form a youth club. Under the leadership of Tim Woods with the help of his wife Pauline, Angela Moss and others in the village it flourished for a time in the old gardener's cottage at the Rectory. There was no electricity in the building so it was lit with candles which probably made it a bit spooky, possibly dangerous and all the more attractive. The youth club was still in existence in the early



*St. John's Ambulance Cadets 1968*

*Included in this picture are:-*

*T Smith, Mrs Langford, Vi Manson, Catherine Wheatley, C Belton, Dr. Reilish, Susan Surfleet, L. Fishwick, Reg Pickering, Peter Smith, Julie Smith, Stewart Maultby, Richard Charman, Andrew Surfleet, Gillian Bristow, Brian Wheatley, Susan Johnson, Pauline Wheatley, Mary Lou Wilmot, Robert Johnson, Marion Bristow, Katherine Johnson*

70s when the village converted the school into a village hall but it didn't continue much longer because in 1975 the hall had to be closed as neither the Social Club, the Hillside Club nor the youth club were operating. There was an attempt to form a junior youth club in 1974 for over 4 year olds on a Saturday afternoon. The intention was for the mothers to supervise it on a rota basis but this didn't appear to last very long. A further attempt to set up a youth club in the village hall was made in early 1997 but in July 1998 the parish council minutes reported that it had been unsuccessful.

The pensioners in the village had their own Hillside Club which met regularly for about 10 months of the year, closing for January and February. They met in the WI rooms for

talks, songs, tea and socialising, with occasional outings. Each year they had a Christmas party and on one occasion they were entertained by the youth club. On another Bill Thompson and the Optimists played, K C Barr sang and then led community singing. The Hillside Club seemed to run from about 1969 to 1975. There is no mention in the Rasen Mail of any activities after that date

Active about the same time as the youth club and the Hillside club was the Normanby St Johns Ambulance Cadets. Its meetings were held in the school. It may have been formed because the Rector at the time Rev Gill Webber was the St John's chaplain but whatever its provenance it had a substantial membership for the size of the two villages. In 1968 the Rasen Mail printed a picture of the cadets showing 9 nurse cadets, 3 ambulance cadets, 5 juniors and 8 probationers. A couple of years later there was a further enrolment and it appeared to have continued for few years but was not included in the list of organisations that might use the village hall when the village took over the school.

Two other active clubs in the village, the WI and the Mothers Union are mentioned in the chapters on Life for Women and Religion respectively

Although the village celebrated great national events throughout the century, there were far fewer regular social gatherings at the end than was common in earlier years of the century. This reflects the looser collaboration between residents, the lack of the common interest of agriculture and the changing age structure of the population. Although there is no possibility of a return to the close relationships of the past, the village could benefit from occasional opportunities to meet for support and friendship and a fostering of a sense of community. Some residents have made attempts to undertake this and deserve support.

Sport also formed a large part of leisure activity for many in the village. The first reference in the Market Rasen Mail was in May 1906 when a fund raising dance was held to buy



*Cricket on Claxby Playing Field*

a cricket set for the youth of the village. The first record of the cricket club in the Market Rasen Mail was in April 1923 when at the Annual General Meeting members decided to carry on with the club and had a balance of 16/8d in hand so it had obviously been running for a year or so. The driving force at this time was Mr Septimus Smith the station master who acted as secretary. Mr A Sharp was the chairman.

There were reports of each Annual General Meeting but the team seems at the time to have been less than competitive. In May 1925 Claxby lost to Caistor by forty runs. It was however reliable. In May 1926 the team went to play Caistor Grammar School and no doubt members were upset when their opponents didn't turn up because of bad weather. Telephones were not common at the time. In August of the same year there was some rejoicing when their innings against Waddingham reached over a hundred runs for the first time, although they were defeated. Records of the cricket team in the Mail are inconsistent. It seemed that the team was probably playing until 1935 or even up to the war. It is likely that there were no matches from 1939 to 1945 or 46 but there is no record in the paper until 1954. Again the reports are scanty but there was an article in 1959 complimenting the 'enterprising village of Claxby' on its new pitch and pavilion. In the same year the club registered three matches and two wins in one of which Michael Sharp made a 'fighting innings'. For several years thereafter the correspondent records an increasing number of matches. Claxby was involved in a match that made the Guinness Book of Records. The team played Osgodby in June 1960 and made 50 but Osgodby's only runs came from 4 byes. The Rasen Mail recorded results for the cricket team until 1966 and there followed a gap of over 20 years. In 1990, stimulated by the success of the Coach House indoor cricket league and encouraged by Ian Forster who sponsored the laying of a new wicket at the playing field, Claxby Cricket Club entered a team in the Burton Hunt League. In its second season it finished third in the Lincoln League fourth division and fourth in its third season. In 1993 the team were promoted to the third division, to the second in 1996 and the first in 1998. It played for one year, 1999, in the first division and then merged with South Kelsey Cricket Club and ceased to play in Claxby. For the last few years of the 1990s only a few members of the team lived in Claxby.

In 1924 there was mention of a tennis club. At the time the club had been in existence for more than a year because it decided to reduce the subscription from 5/- to 2/6. The following year they partially enclosed the court which they believed 'would be of great convenience'. It recorded wins in 1925 against Middle Rasen and Owersby and was able to make a dig at the cricket team who had scored only eight runs at a recent match, five of which were extras. Tennis tournaments were held as part of village events but these were probably played on courts at the Rectory and Claxby House. There was no further reference to the club. The Market Rasen Mail did say that Miss N Sharpe of Claxby took part in a tennis tournament in Market Rasen 1936.

There are still many in the village who can recall the exploits of the Claxby Giants in the 1950s but there was a football club in the village before the Second World War. In

February 1924 there was a meeting of the club at the station when it was stated that Claxby had one of the best grounds in the district. There was no other mention in the Mail until 1935 when the team beat North Owersby. No doubt the club closed during the war but was restarted afterwards and its glory years were between 1949 and 1957. In these eight years Claxby United Football Club won the East Barkwith Village League Division I at least three times, the West Wold League once, the Victor Cup three times and three further trophies. They were nicknamed the Claxby Giants not only because many of them were allegedly over six feet tall but because of their great success. They recruited members from a number of local villages and had a devoted group of supporters who followed them to their away matches by Bristow's bus and supplied them with coffee in flasks. In



*Claxby Giants 1948-49  
D Blanchard, T Johnson, P C Thomas  
C Surfleet, J Surfleet, C Cade, B Adams, J Anfield  
K Cade, E Dukes, N O Wilmot, N Wilmot*

1951 they had enough members to run a reserve team as well. At an end of season party at Market Rasen the team received a warm ovation from 100 football players when they were presented with three cups for the season. Their record in the League that year was; played 19, won 16 drew 1 and lost 2. The club raised money from occasional whist drives and other such events and they joined with the Woman's Institute at least once, in 1960, to raise sufficient money to fund a big children's party.

After these exploits the club tried to move to a more competitive league but in the first year had a series of defeats. Perhaps, as must happen in many smaller clubs, a few key players were no longer performing as well, were just getting a bit too old or had other commitments. Whatever the reason the team ceased to play in any formal league and their name disappeared from the papers until 1963 when the club advertised for friendly matches. It rejoined the local league in the following year. The 1960s team was not as successful as their predecessors had been. In its first season it lost a number of matches and languished in the bottom half of the East Barkwith League. The following year it won the Victor Cup but was well down in the League. In 1966 the team was so keen to play its cup match that they played on four inches of frozen snow and beat Market Rasen Reserves 4-2. They went on to win the Innes Cup that year.

The next successful season recorded was 1968/69 when the team won the Challenge Cup but could do no better



*Innes Cup Winners 1966*

*Back Row, left to right, Colin Bates, Dave Clark, Mike Owen, John Sharpe, Charlie Cade, Nev Fieldsend, Bill Wright-Thompson (sec.), Dick Surfleet*  
*Front Row, Nelson Wilmot, John Cade, Mike Sharp, Pete Surfleet, Dick Heath*

than sixth out of a league of nine. This was still a creditable performance for a small club but it seemed that this second generation was not as consistent as the Claxby Giants. In 1971/72 the team lost in the final of the Innes Cup. It disappeared from the league tables in 75/76 but reappeared in 78/79 for one season only. This is the last reference to football in Claxby in the twentieth century

The first sports field was near the railway, on the Claxby side of the line. In 1924 the secretary of the cricket club was

instructed to thank Mr Abraham for the use of his field. In the same year the *Rasen Mail*, reporting on a meeting of the football club, said that 'Claxby has one of the best sportsgrounds in the district'. It is possible but that both clubs used the same ground and that the tennis court was also on this field. Tennis Club subscriptions were paid to Mr T Smith at the station. He may have been the son of the station master who was himself a keen sportsman. It then moved to fields behind the Rectory where the cricket square was kept clear from cattle by an electric fence. The outfield must have been messy! When the football team was reborn in 1949 it played behind the Rectory, next to the cricket field but moved within a season or two to a field next to Wilkinsons coal yard at the station. The next generation football team, in the 1960s played in a field behind Claxby House Farm outbuildings. Only in the late 1960s did the sports field become established on its present site. The *Mail* records in 1966 that the sports club was making steady progress towards amassing sufficient money to buy and prepare the field with the help of a 30% grant from the Playing Fields Association. It was however the Parish Council who signed the conveyance and who held the deeds and who, when the sports club fell onto hard times in 1976 took over responsibility for the field. This caused some divisiveness over the years. At the end of the century there was no organised sport being held on the playing field but it is there as an open space for children to play safely and may once again be used for football or cricket.

## 7 LIFE FOR WOMEN

Women's lives changed more in the twentieth century than in any previous period. In the early years of the century and in remote villages like Claxby options for young women were severely limited. There was no tradition here of local cottage industries, such as the straw bonnet making in Luton. Most villages had a dressmaker and milliner but these may not have been full time jobs, being more probably a supplement to the household income for a married woman, particularly in very small communities. Domestic service was the most common occupation for single women. In Claxby there were a number of big houses and farms such as the Rectory, Claxby House and Normanby House which would have employed servants. Michael Sharp's mother worked for Mrs Byron at Normanby House before she married Cyril Sharp in the late 1920s. Joyce Sharp whose parents lived in the Terrace worked for Miss Abrahams at Risby Manor in the late 1930s. No doubt Bayons Manor and Brocklesby Hall among others would have drawn a number of local girls. In addition the fever hospital in Osgodby Woods would also have needed both domestic workers and nursing staff. When Mildred Coulson married in 1903 she was described as a hospital nurse living in Claxby. Most women working as domestic servants would have lived in, particularly at the bigger, more distant houses and would have come home for the very limited free time they were allowed. The fever hospital was close enough for daily attendance. Of course one daughter was expected to stay at home to look after her ageing parents and her options

were even more limited when they died. If women wanted to try anything different they had to leave the village. Sarah Littledike went to York and worked for many years at the Pavilion for Mrs Seebohm Rowntree and reached a position of some seniority but we don't know her exact job. Miss P Bristow left the village to work for the National Children's Home in Horncastle. Some women became teachers but they had to stop on marriage. Few had a long term career that they could continue after marriage as is common today.

In the early years of the twentieth century most married women and mothers stayed at home although Mrs Canty, mother of several children, assisted her husband by teaching needlework at Claxby School and sometimes a woman kept the shop as did Mrs Crawford early in the century and Mrs Sharp later. Life for the wife and mother would have been difficult although she probably wouldn't have expected anything else. Firstly she would have had many more children than is the norm today; in 1915 Mrs John Richardson age 41 died six weeks after the birth of her baby leaving her husband with twelve children, eleven of them under twelve. As late as 1943 Annie Blanchard of Lloyds Farm Cottages was reported as having twelve children. The tradition of large families survived longer in places like Claxby than in urban areas. Secondly there were no household appliances and very few people could afford servants, certainly Mrs Richardson couldn't, her husband was a platelayer and neither could Mrs Blanchard. Heating and cooking would have been by coal or wood fires and this



continued until well after the Second World War. Kitty Combs and Pam Whitwell, both born Cade, collected wood from Claxby Wood in the 1950s. Caistor Rural District Council congratulated itself on the new model closed cooking and heating ranges that it installed in its council houses built in the late 1940s. When the women complained that they weren't effective the council said they were too conservative and even if they were offered training they would waste the time gossiping to each other!! In 1954 the council removed some of these stoves, admitting they were too small. Cleaning was equally laborious. There were only brooms and brushes for sweeping and no detergents; soap came in hard coarse blocks. Washing would have been a nightmare by our standards. The whole of the day was given over to it. Quantities of water would have been boiled on the range, (some houses would have had a wash house with a copper solely for this purpose and if it leaked - catastrophe) scrubbing brushes and posers would have been wielded and then wet washing would have been put through wringers and hung outside if the weather were fine or all over the house, creating steam and a dank atmosphere, if it were wet. Once they were dry, flat irons, heated on the range would have been used. There were no easy care fabrics, cotton, wool and linen and possibly rayon were all that were available. It was not until the 1960s and 70s that easy care fabrics became generally available. The first mention of no iron cotton appeared in the Mail in 1956. Some lucky women would have been able to afford to have a washerwoman but this would only have applied to the few. It was of course an opportunity for some women to earn a few pence extra for the household budget.

Electricity and some electrical appliances were available nationally well before the second world war, Fred Grantham of Claxby, when summonsed for riding a bicycle without lights in 1921 was described as an electrician, but as the village had no electricity until 1936 and only 8 subscribers in 1937 not many people could take advantage of these labour saving appliances. The number of consumers probably didn't increase significantly during the war so one wonders whether Joyce Sharp of the Terrace, Claxby, given a washing machine by her employer in 1941 as a wedding present was actually able to use it.

Women would also have made and cooked virtually all the food eaten by their families. There were few convenience foods at the turn of the century. Even at the end of the First World War only a very limited range of canned foods such as salmon, corned beef, soup and citrus fruit was available. Women may not have had to bake bread regularly as it seems to have been widely available. There are references to shopkeepers even in small villages being fined for selling bread other than by weight. As early as 1915 Mary Crawford was found guilty of just such an offence and fined 2/6d. Nonetheless many would have baked their own bread. They would also have bottled excess vegetables and fruit, made jam, pickles and relishes when they could get hold of the ingredients. Generally they prepared for their families whatever fresh food was available. The protein for the family diet of the less well off would have been mainly supplied via the family pig and rabbits, probably poached. Many families in the village had at least one pig and the killing would have

been a community event. George Surfleet remembers a pig killer coming from North Owersby, Michael Sharp remembers Mr Dalton of South View killed pigs and Nora Maddison's first husband, Ben Smith, killed their own pig. The pig was killed, scalded and scraped then opened and hung overnight. The pig killer returned the following day to cut up the carcass. The women would then take over. In some parts of the country the blood would have been saved for black pudding but that does not seem to have been the practise in Claxby. However the offal/pig's fry was shared among the neighbours. A pig produced a large amount of meat and that which couldn't be salted or cured as bacon or ham needed eating fairly promptly. Sometimes some of the fresh meat was shared among neighbours who would reciprocate when their pig was killed. Some families sold a joint or two to pay for essential items like coal.

Potatoes and bread featured largely in the diet of the less well off. Cheese was eaten but whether this was locally made or not is unclear. As there was no real tradition of dairy farming here one suspects that only cream cheese made from milk that had 'gone off' was routinely made. Although standards of nutrition were improving nationally, in rural areas this was less marked mainly because of low wages. Fresh seasonal vegetables were of course available but even in the 1940s tomatoes were regarded as a luxury as were imported 'exotic' fruits such as bananas, oranges, and peaches and these virtually disappeared during the war. John Surfleet said that between the wars the gift of an orange at Christmas was a real treat. The range of canned and packet foods expanded in the interwar years and they included the beginning of breakfast cereals. Some of these 'new' foods would have been seen in the village shops but how many women in the village would have been able to afford them? The introduction of school dinners in 1949 and school milk in 1950 would have had a noticeable impact on the diet of many of the children of the less well off in the village.

Women would also have been expected to dress their children to a large extent with home made clothes. Drapers seemed to do business with the working families, and did not always get paid. In 1911 T Varlow and Sons Drapers of Caistor claimed a debt of 12/- from G Dickinson of Claxby. Some villages would have had a seamstress but there is no record of anyone in Claxby. Mothers would have had help from the grandmothers. In the 1940s and 1950s Kitty Combs and Pam Whitwell remember their grandmother made clothes for all six children, in some cases cutting down adult coats to size. Others remember coats being made from blankets, the red bound edges becoming a feature in the new garments.

Women therefore would have had very little time to themselves.

It is all the more remarkable, therefore that, in 1918 a meeting in the schoolroom with Miss Dixon of Holton le Moor in the chair stimulated the women of Normanby and Claxby to form a 'committee of propaganda' with Mrs Byron as chairman and Miss Alice Canty as secretary. This was the beginning of the Claxby and Normanby le Wold Women's Institute, one of the earliest in Lincolnshire. It appears to have been successful from the start and by June of that year the records show that seven new members were enrolled at



*WI 60th Anniversary*

*From left to right, Mrs R Barton, founding members Mrs Maulby and Mrs N Maulby and Mrs Betty Harvey - County Chairman*

the monthly meeting at which they were given a demonstration of hay box cookery and they discussed how to form a fruit and vegetable depot for the Navy. Over the next few years, meeting in the schoolroom, they covered a range of subjects such as the cleanliness of milk, plain bread making, weaving, glove making, rushwork and tuberculosis. This must have been a revelation for many of the women who had left school at 14 and for whom no further education of any kind would have been possible. In the nineteenth century Institutes had been established in industrial areas to offer education for working men but this opportunity was rarely extended to women and did not exist in rural areas. In later years the WI ran training courses lasting for periods of 6 to 10 weeks. They also began what was to become a long standing tradition of organising a Christmas party for the children of Claxby, Normanby and Usselby. By the third year they also invited the elderly and made up parcels of food to be given to the old and poor of the area. They also found time to run a series of whist drives to build up their funds so that in 1924 they were able to buy the Primitive Methodist Chapel on Normanby Rise which was their home until The Claxby and Normanby Women's Institute closed in 1992. In 1978 they celebrated their 60th anniversary with a party and cutting of a cake. In 1988 to celebrate their 70th anniversary the WI compiled a fascinating scrap book illustrating aspects of life in Claxby and Normanby. They were also substantially involved in organising several successful exhibitions in the 1960s and early 1970s which are described in the chapter Village Organisation, Housing and Services.

Many of the women of the two villages also were members of the Mothers Union. They met regularly, at the Rectory or the house of a parishioner, for discussions, prayers and tea. Nora Maddison remembers Mrs Brant frequently hosted these meetings at Normanby Lodge. They produced the beautiful MU Banner which is still shared between the two churches. As they were able to take their children to these meetings it offered opportunities to young women to socialise. It also was a chance for their children to play together.

Life for urban women started to change profoundly after the Second World War. Reliable contraception, available nationally from the 1960s, possibly later in rural areas, the recognition of the range of work carried out by women in the war, higher education and most importantly greater expectations of the women themselves were all factors. However in Claxby as in many rural villages opportunities for women remained fairly restricted. Cars may have been more common but they were beyond the ability of most young women to afford at this time. They still either had to leave the village to find work or settle for work that was probably well below their capabilities as many still had to do at the end of the century. This was a period when many young people left their homes to find more rewarding work than was available locally and did not return to live permanently. A number took nursing training and lived in the hospital. Others trained as teachers and others took university degrees especially after the first expansion of higher education in the late 1960s. Women definitely had more options than their mothers had done if they were prepared to leave their homes. It was probably from this point that life in villages began to change irreversibly. Even for those who stayed in Claxby, increasing mobility meant that they could look further afield for entertainment and therefore tended to marry men from further afield. This seems to have become more common from the Second World War when local RAF stations were full of young men looking for entertainment. By the end of the century most young women expected to leave the village to pursue a career and many more expected a career than was the case even thirty years before. Moreover they did not expect to return to the village after marriage as most planned to combine their careers with marriage and motherhood. Young women had challenging and responsible jobs often taking them all over the world. Marian Chapman née Bristow's job had taken her to Singapore and California. Fortunately there were some exceptions to this flight from the village. At least two daughters and some sons of local families have remained in the village while working at demanding jobs and have seen their futures in the area

## 8 BIRTH SICKNESS AND DEATH

In 1900 death was very much part of life. Despite a greater knowledge of the causes of many diseases and the introduction of vaccination against smallpox, life expectancy in Lincolnshire and in particular in rural areas like Claxby had not improved significantly over the previous thirty years or so. Improvements in the death and sickness rates had begun to be recorded nationally in the 1870s but this hid wide variations between classes and regions and was most noticeable among the better educated, better off urban classes. Nearly two thirds of prospective servicemen examined at call up during the First World War were found to be unfit for military service. Great improvements for ordinary men, women and children were to be seen during the twentieth century but before the First World War in places like Claxby little had changed. Poor living conditions and a poor diet were still common particularly among the labouring classes. Some aspects of nutrition are discussed in the chapter *Life for Women*. The Medical Officer of Health for Caistor RDC routinely criticised the state of housing, the poor fresh water supply and the lack of fresh milk in the area. Claxby was one of a number of villages that had poor housing in the Medical Report of 1906 and although much of the village had a fresh water supply, the cistern from which it ran still received water from a stream used by cattle in 1939. In 1920 the Medical Officer was concerned about the lack of drinking water at the school. There was also considerable poverty in the village. Its income was derived from agriculture which had suffered in the last years of the nineteenth century and much of the early years of the twentieth century. The Market Rasen Mail reported on applications for exemption from the poor rate and Claxby featured in these applications each year. In 1913 seven people were excused payment and the same number in 1915, 1916 and again in 1923. Application for exemption was a serious business; the applicant had to approach the overseer and gain the support of the Parish Council. It also meant the withdrawal of the right to vote. One would therefore only attempt this if absolutely necessary. This is well illustrated by the case of one old man who applied on the basis that he had a sick wife, his daughter staying at home to care for her. He had a pension of 10/- and he earned 4/- a week from odd jobs. This was as late as 1922 after the introduction of a limited old age pension scheme. Claxby was no worse than other local villages all of whom had parishioners exempted from the poor rate on a regular basis.

In addition to the effect of poor living conditions there was still little that could be done to fight the major diseases. Diphtheria, typhoid, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, whooping cough, measles and chicken pox were serious illnesses that could cause major debility and, in a significant number of cases, death. Tuberculosis was the major killer. It caused more deaths than most other illnesses combined. In addition there was no penicillin to counteract infection in wounds and access to medical care was limited by both cost and availability. The nearest doctor, as today, was in Market Rasen but every visit had to be paid for. The National Insurance Act of 1913 introduced some limited medical

insurance paid through unions and benefit clubs for some working men but it did not apply to agriculture immediately and excluded women, children and the unemployed. In addition reaching the doctor took time. When David Woodforth suffered his serious accident near Holton le Moor crossing he had to be taken to Market Rasen by a passing pony and trap. There was no telephone nor an ambulance to administer first aid on the way. It probably took at least an hour to get him to the doctor. The cost of medical care meant that the less well off managed without a doctor as far as possible. When circumstances forced them to seek medical care they were sometimes unable to pay. In 1911, the Market Rasen Mail reported that John Bedford a labourer of Claxby had a debt of 8/6d owed to T Emmison surgeon of Scotter. In 1912 the debt had increased to 18/- and he was ordered to pay it off at a shilling a month. This was a fairly regular occurrence. In 1914 Barton Jackson Park a Market Rasen surgeon claimed for a debt of 7/- owed by Walter Gregory of Claxby.

Most villages had a nurse. They were unlikely to be trained to any extent and were not infrequently a local herbalist or midwife. Claxby had a nurse, Mrs Emma Littleddyke who died in 1932 aged 72. The Market Rasen Mail said that many Claxby homes benefited from her skill and motherly sympathy and that she made many friends. George Surfleet and Dorothy Bristow also remember Miss Whitwell who acted as midwife and who lived on Caistor Road near the Low Road. This must have been in the 1930s or later, after Mrs Littleddyke had died. Some villagers were reluctant to use the local midwife or nurse but it wasn't always easy to persuade the doctor to attend. On one occasion Ernest Bristow, desperate to get medical care for his wife who was in labour, went into Market Rasen four times to ask the doctor to come. He had to walk or hitch a lift. The doctor only arrived after the birth of the baby.

Child birth was still risky. Although families were generally large, many children died at birth and mortality remained fairly high throughout early childhood. Nationally infant mortality was four times higher in 1900 than it was fifty years later. The parish Burial Register records twelve deaths of infants and children under five years old between 1903 and 1918. The mother also was at risk. In 1915, no doubt already worn out by the birth of her twelve living children, Mrs John Richardson aged only 41 died after the birth of her child which itself died the following day.

Death was not unknown among young people either. In 1906 Alven Richardson died aged 7, Frank Richardson in 1918 aged 20. In 1926 Kathleen Dalton whose parents lived in South View died aged 16 after brief illness, in 1932 Cyril Sharp aged only 8 died of pneumonia and was laid to rest beside his grandmother and in 1939 Teresina Talbot died when only 31. Several of these young people died of tuberculosis.

Despite all these hazards many people did live to good ages. The record for Claxby in the early twentieth century is held by Mrs Mildred Canty, the wife of the schoolmaster and a teacher herself who died at 99 in 1926.

Hospital care was available but only if you could pay. The County Hospital at Lincoln took serious cases, the Market Rasen Cottage Hospital and Dispensary had four beds and Caistor RDC ran the fever hospital. This was originally sited on the Gainsborough Road where the Ten Acres Cafe is today. In the 1920s a new hospital, built of wood, was erected between the Gainsborough Road and the Low Road. This took in patients from a wide area. Nora Maddison can remember her friend Gertie Dalton going there when she caught scarlet fever. Nora walked over to see her but could only wave to her through the window. This seemed to have been quite common. Kath Burrell remembers her father went to see Mrs Carter there when she had scarlet fever. He caught the disease so perhaps he talked himself into the hospital.

The Cottage Hospital seemed primarily to be a maternity unit although it also dealt with emergencies. On Boxing Day 1909 Miss Annie Maultby was chopping sticks and hit the toes on her left foot with the axe. She was so badly injured that she was taken to the Cottage Hospital where two toes were amputated. The County Hospital and the Cottage Hospital ran a subscription scheme. Each village apparently had a quota, presumably based on population but the hospitals also received donations from villages. Like other villages, Claxby together with Normanby le Wold had a hospital association which paid a subscription to allow the villagers to use the Cottage Hospital and the County Hospital. This may have started in 1924 as there is a minute in the parish council records stating that the scheme was to be discussed at the next parish meeting. In 1931 the association sent £17 17 6d but whether this was its quota for a year or for a quarter is not clear. In 1945 the village cleared its debt to the County Hospital with a chapel collection and a whist drive which together raised £27 8 10d. Eight patients had been treated in the previous year. In 1946 the last reference to this scheme records that a total of £53 8 4d had been sent to the County Hospital. The first mention of a donation to the Cottage Hospital was in 1908 when the village gave the balance of the collection for its harvest home supper to the hospital. In 1919 and 1926 the hospital's annual report mentioned that it had treated Claxby patients although no details were given. The gifts continued at least annually until it closed before the outbreak of the second World War, apparently because of the lack of a qualified midwife permanently in attendance. There was surprisingly little resistance from the local population.

Although such schemes must have given some insurance they weren't always the complete answer. Even a fairly well to do craftsman like Fred Sharp the village wheelwright needed the help of his friends when he had an accident in 1909. They raised £4 15s 6d as a contribution towards his losses.

Poor families suffered real hardship before the National Health Service. In 1945 Rev Lee wrote a trenchant letter to the Rasen Mail. Included was the complaint that a widow with four children under 10 years old rushed her boy into Grimsby hospital with a fractured skull. The hospital sent her a bill for £8 for a week and £1.15s for a return journey of the ambulance.

Smallpox vaccination was already standard at the turn of

the century but a number of people applied for exemption from the requirement. These were heard by the magistrates and were not uncommon. In 1904 George Chambers a labourer from Claxby Moor asked for exemption from vaccination for his child who was ill. He was told he needed a doctor's certificate which no doubt involved him in expense he could ill afford. Other immunisations were quite slow to be introduced. Diphtheria began to be treated by immunisation in the 1930s but it was only in 1941 that diphtheria immunisation was generally available locally and the following year the local Medical Officer of Health deplored the lack of take up. He was also unhappy that children were not taking the allocation of orange juice and cod liver oil and proposed setting up local distribution points. Even as late as 1945 there was no immunisation for tuberculosis. Cure required a long period in a sanatorium. Prevention was centred on pasteurisation of milk first ordered in 1922 but not apparently carried out routinely in Lindsey where in 1943 the Medical Officer was instructing villagers to boil their milk if it was not pasteurised. Lindsey was also slow at testing its cattle for tuberculosis. Again in 1943 the Rev Lee was complaining that there was a tuberculin tested herd in Claxby but that milk went to the towns. There were several herds in Claxby by this time. By 1954 however, the selling of milk in open containers was effectively banned and with the universal use of pasteurised milk in bottles the transfer of TB from cattle to humans virtually stopped.

With the introduction of the National Health Service after 1946 things improved greatly for the poorer classes in particular. It became easier for governments to introduce health campaigns and target children, pregnant women and other priority groups. Most people were better looked after than they had ever been and it wasn't until the explosion of new medical techniques and the sharply rising cost of the NHS in the last quarter of the century that people really started to question the level and quality of care available.

The NHS didn't solve all needs immediately. In 1956 the Claxby and Normanby WI decided to raise money for a mobile chiropody service for the elderly and collections continued to be made for other health related charitable organisations. The Royal National Institute for the Blind and the Lindsey Institute for the Blind received regular donations from the village. Miss Gladys Bristow planned whist drives and other events for many years for these two organisations.

Death was close to everyone in the early part of the century and dealing with it was very much a village concern. As in most villages the local wheelwright or carpenter also acted as undertaker. In Claxby this function was carried out by the Sharp family. In 1900 Fred Sharp was the wheelwright, carpenter and undertaker. The first big funeral reported in the Mail was that of Canon Andrews in 1905. Fred would have made the coffin, of panelled unpolished oak, organised the bearers, six parishioners, and any transport required. He had a pony but as far as is known no elaborate hearse such as is seen in photographs of Victorian funerals. Since most people who died in the village would have been buried here a simple flat bed wagon would have been sufficient when it was too far to carry the coffin from

the house to the church. Everyone in the village would have known when someone died. If he or she were a churchgoer the bell would have tolled, the saws, hand saws initially and electric saws later would have been heard making the coffin, and friends and colleagues of the dead person may have been invited to act as pall bearers. Pam Whitwell who was a child in the village in the 1950s remembers feeling a shiver when she heard the saws running after a death. The wheelwright business declined with the advent of mechanisation on the farms, but the family business carried on until 1972 and Michael Sharp, Fred's grandson continued to organise funerals until the early 1990s. His mother used to lay out the bodies when his father, Cyril, had the business as no doubt Fred's wife had before her. Ruth Sharp was described as being wonderful with the bereaved, giving comfort and practical help. Cyril Sharp had a coffin trailer which could be hooked behind his car. It was a black two wheeler with decoration.

Michael took over in 1959 on his father's early death. He carried out all the jobs from making the coffin to preparing the body and organising the funeral service and burial or cremation. He covered most of the local villages, hiring a hearse as necessary as he only did about twelve funerals a year. It was then still usual for bodies to be laid out at home but Michael used a Chapel of Rest in Market Rasen when

needed. He used local men as bearers, preferring not to use inexperienced friends of the deceased. By 1990 he decided that he could no longer do the work on a part time basis and closed down. Now people in the village look to undertakers in Market Rasen, Caistor or further afield, the coffins are already in stock and professional pall bearers carry the coffin and, very differently from the practise in the early part of the twentieth century, many of us are cremated and the ashes scattered.

The second half of the twentieth century saw amazing gains in the health of villagers. It is now rare for babies to die and equally rare for mothers to die at childbirth. Virtually all the childhood diseases have been, if not eradicated, at least reduced in virulence. Epidemics do still occur but few children die. Our homes are bigger, better heated, with mains water and sewage and we know much more about nutrition. Nationally the bulk of these gains were made in the 1920s and 1930s but in rural villages like Claxby the improvements came 20 or 30 years later. The major killers of the past, tuberculosis, typhoid, bronchitis etc have been controlled. The new killers, heart disease, cancers etc are at least partly due to our improved economic condition. When we die however we can no longer look to a village undertaker to see us off.

## 9 RELIGION

At the turn of the century, Claxby had three places of worship, St Mary's Church, the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel then at the junction of Pelham Road and St Mary's Lane and the Primitive Methodist Chapel partway up the hill. All seem to have attracted reasonable congregations and all played a considerable part in the life of the village.

St Mary's was by far the oldest church in the village and had been through a series of ups and downs but had fared well under the then incumbent the Reverend Canon Samuel Wright Andrews. In 1900 Claxby was regarded as a 'centre of power and prestige in the Anglican Church such as scarcely exist today'. Canon Andrews had been the Rector since 1869 and curate for some years before that and had led and substantially paid for the repair and reconstruction of the church in the 1870s. He was also the Rector of St Peter's, Normanby le Wold. The livings had been joined since 1740 and this may have been a factor in the close relationship between the two parishes. The combined living was very comfortable, one of the best in the area and he lived in considerable affluence in the twenty two roomed Rectory set in thirty acres of parkland with a housekeeper, cook, parlourmaid, housemaid, coachman, groom and garden boy.

He was also an important man in the district; a JP and chairman of the bench in Market Rasen, Chairman of the Managers of the Market Rasen Cottage Hospital, President of the Choral Society and of the Market Rasen Branch of the Diocesan Guild of Bellringers and a member of the Caistor Board of Guardians. He visited his parishioners on horseback wearing a top hat and long morning coat but travelled to Market Rasen and beyond in his carriage and pair. In 1900 he was 75 years old yet still seemed to be very

active. There were reports in the Market Rasen Mail of his attendance at the petty sessions and he entertained the Market Rasen Girls Friendly Society at the Rectory. He also gave parties for his choirmen, and bellringers and for the choirboys and girls at Christmas. He had the help of at least one curate, in 1900 it was the Reverend Hormeyer, and possibly two and there were reports that he had three. In January 1902 Rev Dix, curate, proposed the health of the Rector at the annual Christmas party for the choirmen and in September 1902 the Market Rasen Mail reported that Reverend E North-Cox, curate of Normanby had been appointed Rector of a living in Monmouthshire.

The church exercised considerable control over the school. The Rector or more often a curate attended regularly to hear the children in their catechism and a Diocesan Inspector reviewed the religious education at the school annually.

There were no reports of fund raising events in the Mail for the church at this time. Perhaps Canon Andrews was sufficiently wealthy to underwrite the church expenses. The church should have been in good order as it had been completely restored only twenty or thirty years before.

The Methodists at this time were very strong in the area. In many of the surrounding villages there was a boom in chapel building, supported by packed congregations. Claxby had had two chapels for many years and both were well supported. From 1900 the Mail reports on fund raising on a regular basis for both communities. The Methodists, part of the Market Rasen circuit, didn't have a minister living in the village but had several active lay people who seemed to organise the life of their chapel. For the Wesleyans these

included Mr Shepherd, and in particular Mr Hewitt who until 1914, when he left the village, gave annual Christmas and New Year parties for forty or so members of the Sunday School, teachers and friends. He was apparently well regarded in the village. He was approached in 1903 when Ethel Lill the illegitimate child of Lucy Storr ran away from her mother who was beating her. The child was taken to Mr Hewitt's home and he went to see the mother.

The Wesleyans were enthusiastic and confident enough in 1904 to begin to build a new chapel to seat 100 and a schoolroom to seat an additional 60. This in a village of 237, although Normanby at this time had a population of 128 and no active chapel. The land was given by the Yarborough Estate and some of the fund raising was based on sponsoring the stones and bricks used in the building. In October 1904 they had a grand stonelaying ceremony, the first laid by Mrs Hewitt and another by Willie Jarvill on behalf of Mr and Mrs Wilson. Forty two named people laid bricks. This included seven Hewitts and several Bristows. Sponsorship of the stones and bricks, collections, subscriptions and the proceeds of a coffee supper raised £80 4s 4d. On 4th February 1905 the Market Rasen Mail reported the opening of the chapel. 'Standing on a slight eminence with the fine background of lofty hills and facing the main road the chapel is built in the gothic style, with a good vestry, kitchen and heating chamber'. The building contract was for £475. The opening ceremonies were led by the Rev Hornabrook from Manchester and R W Perks the local MP and lasted all day. The following month the concluding services of the opening celebrations were held over the Sunday and Monday. Shrubs were planted and tea preceded the evening meeting. Nearly £7 was raised on that occasion. In October of the same year the chapel was the venue of the wedding of Miss A A Hewitt. This is the only marriage recorded as being held in this chapel.

The debt of £500 was cleared within three years and the commitment this implies was confirmed by a report in the Mail of the Sunday School Anniversary when the correspondent said 'considering the sparseness of the population of the district it was a matter of much interest to friends to discover the vastness of the attendance and the enthusiasm manifested.' The report congratulated Mr Shepherd, who 'for nearly a lifetime has been identified with this service', for the musical arrangements, and Mr Hewitt 'to whose warm hearted activity for nearly fifty years the general success of the school and the church are mostly due'

The Wesleyans used their chapel and school room for a variety of activities. In 1907 the missionary society held a lantern lecture on Personal Experiences in Western Africa and later the same year the Reverend Casswell of Thornton le Moor gave a 'vivid description of the land and customs of Palestine'.

The Primitive Methodists were also active at the time. In 1901 they were raising funds to bring the teachers and scholars of the Market Rasen Primitive Methodist Chapel to Claxby. They returned the following year when Mr Coulson was the conductor and Mrs Mainprize played the harmonium. Nora Maddison's grandfather, Charles Edward Saunby, was a strong supporter of the Primitive Methodist Chapel and was involved with it by the beginning of the



*The New Wesleyan Chapel*

century. Although the chapel was quite small it apparently had a raked floor to enable everyone to see well.

The church and the two chapels all celebrated Harvest Festival each year. They were elaborate occasions and all decorated their places of worship. The church had a service on the Friday followed by one on the Sunday. The Primitive Methodists also spread the celebrations over two days and had different preachers for each service. They sold the fruit and vegetables and had a coffee supper. The Wesleyans also followed their services with the sale of the fruit and vegetables and a coffee supper. These were faithfully recorded in the Mail for years. In 1908 the Market Rasen Mail reported 'Harvest Homes are nearly obsolete but parishioners in Claxby were determined to revive an ancient and homely custom. The idea originated with the labourers themselves. Rev Andrews, H Wildsmith, Mr Maultby, Mr Hewitt and Mr J Jarvill formed a committee and petitioned subscriptions. £7 4s 6d was collected and it was decided to have a meat supper. On Wednesday evening in the schoolroom beef, ham and other good things were provided and the people and children enjoyed themselves. After supper the men were regaled with tobacco and the children sweets. The surplus of £1 was given to Market Rasen Cottage Hospital'. It appears that the three different churches and chapels worked together. There is no indication in any of the records that there was any antagonism between them. This was demonstrated again in 1918 when the fourth anniversary of the outbreak of the war was commemorated by a united intercession service. Anglicans, Methodists and non churchgoers filled the church. The service was led by the Rector and the Superintendent Minister of the Wesleyan circuit preached. Some people living in the village between the two world wars said that church people tended to look down on chapel folk and the big children teased the little ones but it didn't seem to have been anything serious.

The Methodist chapels seemed to keep in close contact with the other chapels in their circuit. In 1909 the Caistor Wesleyan Choir gave a concert at Claxby, the proceeds of which were destined for the new organ. Further fund-raising included a musical service followed by yet another coffee supper. In 1934 the Wesleyan Chapel congregation hosted a successful Guild rally when guilds from a wide area

met at the chapel. Supper was provided for nearly 200 people.

The two Methodist groups organised outings each year, but it seems that the church outing lapsed for some years. These days out usually meant a poor attendance at school. Cleethorpes and Mablethorpe were the most favoured destinations and the organisers provided transport and a meal. Most of the older residents of the village remember these outings. In the early days they were by charabanc which sometimes struggled to reach the top of the hills and everyone had to get out and walk. Later they used Bristows coaches and occasionally the train

Not long after the First World War the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists began to work more closely together. In Claxby this culminated in a decision to close the Primitive Methodist Chapel. It was sold in 1924 to the Women's Institute. There had been comments in the local press about falling numbers in the chapels so one must assume this was a sensible reaction to the problem of maintaining two chapels in the face of smaller congregations and therefore lower incomes. This is not to suggest that they were moribund. Well within the memory of people still living in the village the chapel was still a lively and active centre with two services each Sunday and of course Sunday School.

St Mary's saw the end of an era when Canon Andrews died in March 1905. He was 80 years old and had been Rector for thirty six years and curate for several years before that but it seemed to have been something of a surprise to everyone. He had been out riding the day before and had also attended a concert in the evening. His funeral was lavish but homely in a way we don't often see today. Holy Communion was celebrated at 8.30. The coffin of unpolished panelled oak, made by Fred Sharp in the village, was carried by six parishioners. The fully choral service was led by the vicar of Caistor and the lessons read by a former curate of Claxby. The procession then moved to the graveyard, rather charmingly described as carpeted in snowdrops, for the interment. It was all organised by Fred Sharp, the village wheelwright, carpenter and undertaker.

Canon Andrews was succeeded by his brother, William, the gift of the living being in his family. He seemed to have carried on with the traditions much as his brother had done. On New Year's Eve 1906 he entertained the bell ringers at the Rectory and at 11.30 p.m. they rang a half muffled peal until midnight then ushered in the New Year with a peal of Grandsire Doubles. Claxby appeared to have had a tradition of bellringing which lasted well into the second half of the century, many sons following their fathers into the bell chamber. In Michael Sharp's case he was in the bell chamber when his grandfather Fred Sharp died immediately after ringing for evensong. Both Michael and his father were bellringers. The bells were not always safe to ring. In 1926 a muffled peal was rung to mark the death of one of the bellringers, Mr Littledike, nearly two years earlier. The bells had not been in a state to permit the ring on the day of his death

Reverend William Andrews had a wife and family and they took their part in the life of the village as did their successors over the years. In May 1907 Dorothy Andrews organised a very successful entertainment helped by at least

eleven parishioners and in 1916 when the Rector was 80 years old the family threw open the grounds of the Rectory for a garden party for the Star and Garter fund. This was an elaborate occasion with the band of the 4th Manchester Regiment playing on the lawn and a tennis tournament on the courts of the Rectory and Claxby House.

In 1917 the Reverend Nicholas Lee was inducted into the living and like his predecessor was to serve the twin parishes for twelve years. He was a relatively unusual man to have obtained the living. He had been born into comfort but the family had been reduced to relative poverty by the early death of his father. He had bought a newspaper round as a boy and worked in a forge as a young man. He had become the local correspondent for the Yorkshire Post before going to Bradford as a pupil teacher where he had become a county councillor and rural district councillor. Like the Reverend Andrews he also continued to host the Christmas or New Year parties for the Sunday school scholars, choir and friends of the church and led a campaign to raise money for the church restoration. He appeared to have been an active leader. During one of the whist drives he ran in 1921 the church choir entertained with glee singing in the interval and later there was dancing into the early hours. Reverend Lee was the instigator of evening classes for those over fourteen. He organised a sacred concert to raise the necessary funds to begin two classes in 1922. His wife was also active. There are regular mentions of her involvement with various activities in the village. She may have been concerned with the reintroduction of the church Sunday school outings which were restarted after a lapse of many years in 1925. The first was to Mablethorpe by motor bus.

In 1928 Reverend Lee already in poor health, was in a serious car accident and never really recovered. He died in October and the obituary, unusually for the time was rather candid. Apparently he was outspoken and liked his own way but was popular and much respected.

St Mary's was without a Rector for only a short time. In May 1929 Rev Tyack was inducted and the life of the church continued. A year after the Rev Lee's death Rev Tyack held a requiem mass and the bellringers rang a muffled peal. The church was evidently rather 'higher' than it is today. The *Rasen Mail* gave a full description of the New Year peal rung in the church to welcome 1930. Firstly there was a half muffled peal of Bob Doubles. At midnight the Tenor Bell rang twelve times followed by a full unmuffled peal of Bob Doubles. No-one could have been in any doubt about the time! Sadly this was the last time the Rev Tyack heard the peal. He died aged 72 at the end of January 1930 in the vestry preparing for the service. There was little delay in finding a replacement. The Rev F T Smith was inducted in July. He must have made a good impression when in February he provided the churchworkers from both Claxby and Normanby with an outing to Grimsby by Bristows coach. They all had lunch at the Pestle and Mortar and then went to see *Cinders* at the Prince of Wales Theatre. In 1931 it was decided that the churchyard must be enlarged. It had last been extended in 1879 and was by this time nearly full. This was the only burial ground in the parish so must have been used by all the village. The burial register notes that Methodist ministers occasionally conducted the funeral

service. The Rector offered a portion of the adjacent glebe land and plans were made to raise the money. It is not surprising to those of us involved in church affairs to discover that it took ten years or more to complete the process. Through all this time the records show that a group of faithful servants occupied the positions of churchwarden, secretary and treasurer. W C Bristow, Mr Wildsmith, Mr Dalton Mr Drakes are names frequently mentioned. Miss Bristow, F Sharp, E Sharp, Mrs Hewson, who was the organist for more than fifty years, and Mrs F Maultby were often mentioned as members of the PCC. The church was among the very first establishments to have electricity installed. In 1937 it reported that the accounts were £3 in deficit after paying for the work involved. The following year Mrs Smith, the Rector's wife was killed in a car accident. The Rector and Miss Howard, Mrs Smith's sister, were thrown out of the car but not seriously hurt. The church was not big enough to hold those who wished to attend Mrs Smith's funeral. The Rev Smith finally left Claxby in 1944. He sold much of his furniture but the most attractive lot was his lawnmower which made £46.

He was replaced by the Rev Austin Lee who was the son of a previous incumbent Nicholas Lee. Rev A Lee had already had an interesting career. For a start in 1921 as a schoolboy he was found guilty of riding his bicycle without lights at Osgodby. He went to De Aston school where in 1922 he passed the examination to enter Trinity College, Cambridge. He first appeared in print locally in 1925 when the *Rasen Mail* published his poem 'A Nonconformist fantasy'. He took orders in 1929 and shortly after wrote an article pointing out that curates were neither sub normal nor supernormal. By 1932 he was chaplain to the Mediterranean destroyer fleet and was denying allegations of communism and socialism. He obviously convinced the Admiralty of his suitability for service with the Navy because in 1933 he visited Claxby where he preached a sermon before sailing on HMS Cumberland for China. By this time he had already written for the Sunday and popular papers as well as for more serious reviews. Why did a man of his sophistication, remember Countess Pahlavi the Russian beauty whom he entertained at the Rectory in his father's time, and 'advanced views' choose to come to Claxby and Normanby? The living was in the gift of his family and he certainly didn't have to obtain the agreement of the local congregations. Although the living had been a very good one he soon went into print saying how difficult it was to live on the stipend. He also said he was offering the Rectory to demobbed soldiers who wanted to take up farming as a career. He would live in the gardener's cottage.

He was very politically aware. He offered special intercessions for ELAS, the left wing faction in the Greek civil war, and the people of Greece and urged Col Heneage MP to oppose the Government's 'disastrous' policy for Greece. In 1945 he was fulminating against the Establishment on a different matter. He had been invited to become the Independent candidate for Cambridge University but had discovered that under an act of 1801 he would be subject to a fine of £500 a day if he took up the seat. He pointed out that Bishops sat in the House of Lords with impunity. Later in the year he announced that he was

refusing to pay his rates of £30 because rural areas were sadly neglected. He didn't expect water, sanitation or street lighting but children aged under eleven walked to and from school from Normanby on nothing but a sandwich and powdered milk. There was a tuberculin tested herd in Claxby but the milk went to the towns. He also felt strongly about a working man's wife who had to attend Lincoln Hospital and he also knew of a soldier's widow charged a considerable sum for going to Grimsby Hospital

By 1946 Rev Lee announced that had decided to move to Normanby Dales where Lord Yarborough had lent him a woodsman's cottage. He planned to move around on horseback and had rented a little farm cottage in Claxby in case of weather difficulties. He rented the Rectory to Corinne Brant's parents. She remembers him living at the gardener's cottage at the Rectory for some time. Alice Nickson remembers him living at Normanby Dales. She and her friends were invited to meet students that Rev Lee had living there. Later in the same year he let it be known that he was to be the chaplain director of the British Seamen's organisation in Rosario South America. He added that the Church of England was dying because it was 'timid and lukewarm'. Even the Bishops were 'timid little men frightened of offending government'. He also said that in Claxby a parson was cut off from any real spiritual life. This latter may well have been true but it hardly endeared him to his parishioners. However Eileen Wilmot who lived in Claxby as a young woman remembers he had a reputation as a great preacher and usually filled the church. He was also quite likely to have his wellington boots on under his robes ready for a quick getaway to the Gordon Arms on his motor bicycle. In addition to the post in Brazil he had also been offered a London living. He took neither of them because in 1948 he was still in Claxby and a candidate in a proctorial by election, a post he thought honorary and honourable but not useful. Somewhere in his career he had apparently taken an interest in cookery. He gave a talk to the WI on Ancient and Modern Cookery. Later the same year this unusual incumbency came to an end when he exchanged livings with the Rev Lancelot B Z Davies. He allegedly said 'you may have had criticisms of me but just wait until you get the next man'. Rev Lee was certainly an unusual man, obviously gifted but eccentric. Villagers who lived in Claxby in the 1940s have many stories to tell about him.

Rev Lee's predictions proved all too accurate. If the village had hoped for a period of quiet they were to be disappointed. Less than three months after his induction the Rev Davies had been served by officers from Scotland Yard with a summons alleging that he had been guilty of irregularities in the issue of marriage lines. At evensong the following Sunday he had a congregation of six including three women and two reporters. He was found guilty at the Old Bailey with obtaining fees by false pretences and with making false entries in a marriage register. By the standards of today he had not done anything so very terrible because the understanding of those who remembered the incident was that he had married divorced people in church. It was regarded very seriously at the time. Less than six months after he had arrived in Claxby he was forbidden to take services for two years and could only return under certain



conditions. The parochial church council of the time must have been in turmoil. One of the churchwardens did not appear at the meeting and W C Bristow agreed to take the post of Rector's churchwarden, Rufus Drakes being elected as People's warden. By September 1949 the Rectory was closed.

Rev Lee wasn't very happy either. He wrote in his parish magazine that the Hounslow church had to be kept locked. In Claxby and Normanby, he added, the keys were either lost or had been melted down for Waterloo cannons. He continued his extraordinary career, leaving the church, living in Eire as a lay worker for the Roman Catholic Church, writing screenplays and detective stories. He finally returned to the church in Grantham, died in 1965 and his ashes were interred in the family grave in Claxby churchyard.

Sadly for Rev Davies but perhaps luckily for Claxby he died soon after he left the village and a new Rector could be appointed. In the interregnum and perhaps in an effort to bring the congregation and even the village together, the Bishop of Lincoln and Col Heneage attended a dedication service for the War Memorial which unusually commemorates both those who died in, and gives thanks for those who returned safely from, the Second World War. The PCC took advantage of the Bishop's presence to request that they were consulted before a new appointment. They pointed out that they were not consulted before the last two!

There is no record that any consultation took place but the next appointment seems to have been a happy one. The Rev McLeod proved to be a successful Rector and by September 1950 the churchwarden pronounced that collections since the arrival of the new Rector were twice those of any similar period in the past twenty five years. Reports also indicated that congregations increased at this time and that the Rector re-introduced some traditions which had been lost. For instance on Rogation day 1951 the people processed through the park saying the Litany. Prayers were offered and a hymn sung before they returned to the church to complete the service. In 1954 he preached to the largest congregation seen for years on the occasion of the Armistice day service. Apparently he didn't have a car and walked between Claxby and Normanby to conduct the services. He was less successful at the school as far as the pupils were concerned. They found him frightening.

Fund raising went ahead for a new altar frontal at Claxby and the installation of electric light in Normanby. Most importantly the Rev McLeod led the effort to restore the church tower. Sadly he retired after only five years and was succeeded by a Priest in charge, the Rev Holehouse. The Rev McLeod died in 1968 and there is a plaque in the church commemorating his incumbency.

Through all the tribulations of the parish church the Methodists continued with rather less disturbance. Despite a report that the Sunday School closed in 1947, in 1953 the Mail recorded a successful Sunday School Anniversary taking place over two days. The children performed a play on the life of John Wesley. In 1959 the Sunday School reopened and in December the scholars presented a nativity play. In 1960 one of the old style of Methodist preachers, Charles Henry Chapman of the Terrace, died aged 77. He

was a farmworker and roadworker and had been a local preacher all his life. This was very much within the traditions of Methodism in which virtually self taught men and women devoted their life outside work to spreading the word of the Lord. The Wesleyans were showing confidence at this time. They carried out the renovation of the chapel and installed new electric heating and new lighting and there were regular reports of anniversaries and meetings for home missions. Despite this it appears that the size of the congregation was diminishing. At some point the number of services had been reduced and in 1965 Claxby Chapel announced that it was to suspend services. Apparently by that time there was only one service a month and only three or four people in the congregation. In 1968 came the final decision to close. There were seven members, only one from Claxby. Mrs Maultby of Usselby who could remember the building of the new chapel 60 years before said that numbers started to fall when horses were no longer used on the farms and the number of young men consequently fell. The population of Claxby fell to its lowest since the census began in 1971 when only 145 residents were recorded. Wesleyanism in Claxby had lasted for over 132 years.

In 1965 a new chapter began in the life of St Mary's when the Rev Harry Gill Webber was inducted as Rector of a group of eight parishes. The same problems were afflicting the church as had caused the chapel to close. The Church chose a different solution. Although Rev Webber was to live in Claxby he would have much less time to spend in the two linked parishes than had his predecessors. He was very active and within a few months had instigated activities which were shared between the eight parishes. The great innovation was the purchase of a bus in 1966 to carry Sunday school children to their nearest Sunday school. Sadly it cost too much to maintain and had to be sold within two years. The Claxby group was one of the earliest and was certainly one of the biggest so Rev Gill Webber was pioneering the development of this approach. It appeared that his efforts were not resulting in increases in the congregation. There are regular reports of Rev Webber encouraging a deeper involvement in the church. The church stalwarts were continuing to keep the church in order. They were engaged in raising £650 to improve the heating in the late 1960s. In 1970 Rev Smith took over the incumbency.

In 1974 the grouping of the churches was altered and Claxby became part of the Walesby Group, still eight parishes but with the incumbent living in Walesby. This was a significant change because although the Rev Smith had the care of eight parishes he still lived in Claxby and could be regarded as the Claxby priest. He was immediately at hand in an emergency. Like the loss of the school in 1971, the loss of the Rector diminished the village. Despite the best efforts of the Rector, the officers and members of the church council it became increasingly difficult to maintain the fabric of the church. They were offered a life line in 1983 when Gladys Bristow left the church a legacy. Without it the church might well have closed. By the end of the century, the church, while still a landmark was not significant in the life of most people in the village. The current group of stalwarts who have attended and maintained it are unlikely

to be able to continue to do so for many more years. Like the railway in the 1960s it is a case of use it or lose it.

Parishioners may not find it available for weddings, funerals or baptisms far into the new century.

#### RECTORS OF CLAXBY AND NORMANBY LE WOLD

1794 Richard Dixon LLB  
1819 Thomas Wilby MA  
1820 Richard Atkinson  
1869 Samuel Wright Andrews  
1905 William Andrews  
1917 Joseph Nicholas Lee BA  
1929 George Smith Tyack  
1930 Francis Thomas Smith  
1944 Austin Lee MA

1948 L Bernard Z Davies  
1950 Ernest Erskine McLeod  
1955 Ernest H Holehouse - priest in charge  
1965 Harry Gill Webber -group of eight parishes  
1970 David Earling Smith  
1974 F Michael Massey - lived at Walesby Rectory  
1990 Gervase Babbington  
1996 Brian M Dodds

#### 10 LAW AND ORDER

Even at the start of the twentieth century there was no village bobby in Claxby. The nearest one was probably in Holton le Moor and he would walk or cycle to Claxby either in response to a request or on a routine patrol. Claxby had a parish constable, a responsible local man who was sworn into the post each year by the magistrates in Market Rasen. Claxby had one or more special constables until 1930 when they were finally abolished at the Lindsey Quarter Sessions. Why there were only one or two in some years and as many as nine or ten in others is not clear. Their names were the familiar leaders of the village. Fred Sharp and George Sharpe were constables from 1901 to 1910 when they were joined by H Wildsmith and G F Jarvill. At other times WC Bristow, William Ogg, John Wildsmith, H Maultby filled the posts. In 1962 W C Bristow, interviewed by the Market Rasen Mail on the occasion of the award of a fourth bar to his service medal as first a parish and then a special constable said he was passed the village handcuffs and the village truncheon by his father but he had never had cause to use them. He had never made an arrest although his father had. Parish constables only had jurisdiction within the parish boundaries but there they had the same rights as a full time law officer.

Most problems the parish constables were called to deal with would no doubt have been of a fairly trivial nature, but the Market Rasen magistrates were kept fairly busy with cases brought from surrounding villages. Typical of these was a case in 1900 when John Bradford of Claxby together with four other men, all farm servants was found guilty of throwing stones to injure property. They were each fined 1/- and costs. In the same year Sam Cheffeys pleaded guilty to using obscene language to the Claxby stationmaster. This was a costly error. He was fined 2/6d with 6/6d costs and 15/- witness expenses. More serious cases were dealt with by the regular police. Inspector Holmes of Market Rasen charged the assailant in the following case. In March 1900 Frederick Brown and John Swaby were threshing at Normanby. According to the report in the Market Rasen Mail there had been 'wordy warfare all morning and high words at dinner' At this stage Swaby struck Brown with a pitchfork which entered his brain. Swaby was tried at the Lincoln Quarter Sessions, found guilty of common assault

and fined 20/-. Frederick Brown apparently made a recovery, whether complete or not is not recorded.

In a village where everyone knew everyone else many of the misdemeanours, particularly among the young would have been dealt with summarily either by the constable or by the parents. Even as late as the 1950s people in the village remember being scared of the constable and a telling off from him would not have been taken lightly. The early 1900s were much more authoritarian and most children would have heeded any adult in the village. There were no juvenile courts in the early years of the century but there were a few occasions where children were brought to court. Most cases however were against adults and fell into such categories as riding a bicycle without lights, letting animals stray, keeping dogs without a licence, using a gun without a licence and setting unauthorised traps. Aside from the first they seem to have been peculiarly rural offences. Many men appeared to have had a gun. They used them to shoot rooks, pigeons, rabbits and probably pheasants when they could. Rabbits were also snared and in some cases run down by dogs. However taking rabbits on someone else's property without permission was greatly objected to by the land owner and there were a number of reports of respectable men in the village being found guilty of poaching rabbits. Of the many cases reported the most interesting was in 1949 when Samuel Cade, a smallholder and rabbit catcher and Benjamin Smith were apparently caught catching rabbits by dazzling them at night and sending a dog after them. The defence included comments such as, 'it was only one little rabbit' and 'the dog was a family pet and ran away because of the hullabaloo'. Despite this they were fined £4 each with costs. It must be remembered that this was not unusual. Rabbits were a menace. Until the arrival of myxomatosis rabbits were around in their thousands and seriously damaged crops but they were also a source of income for either the farmer or for whoever he permitted to shoot over his land. Therefore for the less well off in the village rabbits represented a welcome albeit illicit source of meat and a number of villagers living in Claxby before and after the Second World War relied heavily on protein from poached rabbits. In addition a guilty verdict seemed to have had no real effect on the standing of the person in the village. It

may well have enhanced it. Certainly when Sam Cade died he was remembered as a generous man, a good tennis player and a good shot.

Guns had to be licensed and this too was the cause of a court appearance for many careless villager. In 1915 Fred Sharp was found guilty of carrying a gun without a licence and Mary Ogg the witness said 'he should have an Iron Cross'. She obviously felt strongly. He was a Parish Constable at the time. There didn't seem to be any concerns about who was fit to hold a licence. In some cases the law officer who issued the summons issued a licence for the gun as well. In 1941 Joseph Russell of Claxby was fined 10/- for having a gun without a licence. He had been asked by a Tealby farmer to shoot a hawk. A licence was issued immediately after the offence was committed.

It seems extraordinary looking back over the century at the vigour with which the dog control laws were enforced. Every dog had to be licensed annually with the exception of certain working dogs which were granted yearly exemptions. Every year even the most well to do farmers were routinely found guilty and fined for failing to gain exemptions. In 1908 Frank Maultby was even charged with having in his possession a stray dog without informing the police or returning it to its owner. Perhaps it was a very good sheepdog. In 1923 Fred Baxter was reported by his own master for not having the correct name and address on his dog's collar.

The Market Rasen Mail occasionally reported and with some relish more 'interesting cases.' In April 1907 George Todd of Claxby was charged with indecently assaulting Rose Waley age 15 of Usselby. Fred Surfleet was a witness. The story was reported at some length and suggested that horseplay of the rougher sort had got out of hand. The charge was reduced to common assault, the defendant pleaded guilty and was fined £1 with 9/- costs. Rose had to

tell her story in a crowded court.

In addition to dealing with the constabulary, neighbours had to deal with each other, often with unfortunate results. In 1921 Florence Hudson pleaded not guilty to the common assault of Mary Ann Crane. She was bound over for twelve months in the sum of £5 and costs. The same Florence Hudson sued Elizabeth Neville for common assault. Neville filed a cross summons but was still fined 20/- and bound over for twelve months on £5. Apparently Neville struck Hudson and tried to pull her out of the house. They both lived in the Terrace. In 1934 Louise Birks also of the Terrace was charged with stealing 2/6d from Violet Robinson of Claxby. The evidence was conflicting so the case was dismissed but the argument must have reached a pretty pitch to result in a court appearance. Louise Birks returned to court in 1935 to allege assault against Maud Smith. There were no witnesses and the case was dismissed, the magistrate remarking that some of the neighbours at the Terrace were very quarrelsome and on another occasion a magistrate having resolved another dispute between two residents of the Terrace refused to award costs because they would argue over that too. There was also a row about a dog which reached the courts. Of course the residents of the Terrace lived very close together and had to share only one tap. It no doubt encouraged feuds.

Prosecutions for motoring and other minor offences continued to the end of the century but the village doesn't seem to have harboured, at least knowingly, any major criminal. Feuds between neighbours reached the courts much less often than earlier in the century.

In the 1950s the constable was based in Osgodby and later he was withdrawn and increasingly the village was policed by mobile patrols. The tradition of special constables continued with first John Bristow and later Brain Hunter still active in the role at the end of the century.

## 11 POLITICS

At the beginning of the century the franchise was still limited to men and only if they satisfied certain conditions. Farmworkers and servants who moved annually were unlikely to be registered to vote. Women over thirty were not to obtain the vote until 1918, those over twenty one not until 1928. This meant that the number of voters was low and any addition or deletion from the list of electors could have a significant impact on the outcome of an election. Each party therefore fought hard to have their own voters added to the list and those of their opponents removed. In 1903 an application was made to remove from the list of electors a man from Claxby because he was receiving poor rate relief. In 1908 the Conservatives claimed for one Joseph Barton to be put on the list of occupiers in Claxby but the Liberals objected because he wasn't a tenant. Barton showed his tenancy agreement with Lord Yarborough and the revising barrister criticised the overseer saying that he must be impartial. Clearly it was very important for the system for registering or delisting voters to be adhered to strictly

This fighting to adjust the voters' list was a regular occurrence and on the evidence of the Market Rasen Mail,

rather more applications were made by the Liberals than by the Conservatives. Whether this indicated a higher proportion of Liberals or a more active agent is not clear. In 1910 the Unionist won the seat after four successive Liberal victories. A few days before the election Mr Davies, the new Liberal candidate attended a meeting at Claxby. The Market Rasen Mail recorded that it was exceptionally well attended and that the candidate was accorded a splendid reception. Mr Ringrose, Mr Hewitt and Mr Ogg were prominent at the meeting. Later in the same year the Liberals managed to add four lodgers to the voters' list and the Conservatives only one.

Politics caused great interest at all levels of society and without the aid of cinema, radio or television the only way for a candidate to be heard was to tour his constituency speaking at as many meetings as possible. This produced a much more personal and local approach compared with the end of the century and brought the local member much closer to his constituents. Specific issues also generated meetings although these were not always well attended. In 1913 a meeting on Tariff Reform in the Claxby schoolroom,

called by the Market Rasen Unionist Workers League attracted only a meagre attendance, possibly the Mail postulated, because the good weather induced people into their gardens. The League was more successful the following year when a large audience was addressed by Mr Kell of Nettleton Mine on the Home Rule Bill and Insurance Act. Mr Byron was in the chair and with him on the platform were Captain A Tennyson D'Eyncourt, Mr Francis and Mr Drakes.

In 1921, by which time women over the age of thirty were enfranchised, the Liberals had regained the Louth seat and with a notable candidate. Mrs Tom Winteringham, the first British woman returned to the House of Commons, was welcomed with great enthusiasm at the Market Rasen Liberal Institute. She was returned again in the election of the following year. In 1923 in anticipation of yet another election Mrs Winteringham, accompanied by Captain Wedgewood Benn MP DSO and two others attended a meeting at Claxby schoolroom and was presented with a bouquet by Miss Margaret Ogg. She held on to her seat on that occasion but lost it to the Tories in 1924 despite a vigorous campaign which included another meeting at Claxby when the bouquet was presented by Roland Bristow.

For a brief period from the mid 1920s politics generated enough interest in the village for the setting up of a Liberal Association. In October of 1925 the Market Rasen Mail reported on the opening monthly meeting of the Claxby and Normanby Liberal Association. It commented on the great interest in politics in rural areas. On that occasion 34 members were present. The impression given by the report was that the Association had been operating for a time and this was the first meeting of a new season. The following month 7 new members were enrolled and Miss Bristow became honorary secretary. An address was followed by a musical programme given by the Market Rasen Liberal Association. There are sporadic reports of further monthly meetings so it is reasonable to assume that the association was supported to an acceptable level. Indeed in November 1926 the reopening meeting of the Men's and Women's Liberal Association attracted 85 people and 10 new members were enrolled. The organisers wisely combined the political discussion with entertainment and refreshments. In 1927 70 people of whom 40 were paid up members listened to an address on Liberalism Past and Present and later in the same month 90 members attended a social. Things were still going well the following year when with the added attraction of hearing their local candidate, Mrs Winteringham and possibly rounded up by the 'energetic local secretary' Miss Bristow, 140 attended a public meeting chaired by that same secretary. One wonders if it was unusual for such a meeting to be chaired by a woman.

Clearly these meetings were attracting an audience from further afield than just Claxby and Normanby. The next reported meeting, in January 1929 was chaired by a Mr Sanderson, whose name appears no where else in the Claxby records but 84 people turning out on a winter's night, particularly if they travelled any distance, is an extraordinary

testament to the interest being taken in politics at the time. The following month 'despite poor weather' 70 people listened to Mr Woodger deal with the political situation before enjoying a musical evening.

The local Conservatives were trying to fight back by this time and in March they held a social and whist drive for the Conservative association where 5 new members were enrolled and at the end of the year they held another whistdrive for Louth Conservative Association funds.

The Rasen Mail has no further reports of any organised political activity in Claxby. The papers relating to the Liberal Association have not been deposited with any archive. It is intriguing to wonder whether the local associations simply withered away or whether the local correspondent for the Market Rasen Mail stopped reporting on the meetings. There were a few more references to political feelings in the village. The first was the report in the Mail of April 1946 when the Rev Austin Lee was the only candidate describing himself as a labour supporter in the elections to the Caistor RDC. He received just 12 votes. The next was of a meeting addressed by Marcus Kimball in 1964 which received considerable coverage in the Rasen Mail. This was the last reference to any significant national political activity in Claxby.

By the 1955 general election television was judged to be a significant factor but this was probably on a national basis and, as many rural people didn't have television, local candidates still visited as many villages and towns as they could. Candidates continued to come to Claxby at election times on 'whistle stop tours' when they paused for a few minutes to speak to whoever attended the meeting point. This seemed to last until the 1970s by which time it must have been judged to be ineffectual because subsequently the candidates started to canvas individual homes.

Local elections did not appear to have attracted the same level of interest. For much of the century the same member sat on Caistor Rural District Council for years at a time and national political parties did not contest them in the way they did by the end of the century. At the turn of the century, and until 1908 when he died, Mr G J Young of Claxby House represented the parish on the District Council. He was replaced without competition by Mr J Hewitt. Mr Hewitt left the parish in 1914. His replacement is not recorded. In 1924 H L Andrews took on the role. Again there appeared to be no other candidate. In 1931 the Rev Francis Smith took over, only a year after he became the Rector. He served until 1944 when Maurice Brant took over for both Normanby and Claxby. He was succeeded by his son Motley. Motley also served on the West Lindsey District Council which took over from Caistor RDC and he was the last representative who lived in one of the two parishes and although he did face polls he was voted in comfortably. The present system may theoretically be more democratic but few now choose to vote. This may be partly because of the loss of the close link between the local councillor and his constituents although some local representatives have attended parish council meetings regularly.

## 12 CLAXBY IN THE TWO WORLD WARS

The First World War which had such a profound impact nationally had a less immediate effect in Claxby than in many urban areas. This was probably the case in many rural villages. The only precursor event to give an indication of the changes the war was to bring was a demonstration by Lincolnshire's first and at the time only aviator who gave a flying exhibition at Market Rasen in 1913. The Market Rasen Mail reported the signing of the proclamation of war in August 1914.

In the 1914-18 war the government tried to avoid conscription and in the first eighteen months to two years of the war an extraordinary level of patriotism at a national level encouraged by considerable advertising prompted large numbers of young men to volunteer. Locally this propaganda had a limited effect. The Mail reported that the Market Rasen area responded badly to Lord Kitchener's appeal for troops. Claxby appeared to have had three, possibly four men volunteer. After 1916 conscription was introduced and a nation-wide system of tribunals was set up to grant exemptions for important war work. Two Claxby men were reported as having appeared before such a tribunal, one had his call up deferred for some months, the other's application for exemption was refused. The village also responded by subscribing to the Prince of Wales Relief Fund via the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Chapels. There was some evidence of heightened patriotism in the village. The school log book reports that on 21st October 1914 there was a lesson to all scholars on Trafalgar Day and Rule Britannia was sung.

The village's concerns at this time were prompted by the condition of Belgian refugees some of whom were living in the Caistor area. In February 1915 seven guineas was raised for the Belgian Relief Fund which was 'a record for any local gathering of a like nature and members of the Claxby District of the National Deposit Friendly Society are to be congratulated'. In fact Claxby's contribution was sent to York. Whether any of it returned to Lincolnshire is not recorded.

In April of the same year the village held a Patriotic Entertainment for the Soldiers and Sailors Fund. It started with the Belgian Anthem and ended with the National Anthem and five guineas was raised. The village had previously raised £10 for comforts for soldiers and sailors and 'local ladies have had a busy time making socks, shirts etc'. In addition the collecting box in Mr Shepherd's shop was opened and money sent to Private Thorpe of the 2nd Lincolnshire Regiment and Private Clark of the 1st Lincolns 'to be shared among their many chums'. Chums was a familiar term of the time. There was a regiment drawn from Grimsby called the Grimsby Chums. Like the more famous Accrington Pals it was a way of encouraging recruitment by allowing men to join up in groups of friends, neighbours and workmates. By December the village had organised another fund raising event, a social and sale. Mr Nettleship the Market Rasen auctioneer sold vegetables, apples, rabbits, ducks, chickens, turkeys, a pig, honey and jam for the Red Cross and for comforts for the Lincolnshire Regiments. The participants were from Claxby, Normanby and Usselby and

£25 was collected.

The school was affected by the war beyond the commemoration of past victories. In November 1915 the headteacher Miss Canty left to take charge of Holton le Moor school where the headmaster had joined the army. Fortunately Miss Alice Canty was available to take over and another sister Miss M H Canty became assistant mistress. Under their leadership patriotism continued to be encouraged in the school. On May 24th 1916 the Head Teacher gave an address on Empire Day and the children saluted the British flag and sang the National Anthem.

Later that year the realities of war were brought home to all the village by the 'Great Zeppelin Air Raid.' The Market Rasen Mail said that 'a large number saw and heard for the first time one or more of these monster airships which may impress the importance of absolute darkness at night'. Reminiscing forty years later about his wedding day, Mr W C Bristow said 'up to that time we had had no blackout and life was going on much as usual in villages like Claxby. We had a lot of people in for the wedding but we weren't having a honeymoon owing to the war. Every thing was going beautifully then there was a tap on the window and someone said 'The Zepps are here'. Most of the wedding guests immediately dispersed. Nobody quite knew what was going to happen. A huge Zeppelin could be seen flying low over Normanby hill making for Scunthorpe. The vibration set up by the engines was terrific. The actual danger was nothing like so great as in the bomber raids in the last war but it was so new to us to have the enemy overhead and we didn't know where or when the bombs were going to fall. So far as we heard only one bomb was dropped.' This was the last day on which the Claxby church bells were rung after nightfall until the end of the war. A ban was placed on bellringing so that the Zepps might not be guided by the bells to any possible target.

In a more mundane manner the pressures of war were emphasised by the first mention in the school log book in October 1916 of a holiday specifically to allow the children to help with the potato harvest. Even at that time the country relied on imports for a significant proportion of its food and a considerable expansion of agriculture had been required to feed the nation. Although children must have helped with both the grain and potato harvest before 1916 it had clearly become a national economic necessity by the middle of the war. These holidays continued through the interwar years and well into the 1950s. In 1917 five children were 'allowed in the interests of the National Service to go and weed corn'. In 1918 the whole school closed for this work and on September 23rd the log book records that the school closed at 11.10am 'so that the children might gather blackberries for H M Troops'.

Early in 1917 another social and sale was held and £40 2s 7d was raised to send to the 'boys who have gone out of Claxby, Normanby and Usselby'. Normanby and Claxby had also formed a War Savings Association in December 1916 and its first report in March 1917 said that during the first two weeks the Association had been in existence £20 had been subscribed and that there was a membership of one

hundred and thirty. The secretary, Miss Alice Canty received subscriptions every Monday between 3pm and 4pm and between 7pm and 8pm at the School. Miss Canty was also involved in the Women's War Labour Committee and was away from time to time. In addition in 1917 Gladys Bristow was organising the local end of the National Egg Collection and the school despatched ten packages of fruit and vegetables to the fleet.

Matters carried on much the same in 1918. Miss Bristow collected eighty seven eggs and 15/6d in January and the War Savings Association contributed a further £14 4 6d in February. Also in February a whist drive raised £13 1 5d for comforts for the soldiers. In June the newly formed WI discussed how to set up a fruit and vegetable depot for the navy. In August the fourth anniversary of the outbreak of war was commemorated by a united service at St Mary's. In November the Armistice was declared and no doubt the village breathed a sigh of relief and waited for everything to return to 'normal'. However disruption to life must have continued. Although Miss Bristow closed her egg collection with thanks to everyone, there were still shortages, notably of coal. The school closed for a week at the end of January and for a further week in March 1919 because there was no coal and it was with great relief that the head teacher recorded in the school log book that one and a half tons of coal were to be stored for future use. Thus Claxby weathered the First World War. It did not forget. The school suspended its lessons at 11am on 11th November 1919 and in the years thereafter for 'Silence and Remembrance after which was sung the Victory Hymn, Jesus shall reign where ere the sun and the National Anthem'.

It is difficult to confirm who enlisted from Claxby and who may have died in the war. There is no First World War memorial in the village and there is no recollection of villagers participating in or more especially dying on active service but the Rasen Mail does record the two volunteers already mentioned above. In addition a Mrs West of Osgodby was informed of the death of her husband in August 1916. He had enlisted from Claxby. In 1918 the Market Rasen Mail reported on the death of Private Chapman of the 10th West Yorks Regiment who died of wounds in France aged 29. Research in the parish registers indicated a poignant story. On 5 January 1916 Fred Chapman, labourer of Claxby married Ellen Markham of Acre House Cottages. His brother had married Nellie's sister some two years earlier. He had worked for Mr Byron at Normanby and joined up in March 1916. He was to stay alive in France for twenty one months. In 1922 an In Memoriam notice appeared in the Market Rasen Mail for Private F Chapman of Claxby. In addition there may have been a regular soldier from Claxby who died early in the war. Company Quartermaster Sergeant George Fred Munday (Mumby/Mundy)7674 of the 1st Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment, born in Claxby, enlisted at Lincoln, acting QMS was killed aged 32. He was the son of the late Fred David and Elizabeth Munday of Claxby. His death is recorded on the Menin Gate and an In Memoriam Notice was printed in the Market Rasen Mail on 11 December 1915 by his sisters Blanche and Sylvia and his nieces Lizzie and Mabel. Unfortunately research has not yet confirmed that this

particular family were living in the village at the time. A little more research could resolve this puzzle and perhaps these brave men should be formally commemorated in the village.

The Second World War had been rather more anticipated than the first although the country was still not ready to fight. In September 1938 the Market Rasen Mail welcomed the building of Binbrook aerodrome; in October a leading article told of strained nerves and stresses in London, Munich and Prague and recorded the arrival of 54,000 gas masks. In Claxby four newly appointed air raid wardens, W C Bristow, R Drakes, S Dalton and J Waters completed their ten weeks course in Caistor with 100% attendance and passed the examination. By January 1939 Hemswell aerodrome was under construction and Caistor RDC was complaining about the requirement to accommodate 6,000 civilians with 3 days notice. They quickly found that the villages were ready to receive refugee children in an emergency. In April the Mail was reporting weekly on the international situation and no doubt the wireless was doing likewise. In May 63 aeroplanes were seen over Market Rasen, and could presumably be seen at Claxby as well, rehearsing for Empire Day. They comprised 3 squadrons of Supermarine Spitfires, 2 of Hurricanes and 2 Blenheim bombers. Binbrook was ready for handover to the RAF in July. In September, with hostilities begun by Germany against Poland, 1,000 evacuees were expected in the area the following day. The school reopened after the summer



*Evacuees at Maultby's Farmhouse*

holidays with 25 local children and 15 evacuees mainly from Leeds together with two of their own teachers. It must have been a confusing time for everyone. The two Leeds teachers were sent back home within the week and in October another one arrived. One child returned to Leeds in November and shutters for the school windows arrived. There is little recollection of these children in the village so it may be that they didn't stay very long. We know that the Sharps had one boy, the Maultbys at Valley Farm had two, possibly three, and the Brants also helped accommodate them. Frank Maultby at Corner House took in the teacher. The children must have been so disorientated. Imagine them arriving from a large industrial city probably from a poor area but with street lighting, with electricity, water, and sewage facilities and buses or trams only to be faced with a small backward village with few houses connected to electricity, poor water supplies, no sewage and no shops to

speak of or any large buildings and virtually no transport, and most importantly without their family. However by November they were being initiated into some of the rural customs. The school log book recorded that the children were taken to a meet of the hounds reporting that 'they have not seen it before'; they probably hadn't seen a field before coming to Claxby.

Life changed much more quickly than in the First World War. In October and November 1939 petrol restrictions were introduced and ration cards issued. Bureaucracy and regulation increased. In addition to ration books, maximum prices were established for basic foodstuffs and the rules governing these could be complicated. They continued until well after the war finished. In 1949 Edward Wordley of Claxby was charged with making an unreasonable charge for milk. He was alleged to have charged a halfpenny too much for priority milk for consumption by children under five. As the milk cost the complainant 2d he was charging an extra 25%. The magistrates declared the case not proven but it demonstrates the draconian and detailed regulations people had coped with during the war.

In 1940 Miss Drayton and Miss Bristow had Public Service Vehicle licences, to drive Bristows coaches in the absence of the three Bristow boys who joined up. In addition to the Bristow boys, one of whom was to die at Monte Cassino in Italy other young men and women from the village joined the forces. Their names are given at the end of the chapter. Three were to die, Albert Arliss, Alan Bristow and Roy Wilson.

The village quietly resumed the collection of money for comforts for the troops and a Claxby and Normanby Knitting Party was established. It met fortnightly and by December 1940 had sent parcels to 'all our local boys serving'. The village would also have helped with Normanby's Spitfire Shoot organised by Mr Brant and Mr Cade to raise money for the Market Rasen Spitfire Fund. The shoot covered 1600 acres; 30 guns paid £93 for the right to take part and a whipround increased the total to £100. In 1941 the ARP patrol needed funds and held a whist drive which raised £10 15 6d. The ARP had taken over the WI Rooms so the Women's Institute was suspended for the duration.

As in the First War there was a great preoccupation with growing enough food for both local people and for the country as a whole. Although there was no comprehensive call up among agricultural workers, labour was scarce. The school children were given an extra holiday to help with potato planting in May 1941. This difficulty generated a locally developed potato planter which was demonstrated the following year. The labour situation on the farms had not improved in 1942 when children were helping with beet singling during specially arranged holidays. In August, Girl Guides were thistling on the cliffs for Mr Brant. Apparently the men didn't like the job but the girls enjoyed it. The villagers who would have always grown vegetables no doubt redoubled their efforts. Canada and the USA gave vegetable seeds and they were distributed by the WI. North American beans, cabbages, leeks and potatoes could well have been growing in Claxby gardens. Many in the village also kept a pig or two. Some of the children would have been involved

in the pig and bee keeping at the local secondary schools. The Secondary School in Market Rasen had a very successful beekeeping organisation which paid out up to 200% on its shares. It continued until well after the war and members of the organisation broadcast on the BBC. Its pig keeping operation was still running in the 1960s. Meat was very short. Rural people had some advantage over townsmen and women because they had access to rabbits and game however illicitly. Vegetarianism was not common at the time and many housewives had problems in making meals with the provisions available. The government came up with Lord Woolton's Pie, made in central kitchens across the country and available off ration. It was apparently quite popular and was distributed from Caistor for sale in the surrounding villages.

The ingredients were:

1lb potato	1lb cauliflower
1lb carrots	1lb turnip
Tsp veg extract	rolled oats

All topped with potato pastry or sometimes with cheese or ordinary pastry.

Wedding plans had to be curtailed and Sidney Dalton of Claxby and Kathleen Curtis of Market Rasen couldn't have a honeymoon because travel was difficult so went straight to their new home in Claxby. Life must have continued despite the shortages, the blackout and the increasing scarcity of labour as conscription bit ever harder. It would have been drab and worrying, especially if a family had a father or children in the forces. For skilled farmworkers who were exempted from the call up life may have been improving. In 1940 the Mail's leader commented that 'war can have incidental benefits and that it was excellent that the farm worker should share in the amenities of the townsman and that their pay had now increased'.

In 1943 a disaster occurred. Raymond Wilson aged 13 and his friend Edgar Roach were out after tea playing on land near to Grange Farm. According to Edgar they found a 'queer shaped thing with two tapes attached, lying on the ground'. They pulled the tapes and the 'thing' probably a grenade exploded, killing Raymond and injuring Edgar. He managed to run back to the Terrace and told his tale to Mr Maultby and had his wounds bound by Mrs A Sharp. Raymond is buried in St Mary's churchyard. The Home Guard had a range on part of Grange Farm which had been abandoned in the depression. This site was chosen for a big tactical Home Guard exercise. The start was the message 'German parachutists have landed at point XYZ. They have taken up a strong position at the foot of the Wolds. Send reinforcements' This was the signal for Home Guard detachments from the surrounding area to arrive by bus at the Caistor/Brigg road fork, jump out and set off in battle formation. The Mail's reporter had a hard time keeping up with them. A Bren gun carrier went past indicating that the military were joining in. Mortars and smoke shells were fired, rifles and machine guns were all using live ammunition. The only interruption came when the smoke shells set fire to the surrounding heath. All firing stopped, everyone helped to put the fire out. Then the war resumed. Despite the sadness everyone felt over Raymond's death only

two months before, no doubt many from the village were out watching the action. For understandable reasons, the public was not invited but there was apparently no attempt at secrecy, only a requirement to stay out of harm's way.

In the same month as the Home Guard exercise, Claxby and Normanby raised the astonishing sum of £3,449 in the Wings appeal to build more aircraft. Only one event was reported, a whist drive. There must have been a huge effort to raise such a sum. Previously the two villages had contributed £1200 to a warship appeal. Fund raising also continued for the less glamorous needs of wartime. £4 8s was raised for the Army Benevolent Fund at a whist drive in April, £60 was made at a fete in Normanby for the Red Cross and £37 10s for the comforts fund for those from Claxby serving in the forces, at a sale of work in October. The report added that everyone in the village contributed something and £2 10s was given to each serving man and woman.

There were many airfields in Lincolnshire and there were a number of occasions when aircraft leaving or more often returning to their home base failed to make it. It happened a number of times around Normanby but the only aircraft that came down near Claxby was on 11 May 1944 when a P38 lightning based at Goxhill crashed about 100 yards north of the railway station.

There were by 1945 some thousands of prisoners of war at various camps in the district. Some were used on local farms. The Italian POWs, who had a camp on the edge of Osgodby Woods, seem to have been allowed quite a bit of freedom and gathered in Brigg and Market Rasen. There were a number of complaints from women who were unwilling to go unescorted after dark. What did the women of Claxby make of this? They would have had to pass the camp on their way home from Market Rasen.

By this time, 1945, most people would have felt that the war must be nearly over but they did not slacken in their efforts to support the voluntary organisations. In April a sale raised £70 for the Red Cross, the largest sum made at such an event for thirty years. In May a series of collections contributed around £50 for the Welcome Home Fund and Claxby was one of a number of villages that contributed blood for field hospitals in Germany. A thanksgiving service in the same month was well attended but in August the

Reverend Austin Lee caused controversy by refusing to hold another Thanksgiving service for the sudden end to the war. This must refer to the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and must have been one of the earliest anti atom bomb protests. The Mail does not report on the attitude of the village although the Rev Lee said he was surprised by the number who agreed with him. In November the poppy appeal made £10.

The war still impinged heavily on the village in 1946 although the concerns were changing. More efforts went into the Welcome Home Fund. A total of £153 10s was raised, £8 for each of the nineteen boys and girls who served in the forces in the War. By this time it appeared that all but one had come home. The one was Quartermaster Sergeant George Slater who sent back his Welcome Home Fund cheque to be given to the Army Benevolent Fund saying that he was stationed with his wife in Tripoli where there was a wide variety of goods available and no requirement for coupons or points.

The village had lost many of its footpaths during the war when food production was paramount but in 1946 the Parish Council was already pressing for them to be reinstated.

VE Day, in June 1946 was celebrated with a service in the parish church followed by a united service in the Wesleyan Chapel where the church sidesman was the organist. A grand tea was served including an unlimited supply of ice cream and three large pieces of home cured ham. Sports had been planned but the weather was too bad so everyone gathered at the school for a social evening.

The Home Guard range at Grange Farm caused problems long after the war. Trevor Lyle had to call in the Army Bomb Disposal Unit on a regular basis from 1965 when he took over the farm until the early 1970s. The most memorable occasion was in 1967/8 when the tractor driver came back to the farm very white in the face because his tractor had turned up a mortar. The men who carried out the removal and disposal were ex POWs, or displaced persons who walked the fields with handheld metal detectors. Carrying out this type of work was a condition of them being allowed to remain in the country. Much of the ordnance found was blank but as there was always the chance that one would be live great care was taken.

## ROLL OF HONOUR

### Died as a result of injuries received

#### 1914-1918

F Chapman  
G Munday

#### 1939-1945

Albert Arliss  
Alan Bristow  
Roy Wilson

### Served and returned safely 1939 - 1945

D R Bristow	E Roach
J S Bristow	J Robinson WAAF
G Bycroft	C Saunby
W Dalton	J B Sharp
H Fieldsend	G Slater
C T Hewson	M E H Smith ATS
S L Hewson WAAF	N Surfleet
G R Ogg	M A Wressell ATS