

Rutland Local History & Record Society

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Seaton Village Walk

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INTRODUCTION

The village name was first recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as *Seieton* and *Segentone*, but it is of uncertain origin. It probably means *the farm or village of a man named Sæga*, but it may refer to an otherwise unrecorded stream named *Sæge*, meaning *slow-moving*. Later names were *Saeton* (12th century), *Seton* (13th century) and *Seyton* (13th to 16th century).

The parish is separated from Northamptonshire by the river Welland which forms its southern boundary. The ground falls towards the Welland from a ridge to the north of the village. The Barrows, just south-west of the village, are not so high as the ridge, but stand up conspicuously out of the valley.

The valley is crossed by the distinctive Welland Viaduct (also known as Seaton Viaduct and Harringworth Viaduct), which was built in 1875-78. It still carries the original Kettering to Manton railway line over its 82 arches with services to and from London through to Oakham.

The former Seaton station is about half a mile south-east of the village. It opened on 2nd June 1851 and closed on 6th June 1966, but the station buildings remain substantially intact. Lines linking Rugby, Peterborough, Stamford and Uppingham passed through the station.

Seaton Meadows is a biological Site of Special Scientific Interest adjacent to the railway viaduct and the B672 road. It is traditionally managed as hay pasture and is a rare example of unimproved alluvial flood meadow. Grasses growing here include meadow foxtail, red fescue, sweet vernal grass and Yorkshire fog.

THE VILLAGE MAP

The map attached to this walk is based on the 25 inch to one mile Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1886. Consequently, later buildings, extensions and demolitions are not shown. Numbers in the text, for example [12], refer to locations shown on the map.

Please:

Respect private property.

Use pavements and footpaths where available.

Take great care when crossing roads.

Remember that you are responsible for your own safety.

THE WALK

The walk starts and ends at the Village Hall [1] in Main Street. Opposite the Village Hall is one of the three remaining thatched cottages in the village [2]. At one time most of the cottages in the villages would have been thatched. The pinfold, where stray livestock was impounded, was next to this cottage, at the corner of Baines Lane.

Baines Lane is named after a long-standing Rutland family that rented Manor Farm from the Monckton estate and were elsewhere in the village for over 200 years. In the days before enclosure when Seaton was an open field parish, an occupation road [3] led from Up Hall farm, across Baines Lane, past the village hall and along Drury's Lane to the West Field.

Walk east along Main Street. Behind the wall on the left [4] stood Manton's wheelwright's workshop, next to Palmer Tett's beer house. Seaton's many stone walls, like those seen here, are an attractive feature of the village.

At the end of the path, the red brick house on the left [5] was the Post Office from 1881 until the 1960s.



Seaton Post Office in 1907. (Jack Hart Collection)

Take the lane to the left of the telephone box past Little Thatch [6] to the junction with Thompsons Lane.

This lane was once was an ancient track extending through to the Uppingham Road and ridgeway beyond. It was also a rear service lane to the messuages on Main Street.

The former council houses [7] to the right on Thompsons Lane are on the site of a 5th to 7th century pagan Anglo-Saxon Cemetery. A cremation urn was found in the bank in front and skeletal remains in the gardens, and under the buildings.

Thompsons Lane is named after a family who were resident in the village and the area for at least 500 years. The last Thompsons in the village lived in part of the large house [8] which had another gable wing, since demolished. It was divided into four dwellings and Thompson's cobbler's workshop.

Follow the lane to the right, walking down to the crossroads [9]. Part of the old village allotments [10] created in 1856 at the enclosure have been converted into a village playing field.

The crossroads have moved slightly to the east, and once were at the junction where Thompsons Lane meets the end of the Main Street, at the end of the pub car park. The village windmill [11] stood on Glaston Road at the brow of the hill until it was moved down to the valley before 1900.



The old name for the field across on the far side of the Glaston Road [12] is Dead Man's Plot, denoting where plague victims were buried in 1625.

From the crossroads there is a good view of the Welland Viaduct which crosses the valley.

The road down to Haringworth, known as Station Road, was originally known as Green Gate Way, and is part of one of the old coach routes across Rutland from Northamptonshire.

Morcott Road originally was a road across the headlands, dividing two of the village open fields and leading to a footpath to Morcott. It extends down to the valley and up Red Hill to Barrowden.

Facing west along Main Street, on the left is the drive leading down to the old Rectory [13] which can be seen through the trees. It was built in 1821 by John Boyfield, under the direction of the Rev. Hugh Monckton and replaced an old Parsonage on Church Lane.

Part of the John Senex London to Nottingham coach map of circa 1720 showing the route through Haringworth, Seaton and Glaston

Walk west along Main Street. On the right, the George and Dragon [14] is an early 19th century rebuild of a possibly 17th century building (contrary to the date stone of 1771 near the inn sign).

The house next door to the west [15] is of 17th century origin and was once divided into two cottages. It stands opposite the site near the churchyard wall of one of the former village pumps [16].

Continue through the narrow gap being careful of the traffic. The red brick cottages on the bank [17] on the right date from 1827.

Priory Cottage [18], on the left, stands next to the churchyard entrance. Enter the churchyard and walk over to the railed enclosure at the east end to see the Monckton burial plot. This was used when the vault under the church became full. The Moncktons of Fineshade were Lords of the Manor here from 1771 to 1936. Notice the fragments of medieval grave covers in the church wall near this burial plot.

In the west churchyard wall, towards the bottom of the churchyard [19] you can see the signs of an extensive stone building, probably part of the Up Hall manor.

Now is a good opportunity to visit All Hallows church [20]. It is normally open and a separate guide is available.

On leaving the church, walk down the footpath to the gate and steps at the bottom of the churchyard. Opposite is the former school [20], now known as Old School House. It dates from 1859 with extensions in 1872 and in the 1960s, but the school closed in 1946. It was built on the probable site of the house of John Digby, who was a recusant Roman Catholic in the time of Elizabeth I, and implicated, in the eyes of the government at least, in plotting against the Queen. As a consequence, he was imprisoned in the Tower of London at the time of the Babington plot of 1586. He was later released after his family paid a large bond. He returned to Seaton where he still harboured catholic priests and was repeatedly fined by the authorities. He was an uncle of Sir Everard Digby, the Gunpowder conspirator.

Walk down the lane to the left of Old School House to the stile at the bottom [21], passing Nurse's cottages [22] which have early 19th century brick facings over a stone core.



The George and Dragon in 1930. (Jack Hart Collection)



George Henton's view of Seaton watermill and windmill in 1913. (ROLLR)

An ancient footpath leads from this stile, past the watermill which you can see in the valley below, to Haringworth. Ridge and furrow originating from the open fields can normally be seen from here.

Retrace your steps towards Church Lane. On the right, the new houses stand on the site of Royce's Barn [23], a reminder that the ancestors of Sir Henry Royce, one of the founders of the Rolls Royce company, lived in the village for many years. He was awarded the OBE in 1918 and was created baronet of Seaton in the County of Rutland in 1930 for his services to British aviation.

Return to Church Lane and turn left. The new barn conversions further down on the right-hand side are of farm buildings erected by the Monckton Estate [24] after the enclosure of 1856. They are on the site of the original Up Hall Manor. On the last building of these barn conversions, you can see the remains of a 'V for Victory' in white paint, which is the last surviving example of patriotic graffiti placed around the village by a lady in the Second World War. Church Farmhouse [25] on the left was built by the Moncktons in the 19th century.

Turn to the right and walk a short distance along Baines Lane. On the left across the paddock is the Manor House [26] with its stepped gable end. It dates from the 17th century when the three manors of Seaton were united by the common ownership of the Sheffield family.



Seaton Manor House in 1910. (Jack Hart Collection)

Retrace your steps and walk down Maltings Lane (which does not have a name sign). In the field on the left [27] were a tannery and a hop ground in the 17th century, marking the diversification of agriculture in that period.

Walk down Maltings Lane to the junction with Thorpe Road and Moles Lane [28]. Looking down Thorpe Road to the bottom of the valley, you can see the line of trees and bushes which mark the railway embankment of the Rugby to Stamford railway which was built in 1848 and which closed in 1966.

Further down Thorpe Road, where the hedge is lower, the small hills seen on the right are The Barrows, the probable location of an ancient burial site, one of many in the valley. Seaton Common, with its large area of inter-commoning with Thorpe and Lyddington is on the highest hill.

Walk along Moles Lane with the Manor House on the right. Over the wall on the left you can see Ridings Farm [29] now renamed The Ridings. The new Seaton House [30] stands on the bank at the junction of Moles Lane with the lane leading to The Ridings. A line of cottages once stood on this bank. There was also another farm here and a lane extending south-west along the southern flank of the village towards the drift way and the common. The farm and its buildings together with the lane have since disappeared.

The Ridings was the family home of the Broughton family, including Andrew Broughton, the clerk of the court at the trial of Charles I in 1649. To avoid being arrested for treason after the restoration of Charles II in 1660, he fled to Switzerland where he died in exile. Major-General Robert Overton also lived in this house until his death in 1678. He fought in the Civil War battles at Marston Moor (July 1644) and Dunbar (September 1650), and commanded parliamentary forces in Scotland.

Moles Lane was probably named after a family of servants of the Broughtons in the 17th century. Ridings Farm became part the Heathcote of Normanton, later Ancaster estate.

Walk up Moles Lane to its junction with Main Street. The dip in the field opposite, beyond the stone wall, marks one of the geological fault lines that Seaton stands on.

Turn to the left and walk along Main Street. On the right, the old steps in the wall [31] lead to the cricket field and the footpath to Bisbrooke. Opposite the old steps is Homestead [32] where Mr Woodcock the village carrier lived. Claremont [33] to the right is on the site of another large 17th century farmhouse, some traces of which survive in the cricket field behind. Note the remains of a farmhouse in the wall to the left which once belonged to the Gilson family.

After the entrance to the West Farm development on the left are three 18th century farmhouses: Woodbine Cottage [34] (now known as Fineshade), West Farm [35] and The Lilacs [36]. These buildings are probably on the site of Down Hall, one of the medieval manors of Seaton. Remains of a 9th to 10th century building were found when excavations were being carried out for the new development site [37] at West Farm.

Further along the street, set back from the street to the right, is the quaintly named Sparrow Hall [38] which was converted from three workmen's cottages. It was named as such in the 19th century because of the many sparrows that nested in the thatch.

Further along on the right, are a series of estate cottages [39] built by the Monckton Estate in 1883 and marked with EPCM for Edward Phillip and Christabel Monckton.

Retrace your steps past Moles Lane towards the village hall [1]. On the left are two more Monckton cottages [40], now converted into a single dwelling. On the right, again converted into one house, are two former red brick cottages once known as Granny Lacks [41].

The attractive thatch cottage to the left [42] was restored in the 1970s and is next door to Croft House (18 Main Street) [43], which was once the Three Horseshoes public house. When the Welland Viaduct was being built railway workers slept twelve to a room at this inn. Opposite, is the site of the village Smithy [44] which was demolished in 1973.

You have now reached the end of the walk.

Acknowledgments

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Hilary Crowden
(Updated by Robert Ovens)

Based on the Ordnance Survey 1st
edition 25" to 1 mile map of 1886

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