

IX

NATIONAL FARM SURVEY OF ENGLAND & WALES 1940-1943

Following the outbreak of World War II in 1939 the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) set up County War Agricultural Executive Committees (“County War Ags”), initially to increase food production by directing a ploughing-up campaign. It is not clear what effect, if any, this had on Grasby and Clixby. Once, however, the short term objective had been met thought was given to implementing a more general National Farm Survey to form the basis of post-war planning. This was seen at the time as a “Second Domesday Book”, a permanent and comprehensive record of conditions on the farms in England and Wales. As a source for local historians the survey is invaluable, providing an enormous database of land ownership and land usage in mid-C20th Britain (a more limited survey was also carried out in Scotland). The survey comprised three elements:

1. A primary farm record giving tenure and occupation, the natural state of the farm (fertility, equipment, water and electricity supplies, any infestations of weeds or pests and the quality of management, rated A, B or C.
2. Statistics of crop acreages, livestock numbers and information on rent and occupancy.
3. A map of each farm showing its boundaries and the fields contained in it (these are currently only available for viewing at The National Archives).

Surveys for Grasby & Clixby

The surveys for Grasby and Clixby were carried out during the second part of 1941 and early in 1942. 22 farms were surveyed in Grasby and 3 in Clixby.

Table 7

The pattern of farm size of resident farmers in 1941/42

Size of farm	Number of farmers
200+ acres	3 (2 in Clixby)
100–199 acres	4 (1 in Clixby)
50 – 99 acres	2
30 – 49 acres	1
20 – 29 acres	2
10 – 19 acres	4
Below 10 acres	9

The most surprising fact shown in the table above is the number of small holdings included in the survey.

Large Farms (more than 200 acres)

By far the largest farm in 1942 was at Grasby Top, owned by Mr A J Hilton, with land in Owmbly, Grasby and Clixby. There were yards and housing (6 cottages in "fair" condition) at Owmbly Top, Grasby Top and Clixby Top but Mr Hilton, although he owned the farm, lived in Brigg next to the Monument roundabout. His father purchased the land, previously tenanted by Henry Dudding, from the West/Webb Trust which was wound up around 1928. According to his grandson, the 622 acres were bought at auction for £22,392, at £36 per acre, for which a down payment of just 2s/6d was made and a mortgage taken out for rest. He had apparently made money during World War I from a farm he owned near Habrough and put his son in to manage Grasby Top. The farm comprised 180 acres of pasture (including 50 acres of permanent grassland) and 442 acres of arable land. Barley was the main cereal crop (180 acres), followed by wheat (58 acres) and oats (46 acres). The main root crop was sugar beet (119 acres), followed by turnips, swedes and mangolds (35 acres), with 12 acres of carrots (for human consumption) and just 5 acres of potatoes. All the soils were described as "medium" and 100% good, but with no ditches or drainage.

It was clearly a mixed farm with a herd of 49 cattle (presumably stores), one bull kept for service, 643 sheep, including 8 rams kept for service, (more than twice the size of any other flock in the parish), just over 100 fowls and 6 pigs. Although the farm had 3 tractors, all Fordson's, (out of a total of only 9 in the parish), there were still 13 farm work horses (3 unbroken) and 17 farm hands (2 casual). Water came from wells and there was no electricity. The farm was rated **A** for management in the MAF survey.

Again, according the grandson above (Ron Hilton the current owner in 2017), this large farm struggled during the 1950s and was not making enough money to pay even the interest on its mortgage. At this time it still relied on its pre-war system of production and employed 18 men. Its salvation came with the introduction of frozen foods and Bird's Eye setting up factories in Grimsby in the early 1960s. It came back into profit growing mainly vining peas, but also Brussel sprouts, for freezing. Since then livestock have disappeared and it has flourished as a modern arable farm.

The next largest two farms were in Clixby and still part of the Winkburn Hall estate, owned now by Richard Craven-Smith-Milnes, a descendant of the Pegge-Burnells.

The tenant of Clixby Manor Farm was Mr G.W. Markham & Son, who was paying an annual rent of £200 for 408 acres of land (the farm was tenanted by Joseph Spilman in 1910). This was George Markham and his son, William Clifford, previously of Glebe Farm in Grasby, who moved to Clixby after the brothers sold Bentley House and its land in 1923, but not

until after Captain Rowland Ben vacated the farm in 1932, who had been the tenant there since 1925.

The soils on the farm were described as all “light”, 70% “fair” and 30% “bad” in condition. There was one cottage in “good” condition and a labour force of 8 (2 casual). The farm had two tractors (Case), but there were still 12 work horses (5 unbroken).

The farm comprised 90 acres of permanent pasture and 318 acres of arable land. As with Grasby Top Farm, the main cereal crop was barley (114 acres) with 36 acres of oats and just 3 acres of wheat. Turnips and swedes (for fodder) occupied 54 acres and sugar beet 40 acres. There were only 4 acres of potatoes.

The farm had a herd of 52 cattle (one bull for service) and a flock of 286 sheep, but with no rams. In addition there were just 2 pigs and no poultry.

Interestingly, the management of the farm was rated as only *B*, with the comment “lack of initiative”. One is left wondering whether this was largely because of George’s age, over 70 (although his son was working on the farm), an unwillingness to modernize, or the fact that they were tenants and not owners of the farm. In 1950 the rent went up to £400 and the Markhams gave up the tenancy in 1954.

The second farm in Clixby, Clixby House Farm, was 306 acres and tenanted by Mr H.C. Spilman, who had been there 14 years in 1942. This was Henry Spilman, son of Robert who was the tenant in 1910 (one assumes that Robert died in 1928). As with Clixby Manor Farm, all the land was described 100% “light”, and all was in “fair” condition. Management was rated as *B*, again through “lack of initiative”. There were 7 permanent farm workers and two cottages rated as being in good condition (as they should have been having been built in only 1938, with assistance of a government grant of £10 p.a. from the Ministry of Health). Piped water had also arrived in Clixby in 1935. The annual rent payable was £213 6s, £13 6s more for a smaller acreage than that of the neighbouring Manor Farm (see above). There was only one tractor (International) on the farm and 11 working horses (none unbroken). Clixby House Farm comprised 69 acres of pasture and 237 acres of arable land. The main cereal crop, again, was barley with 82 acres, followed by 35 acres of oats and 29 acres of wheat. 34 acres of turnips and swedes were grown for fodder, with an additional 20 acres of sugar beet. There was also a half acre orchard.

Very similar in number to both Grasby Top and Clixby Manor farms, Clixby House had 48 cattle, with one bull kept for service. It had a flock of 298 sheep, with 4 rams kept for service, a few pigs (10), largish poultry flock (348) and 4 goats.

Medium Size Farms (100-199 acres)

Mill Farm was 178 acres, part owned and part rented by Mrs E. Foster. She had been the occupier of the holding for 12 years. It is also certain that this was Edwin Smith’s farm in 1910. The mill closed in the 1920s.

The soil was described in 1941 as 100% “light”, which suggests that the farm at this time was to the north of the A1084 on Wolds land, whereas, as well as his Wold land, Edwin Smith also rented a significant acreage “on the moor”, which was likely to have been described as at least “medium” or possibly “peaty”. That said, 8 acres of the farm were described as “rough grazing” and it is difficult to know where this was located. The whole farm was described as being in “good” condition and there was piped water to the house and farm buildings. There were 4 full time workers, two of whom were male family members, and one part time worker. Mrs. Foster had one tractor (Fordson) and 5 working horses, all mares, none unbroken. The farm was graded *A* in the survey for management. It had 110 acres with a rental value of £130, and 68 acres rented at £72 per annum.

The crops grown and livestock kept on the farm followed a similar pattern to the large farms, albeit on a smaller scale, with 32 acres of pasture and 144 acres of arable land. There were 43 acres of barley, 20 acres of oats and 17 acres of wheat. Roots comprised 9 acres of turnips and swedes for fodder and 23 acres of sugar beet, with just one acre of potatoes. There was a herd of 26 cattle, with a bull calf being reared for service, a flock of 176 sheep, with 2 rams used for service, 11 pigs and a sizeable poultry flock of 376 birds.

By 1941 Grasby House Farm had been in the Wilmore family for 56 years. William Wilmore died in 1930, at which point Willie Dann moved to Grasby House Farm from Little Drift Cottage, formerly known as Low Farm (he had bought this cottage in 1905, along with Little Burstalls, a field of 2 acres 2 roods and 17 perches, for £105). In 1941 Willie Dann owned 84 acres (rental value £105) and rented a further 34 acres (annual rent £45 10s), making a total of 118 acres, more than double the size of the farm in 1910. Willie Dann’s son, Rowland, had married in 1938 and was living at Little Drift Cottage. The farm’s soils were described as “medium” and its overall condition as “fair”. There was piped water to the house and farm buildings and a stream fed the fields. Both the 39 acres of pasture and 79 acres of arable land were described as being in good condition. Fertilisers were used on the latter, but not the former. There were 3 full time male farm workers, one of whom was a member of the family, presumably Rowland. The farm had one tractor (Fordson) and 4 working horses, 2 mares and 2 geldings. Management of the farm was rated *A* in the survey.

The balance of crops and livestock differed a little here in that, although barley was still the main cereal crop (22 acres), more wheat (13 acres) than oats (10.5 acres) were grown. The increase in wheat production, however, appears to have been in direct response to the “ploughing up of grass fields” campaign as this was one of three farms in the parish in 1941 identified in the survey to have put aside, in this case, a 3.5 acre field for this purpose.

Even though sugar beet was the main root crop (10 acres), more potatoes (5 acres) than turnips and swedes (3 acres) were grown. This was also

one of only 3 farms in the parish to grow carrots (1.75 acres) and the only one to grow peas/beans (0.25 acres) for human consumption. 22 cattle and only 75 sheep (with 2 rams for service) were kept, but pigs were more in evidence (34). There was also a flock of 216 poultry. This was perhaps a perfect example of a truly mixed farm of the time, spreading the risks and opportunities for income as widely as possible. Rowland's son, Arthur, was born in 1943. When interviewed in the 1990s by Ifor Barton, Arthur provided an insight into how the farm operated when he was a boy and a teenager after the war and during the 1950s. In about 1950 his family moved from Little Drift to the Old Vicarage Cottage on Station Road. This was after Willie Dann died in 1947. He said that by then the farm was about 200 acres in size. Arthur left school when he was 15 and moved straight into farming. The farm had 4 full-time workers and 2 or 3 part-time and casual workers. Work horse numbers had dropped from 4 to one, but they now had 4 tractors, 2 grey "Fergies" and 2 Fordsons.

According to Arthur, they had 12 cows, which were milked by hand, and calves were kept for beef. The farm also had a bull, called Angus, which apparently used to escape regularly to visit the cows at Bentley House Farm. By this time they had only 4 or 5 pigs kept for fattening, one or two for the family and the rest sold. They also had ducks and chickens, kept for egg production and to fatten for selling. Arthur makes no mention of sheep, which would have been a major change of direction for the farm.

Ploughing was done in spring and spring barley then sown, followed by sugar beet, using a drill. Potatoes were planted by hand before, in the 1950s, a 2-row planter was bought. From May the beet was singled and hoed by hand using casual labour. Some side-hoeing was also carried using Boxer, the one remaining horse on the farm, pulling a skerry (which could be a term confined to Lincolnshire and meaning a horse-drawn hoe). When the corn was 4 inches high, clover seed was spread by hand (under-sowing) for cattle feed the following year.

Hay making was in June, cutting both grass and clover, which was still loose –stacked. During the summer the corn was cut and tied into sheaves using a binder, stooked by hand and left to dry, after which it was carted to the stack yard (an area now occupied by a new house and garden on Station Road, appropriately named Stack Yard House).

Potatoes were harvested and left on the ground to be picked by casual labour and school children. Arthur recalls his father keeping a register of the school children, who came from Scunthorpe schools during term time (whether this was before or after the school holidays is not clear). The children were collected each day in a lorry driven by Rowland. The potatoes were led into the farm yard (quite probably using Boxer – apparently one of the last uses for horses on farms was in collecting and bringing in root crops as a well-trained horse, which would move forward and stop on just a voice command as required, was much better than climbing on and off a tractor to move a trailer forward in stages) where they were covered in straw for storage in what Arthur called a "potato pie". Sugar beet was harvested much later in the year, originally

by hand, before Rowland purchased a beet harvester in about 1952. The beets were left in rows for the leaves to be chopped off, loaded and led in to be stored before going by lorry to the sugar beet factory in Brigg (the inference here being that the railway was no longer being used). Mangles and swedes were also grown for cattle feed. Cattle (again, sheep are not mentioned) were turned out to eat the sugar beet (and presumably mangle and swede) tops before ploughing for the winter sown corn. Another winter task was riddling potatoes, large ones went for eating, medium size ones for seed and the really small ones went to feed pigs. Wrights of Caistor were the thrashing contractors at the time, spending two or three days at each farm. Little had changed in the process, save for the steam engine being replaced by the tractor (often a green single cylinder Field-Marshall, coupled to a very large flywheel to drive the thrasher. Marshalls were, of course, based in Gainsborough). According to local reports, several thrashing machines were stored in the old chalk pits when not in use. The farm bought its first combine harvester in the 1960s. Barley was sold for malting and wheat for flour.

On July 24th 1941 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England put up for sale by auction, held at the Parish Hall in Brigg, 225 acres 2 roods and 26 perches of Church owned residential and agricultural properties in Grasby, Searby-cum-Owmbly and Somerby. In Grasby the sale included the “Old Vicarage” (built by Tennyson-Turner) and 13.5 acres of grounds and paddocks, “Glebe Farm” (tenanted by Willey & Feirn) comprising farm buildings (but not, interestingly, Glebe House which had already been sold to F.E. Tee in 1938) and 75 acres of land, “Church Hill Cottage”, the Y.M.C.A. hut (now the village hall), the school playground, nearly 10 acres of “Arable Allotments” (tenanted by J.R. Frankish & others), and a further 9 fields (tenanted by Willey & Feirn and W.D. Wilmore), amounting to a further 54.6 acres. The two fields farmed at the time by Willie Dann Wilmore were also rented by his father in 1910 and are opposite Beech House, next to Grasby Road. They are today known locally as “Holy Land”. It is possible that Willie Dann bought these 15.6 acres by private treaty.

In October 1941 the MAF survey described “Vicarage Farm” as 109 acres tenanted by Messrs. Willey & Feirn. According to the sales particulars above, Willey & Feirn rented 110.509 acres of Church land (likely to be a precise figure), which indicates that the entire farming enterprise was confined to land owned by the Church. The sales particulars also provide evidence of exactly which fields were under permanent pasture and which arable land at the time. Hand written notes in both the sales particulars and the survey indicate that Mr. G. Riggall purchased “Glebe Farm” for £1350. Unfortunately, what is not clear is whether or not he purchased other fields, sold as separate lots, in addition to Glebe Farm, at the same time.

According to the 1941 survey, Willey & Feirn’s farm comprised 18.5 acres of pasture and 90.5 acres of arable land and they had been the tenants for 3 years. The sales particulars above indicate that there were 11 acres of permanent pasture below the Old Vicarage and nearly 2 acres

around Glebe Farm (at the end of Babb's Lane and just south of the barns and yard). All the land was described as "light" (soils) and "fair" (condition). A significant proportion of the arable land (62.6 acres) was Wold land, either side of Grasby Wold Lane, previously tenanted by George Markham in 1910. This Wold land was at a later date purchased by Willie Dann Wilmore. The remainder was a field adjacent to and north of the arable allotments (9.7 acres) and adjacent to the south bank of North Kelsey Beck, on the west side of Grasby Road (10.8 acres). There were 3 full time farm workers, one tractor (International) and 6 farm work horses (two unbroken). There was piped water. The annual rent was £85 and the management of the farm was rated **A** by the survey.

The fourth and final of the medium size farms appeared to have been in a poor state. As the name indicates, Moor Farm comprised 112 acres of enclosed land, formerly part of Caistor Moor, in the parish of Clixby. Access to the farm was from the Caistor/North Kelsey Road, but the house no longer exists and most of the land is now part of the Cherry Valley complex. The tenant in 1942 was Mr. James Willey and the land was owned by Beaver & Wheatman of Retford, Notts. The soil was described as "light", but only 75% of the arable land was rated as "fair", with 25% "bad" and all the grass land was rated "bad" in the MAF survey. There were 25 acres of derelict land, water was provided by wells and a stream. The farm had no tractors, only 3 work horses and there was one full time farm worker. Mr. Willey had been the tenant for 23 years and his annual rent was just £64. The management of the farm was rated **C** in the survey (of the 300,000 farms and holdings in England and Wales classified by the survey, 58% were **A**, 37% **B** and only 5% **C**) and the reason given in this case was "lack of initiative and power".

In terms of the crops and livestock, there were more oats (15 acres) than barley (11.5 acres) grown and no wheat. With respect to roots, there were 15 acres of turnips and swedes grown for fodder, 6 acres of sugar beet and 2 acres of potatoes. A further 12.5 acres of mustard ("for fodder or ploughing in") was grown and there were 13 acres of bare fallow (evidence of a "lack of power"?). With a further 10 acres of rough grazing, the above is evidence enough of a low level of productivity. Livestock numbers were also modest with 14 cattle, 41 sheep (no rams) and 5 pigs. An important source of income may have been poultry as Mr Willey did have a largish flock of 429 fowl.

It is interesting to note that, although not mentioned in the survey (which isn't surprising) by 1942 Mr. Willey's land adjacent to the Caistor/North Kelsey road had been affected by the building of RAF Caistor airfield. It doesn't seem that any of the farm's land had been requisitioned by the MOD, but James had been ordered to fell trees on the approach to the runways. He gave up the tenancy in 1944 and the farm was sold by the estate to Henry Blackburn from Fonaby for £14,001.

Small Farms (30-99 acres)

By 1941 the Middleton family farm was still based at Pond House and it had increased in size to 87 acres. The MAF survey named the owners as GW and R Middleton, almost certainly Sophie's sons George (who would have been 65) and Richard (who would have been 56 – see below). The family owned 49 acres (rental value £75) and rented 39 acres for £26 a year (interestingly, 15 acres of which are recorded in the survey as being rent free).



A young Richard Middleton

All the soils on the farm were described as “medium” and the farm “naturally 70% good and 30% fair”. The condition of both the arable and pasture land was rated as “good”, fertilisers being used on the arable land but not on the pasture. The farm had piped water, there was no tractor but 3 work horses and just one full time and one part time worker (both family members). The survey rated the management of the farm as *A*. The balance of pasture to arable land was 28.5 and 58.5 acres respectively. 19 acres of barley were grown, against 6.5 acres of wheat and 5 acres of oats. Of the roots grown, there were 9 acres of sugar beet, 4 acres of potatoes and 3 acres of turnips and swedes for fodder.

Livestock numbers were modest with 10 cattle, 77 sheep and 123 fowl. With stocks of 5 tons of hay and 3 tons of straw in June 1941 (a larger than average amount for the parish), it is possible that some of this was on offer for sale to other farmers.

Of note is that in response to the “ploughing up of grassland” campaign Pond House Farm had brought a 6.3 acre field, next to the Owmbly parish boundary, into use for the production of sugar beet.

In January 1941 Bentley House Farm had been owned and run by Mr. C W Harriman since 1923, when sold by the Markham Bros. The figures in the MAF survey do not tally as the size of the farm was given variously as 63, 72 and 76 acres. There were 16 acres of permanent pasture and 60 acres of arable land according to the first page of the survey. The annual rental value was given as £47 5s. The soils were described as 100% “medium” and the condition of the farm 100% “good”. Fertilisers were being used on both the arable and pasture land. There was piped water. The management of the farm was rated *A*. The farm had no tractor. There were 4 farm work horses (all mares), one part time and two full time workers – all family members.



Cyril Harriman

With respect to cereal crops, 18.5 acres of barley, 10.5 acres of oats and 5.5 acres of wheat were grown. As for roots, 8 acres of sugar beet, 3.5 acres of turnips and swedes for fodder and 4 acres of potatoes were grown.

Livestock numbers were modest, with 11 cattle, 70 sheep (one ram used for service), 3 pigs and 100 fowl kept.

The farm went up for sale by auction in September 1942, 63 acres 1 rood and 21 perches as opposed to the 126 acres 3 roods and 29 perches sold by the Markham Bros. in 1923. The figure of £2,500 was scribbled

in pencil on the sales particulars and it was purchased by Mr George H Ferguson who farmed it until 1960 because, according to the sales particulars, he was selling up and leaving the county. The farm was advertised as a freehold agricultural property comprising 63 acres 1 rood and 21 perches, basically unchanged since the 1941 survey. It was bought by Mr Lowery and the family still lives in the house today (2017).

The final small farm appears to have been jointly owned by W Turner and Newman. It comprised 11 acres of grass and 26 acres of arable land. All the land was described as “light” soils in 100% “good” condition, with some use of fertilisers. There was piped water. There were 3 work horses and one part time worker, but no tractor on the farm. The annual rental value was given as £63 2s. Mr Turner had been there since 1928 and the management of the farm was rated *A* in the MAF survey. Just 8 acres of barley and 2.25 acres of oats were grown, with 11 acres of sugar beet. Less than an acre each of potatoes, turnips and mangolds were also grown. As well as the 11 acres of permanent grassland there were an additional 3 acres of temporary grass for mowing. The farm had only 8 cattle, 17 sheep (no ram), 5 pigs and just 19 fowl. Given the above it is reasonable to describe this as a largish small holding rather than a small farm.

The location of the farm is difficult to establish. The address of the farmer given in the MAF survey is “Union Road”, Caistor (North Kelsey Road today). The OS map reference given on the survey for the farm (XXXVIII SE) suggests that this land was close to that of Mr Willey’s farm in what had been Clixby parish. If access was from North Kelsey Road, this would explain the Caistor address.

In 1920 the dwelling on the corner of Front Street and Canty Nook , called Canty Farm today, was owned by John William Turner, and then by Walter Turner from 1950, where he farmed until the 1960s. Walter has been described by people who remember him to this day as a very old fashioned farmer who only ever used horse power. The brick and tile farm buildings are still next to the house where he kept his animals, but his fields were scattered and probably rented. It is likely, in the absence of any other farmer called Turner in the survey, that he is the farmer in question. It is possible that it was Mr Newman who lived on Union Road. The survey offers no explanation for the joint enterprise.

Canty Farm has an interesting history which has been researched, using the deeds for the house, by its current (2017) owner Peter Threlfall.

William Hill, yeoman, took a £35 mortgage on the property from Marmaduke Dixon 1st August 1825. William had inherited the property from his father, Robert Hill of Grasby, who in turn had inherited it from his father John Hill, who took over the property from Widow Madens. The original house dates, therefore, from at least as far back as the C18th. William Hill had been awarded 1 rood 31 perches in the Grasby Enclosure and 1 acre 2 roods and 21 perches in the Caistor Moor Enclosure, which suggests that he farmed on only a modest scale. The valuation of Grasby for the poor rate 1826 lists William Hill the elder as the occupier of a house and garden with 2 acres of land. In addition,

William Hill the younger was the occupier of a house, garden, stable and 2 acres owned by "Kettleborow (sic)". This name appears nowhere else in the poor rate.

By 1828 William had moved to Great Limber and he leased his property to William Richardson of Holme, Bottesford, for one year ("the cottage, yard, curtilage and outbuildings"). On 26th March 1821 Marmaduke Dixon provided a mortgage for £200 to William Richardson for the property, at 5% interest. On 10th June 1842, William Richardson, farmer, now of Twigmoor, sold the property to John Hill, late of Flixborough, now of Grasby. In 1844 John Hill received the 1 rood 31 perches originally awarded to William Hill when the Grasby Enclosure was, after many delays, finally completed. On 10th May 1852 John Hill sold the property to Joseph Barron of Grasby (Joseph signed with a cross "Joseph Barron, his mark"). In the 1851 census Joseph Barron (50) was listed as a farmer of 50 acres. His wife Martha (49) was a mantua maker and they had three daughters, Margaret (18) Sarah (13), and Elizabeth (11).

Joseph, however, sold the property to George Nelson (a large scale landowner from Great Limber) in April 1852 and left Grasby to live in Clixby. George Nelson, in turn, built a new house "on or near the site of the old cottage" and sold it to Mrs Jane Roebuck of Great Limber. The new house was divided into two and occupied by John Mumby and John Lusby. In 1871 Henry Lusby (agricultural labourer) and George Milson (butcher) were listed as living at No. 19 and No. 20 Butchers Lane respectively. In the 1881 census only George (now 42, with his wife Francis, two sons and four daughters) is listed as living on Front Street. On 12th May 1888 Edward Anderson of Great Grimsby (grandson and executor for Jane Roebuck) sold the property for £135 to John Wilkin of Cabourne. The occupants were Henry Lusby and George Milson initially, but later the whole house was occupied by George alone. The property was described as "the butcher's shop, outbuildings, yard, cottage (formerly two cottages) bounded by the Town Street of Grasby on the south and east, by representatives of Parkin Wigglesworth on the west and by Robert Urry on the north". From this it would appear that Front Street and Canty Nook together were known as Town Street in 1888. In the 1891 census George (52) was still listed as a butcher, as were his sons Fred (butcher) and Edwin (butcher's assistant). In the 1901 census George (now a widower) and his family were living next to Fred, described as a journeyman butcher, and his family. Combined the two households comprised 13 family members.

At no point to date had George been listed as anything other than a butcher. However, in the 1910 Land Tax Assessment he was described as a cattle dealer and butcher and held the tenancy on two fields, one acre at the back of the Old Vicarage and 4.3 acres on Station Road, the second field along south of Middleton Lane.

The history of this property serves to demonstrate the complex patterns of land ownership and tenancy agreements commonly found Grasby. The practice of "buy to let" is clearly nothing new and it was far from unusual for landlords of properties and land in Grasby to live elsewhere. The link between Grasby and Great Limber, for instance, is frequently seen in

documentation relating to land and property purchases during the C19th. Canty Farm demonstrates the pattern of small scale farming enterprises based on tenancies rather than land ownership commonly seen in the parish.

Small Holdings (10-29 acres)

Six farms fell into this category, ranging from 12 to 26 acres. All bar one described themselves as full time farmers. One employed a full time worker, two a part time worker and the rest none. All bar one had either one or two farm horses and none had a tractor.

Amos Good was a tenant of 26 acres with 3 landlords. Although he had access to farm buildings there was no farmhouse, which suggests that he lived in the village. An account of life in the village by Tom Hornsey (born in the first of the terrace of houses at the bottom of Station Road) is an invaluable source of information about life in the village during the early part of the C20th and in his account he says that Amos Good lived in a house opposite to the old chalk pit. This house was later inherited by Frank Good, whose sister, Mrs Capp, lived only a few yards away. He goes on to say that a lot of this house is now missing, including its two storey barn where apples and potatoes were stored, and the best guess would be that it was between where Alf Capp lives now (2017) and Reading Room Cottage. Some of his land was allotments and he had an orchard on Kelsey Moor. He had piped water and all his land was described as “good” in the MAF survey. His management was rated **A**. His annual rent payable was £48 in 1942 and he had farmed varying acreages for 8 years. As well as small amounts of barley, oats and sugar beet he grew 0.5 acre of carrots for human consumption. Although he had 7 acres of grassland he kept no cattle or sheep. He did, however, have 6 pigs and 60 fowl. He had one part time worker and two work horses.

Mr R Steer lived at Manor Farm and owned just 19 acres of land, 14 acres under grass and 5 for arable use. This was clearly much smaller than the farm had been in the past. Although the condition of the farm and its fields are described as “good” in the MAF survey, with piped water even to the fields and some use of fertiliser, his management was rated only **B**, the reason given was “lack of power”. He had one work horse and employed one part time worker. The rental value of the holding was £40 and he’d had the farm for just 3 years.

According to Tom Hornsey (see above) he would fetch milk from Mr Parkers’ in a can. “Parkers lived where Steers lived until recently”. This would seem to indicate that Mr Steer was also a small milk producer, which would seem to be borne out by the fact that he grew only oats (3 acres) and sugar beet (2 acres), the majority of his land (14 acres) being permanent grass. He had only 5 cows in milk and 6 others for rearing. He had no bull for service, although there was 1+ year old male that may have become such in the future. He had 5 pigs, 400 fowl and no sheep.

Mr. Charles F Foster lived on Station Road and had his own farm of 23 acres. Again, all his land was described in the MAF survey as “good” and his management was rated **A**. He had piped water and access to a stream. He had occupied the holding since 1927 and its rental value was £50. He employed no farm workers and had two work horses. He grew a few acres of barley, wheat and oats, 7 acres of sugar beet less than an acre each of potatoes, turnips and mangolds. He kept just 6 cattle, no sheep, 4 pigs and 150 fowl. This is the farm occupied in 1910 by Thomas Sellars i.e. Treetops today.

Charles Coupland was a farmer of 29 acres in 1910, as described previously. In 1941 he still had the same holding but had reduced to farming just 19 acres on a part time basis. His other occupation was “coal hawker” and this was given in the MAF survey as the reason for rating his management of the farm at only **B** “taking more time than land can spare”. There was no sign of his son as a worker on the farm, or any other farm worker. Even though old age was not given as a reason in the survey for any failings on the farm, Charles would have been 68 by this date.

The soils were described as 70% “heavy” and 30% “medium” and overall the condition of the farm was rated as “fair”. There was piped water and a well. He didn’t have a tractor, just two work horses (both mares).

Farm output could only have been described as modest with 4 acres of barley, one of oats, two acres of sugar beet and 0.5 acre of potatoes. He had just two cows and two calves, one pig and 115 fowls. There were 7.5 acres of permanent grass, half set aside for mowing. It is interesting to note that, despite the small size of the farm, he had put down nearly 10 acres to oats under the “ploughing up of grassland” scheme for the war effort. The field in question was on the eastern edge of the parish, north of Little Drift Lane – definitely part of Charles’ farm in 1910 but, although this is recorded in the relevant section of the MAF survey, it is not reflected in the “Crops and Grass” part of the return. This might mean that at the time he was renting out this field to another farmer.

Interestingly, instructed by Mr CF Foster, “White House Farm”, as Lot 1, was put up for sale in November 1962, comprising 42 acres 3 roods and 4 perches. In addition Lot 2, an arable enclosure, adjoining White House Farm, extending to 3 acres 3 roods and 37 perches was put up for sale by Mr JS Kent and Lot 3, arable enclosure, also adjoining White House Farm and extending to 3 acres 1 rood and 17 perches, was offered for sale by Messrs. E & H Kirkby.

The OS field numbers provided in the sales particulars show clearly that White House Farm was Charles Coupland’s farm in 1910 and 1941 in respect of the farm buildings and adjacent fields i.e. 113a, 113, 112, 134 and 135. Other fields included in the sale were 136 (glebe allotments in 1910), 139 (owned by Markham Bros. in 1910), 140 (bought from Beck House just before the sale), 133 (owned by WHB Fletcher in 1910), 104a and 106a (owned by Tyson in 1910). Field 133 being sold by JS Kent was owned in 1910 by WHB Fletcher and field 151, being sold by E&H Kirkby, was owned in 151 by MA Ward. It seems that Charles Foster

purchased and rented land and buildings to add to the 23 acres he had in 1941 to expand his farm after the war. As the land adjacent to his farmhouse ("Treetops") was not included in the sale, this suggests that he retired from farming but kept the few acres still attached to Treetops today as an extended garden, allotment or small field. It is clear that his farm was not sold as a single unit, but was broken up as other farmers (some from outside the parish) purchased land to expand their own enterprises (most of the land adjacent to the old farm was probably purchased by the Knapton family from Ownby). The old farmhouse was demolished and a new bungalow was built in field 135. It must have been after this that the 9 fields comprising the greater part of Charles Foster's farm between North Kelsey Beck and the current track from Station Road to the sewerage works became just the two large fields existing today of approximately 22 and 18 acres respectively.

Mr E Barron had been the owner for 22 years of a 15 acre farm in Grasby and, thanks to the recollections of Tom Hornsey (see above) it has been possible to identify the location of the farmhouse and farm buildings, which no longer exist. In Tom's own words: "Across the road from us (i.e. the terrace of houses at the bottom of Station Road) was the Barron's house which was set at 90 degree angle to the road. This was the first house in Grasby and the next house was the Old Vicarage". That space has now been filled by about 12 houses built during the late 1960s or early 1970s.

The farm's soils were 30% "heavy" and 70% "light", its overall condition 70% "fair" and 30% "bad" and poorly laid out. There was piped water and a well. Mr Barron had one full time employee, no tractor and no work horses (there was one horse under the "other section", presumably for driving and/or riding). He had, however, 10 acres of cultivated arable land, growing 2.5 acres of barley, 2 acres of oats, 5 acres of sugar beet and 0.5 acre of potatoes. How this was achieved without horses or a tractor is not known. He had no cattle or sheep and just two pigs. There were 5 acres of permanent grassland (not for mowing) on which it is possible that he kept his 600 fowls. The farm's estimated rental value was given as £35 in the MAF survey. Mr Barron was a full time farmer and his management was rated as *A* despite the small size of the enterprise.

Mr. H O Burnett had been the tenant for 3 years of just a 12 acre farm on Middleton Lane (Willow Farm) in 1941. He was a full time farmer with no employees. His landlord was Mrs Marshall, from Cleethorpes and his annual rent was £26. The soils were 100% "heavy" and the overall condition of the farm was "fair". There was piped water to the farmhouse, and a pond served the farm buildings and the fields. He had just one farm work horse and no tractor. His management of the farm was rated *A*.

Mr Burnett grew 1.5 acres of oats, 0.5 acre of wheat, one acre of sugar beet, 0.5 acre of potatoes, 0.5 acre of mangolds and 0.5 acre of kale for fodder. Eight of the 12 acres were down to grass, two acres of temporary grass for mowing, 3 acres of permanent grass for mowing and 3 acres of

permanent grass for grazing. He had one cow in milk and 5 others, 4 under one year old. There were no sheep, but 3 pigs and 276 fowls. Things were to change after the II World War when Mr Burnett eventually took over the Middleton's farm.

Small Holdings (below 10 acres)

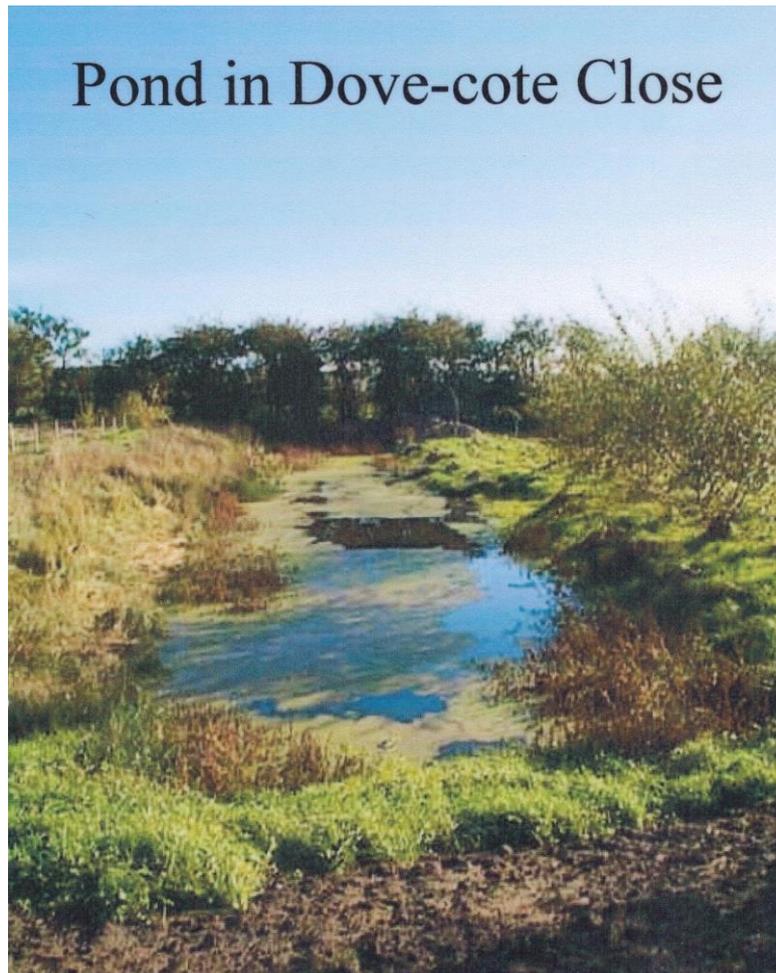
The 1941/42 MAF surveys for Grasby included 9 small holdings ranging from 7 to just 1.5 acres in size, covering a total area of 37 acres, just 1.7% of the area being farmed in Grasby and Clixby at the time. The majority of these small holdings comprised grassland, 23 acres, with just 14 acres of arable land. The village allotments made up parts of some of these holdings. There were only 7 cattle and no sheep were kept. Pigs were more important with 23 kept, 16% of the total in the parish. Of much greater significance, however, were the 2,425 poultry, 42% of the total kept in the parish. Unfortunately the first page of the MAF survey for 4 of the small holdings is missing which limits the analysis with respect to ownership, management and overall condition of the holdings concerned.

W Harriman was the tenant of Pond House and 7 acres on Middleton Lane. His landlord was a Mrs Kendall from Grimsby. It's possible that this was the holding tenanted by John Sellars in 1910, called The Long Close today. Mr Harriman described himself as a full time farmer and the survey rated his management of the holding as **A**. All 7 acres were down to grass and he had just two pigs and 251 fowls. He had been the tenant for just a year and he was paying £25 annual rent. It is difficult to see how he made a living.

Mr Harry Franklin was a classic part time small holder, owner of two acres and renting a further 3.25 acres from the parish council – almost certainly part of the village allotments, for which he paid an annual rent of £5 16s. He was, however, first and foremost a carpenter based in the village and his management of the land was rated as only **B** on the grounds of “neglects for carpentering”. He grew 0.75 acres of mixed corn (without wheat in the mixture), 0.25 acres of potatoes and 2.25 acres of sugar beet. Other than that he kept two pigs and 85 fowls. He had occupied the holding for 8 years.

Samuel Spolton was the landlord of the Bluebell Pub on Church Hill. He also had 4.5 acres of land which, apart from just 20 fowls, he used as grazing for his stallions. Tom Hornsey (see above) provides a first-hand description of the work of a stallion man: “Sammy Spolton had what was called travelling horses. Sammy kept stallions in the field which has a footpath going between Station Road and Bentley Lane. There was a wooden fence to keep the horses and walkers apart. They would be taken around the county as a mobile stud and cover mares as required. Dad would leave on Monday and we wouldn't see him until Friday night. The horses had a regular round. Dad was at Kirton Lindsey when he was told about Doris' birth (his first child, of eventually 6). Uncle George was also with travelling horses. He was killed when one of the mares that was

being turned around lashed out and kicked him. He travelled for Victor Neale at the time (Victor Neale provided nearly all of the field information and primary records for the MAF surveys). The field that Sammy Spolton kept his horses in belonged to Willie Dann Wilmore and during the season I would be hired to cut down thistles and ragwort". The field in question is now part of the Wilmore Lane housing development, but the pond which was in this field, Dove-cote Close, has been preserved and is now part of one of the gardens, easily visible from Wilmore Lane. The photograph below of the pond was taken before the Wilmore Lane development took place.



Source: Ifor Barton

Mr G R Ashley farmed 4.5 acres which, according to the incomplete MAF survey, comprised "all allotments and gardens, including own garden". He appears to have been a part time farmer, grew two acres of mixed corn (with wheat for one acre and without wheat in the mixture for one acre), 0.5 acres of potatoes and two acres of sugar beet. He kept two pigs and 60 fowls. He had increased the size of the holding from 2.5 to 4.5 acres over a period of 10 years.

The MAF survey for Mr C W Scott's small holding is incomplete, but with the address given as "Poultry Farm" it is reasonable to assume that the 326 fowls he kept provided his main source of income. That said, he also kept two sows for breeding and, at the time, had a litter of 10 2-5 month old piglets. He also had one goat. Apart from that he was growing just 0.5 acre of sugar beet and had a 0.5 acre orchard. With 3 acres of permanent pasture this gave a total of 4 acres for the holding.

Mr J Dobbs lived on Vicarage Lane and had just 3.5 acres of permanent grassland, with 1.5 acres set aside for mowing. On this land, however, he had 5 cattle, 3 pigs and 519 fowls. He had been the occupier for just over two years and was part owner and part tenant, paying £18 annual rent. Again, the MAF survey is incomplete.

Mr W J Enderby was the landlord of the Cross Keys Inn and had 1.5 acres of land, including one acre of chalk land rough grazing. He kept two pigs and a large flock of 852 fowls. He had occupied the holding for 9 years. There is no other information shown on the survey, which is incomplete.

Mr T Page owned 1.5 acres of land and lived at Rose Cottage in Grasby. On this he grew just 1.25 acres of oats and 0.25 acres of potatoes. He had occupied the holding for only one year and estimated the annual rental value at £16.

The last of the 9 small holdings in the parish was Beck House, a poultry farm owned by Eric Senior (the full history of this small farm is recorded in a separate account).

Summary Grasby & Clixby MAF Survey 1941/2

The survey indicates that for the large farms the traditional Wolds system of mixed farming, representing perhaps the last vestiges of "high farming", was still dominant, but with barley replacing wheat as the main cereal crop and sugar beet replacing turnips as the main root crop. Although tractors were slowly being introduced, all three large farms clearly still relied on farm work horses, 36 between them, and agricultural labourers, 32 between them. They all kept sheep in significant numbers and around 50 cattle each. At least 20% of each farm was down to grass. Barley was by far and away the most important crop measured by acreage, oats were still grown as were turnips for fodder. As well as providing fodder by way of the tops after harvest, sugar beet may have been as important as barley as a cash crop, especially in view of the proximity of the factory in Brigg. It seems certain that the beet was taken to Kelsey Station to be taken by train to Brigg – the factory would have had its own siding. Tom Hornsey (see above) used to work for Len Knapton as a driver. There is a photograph of a loaded lorry (date unknown) in his account titled: "This was one of the loads we would take to Kelsey Station for loading onto trains. Even hay was sent by rail". Apart from the introduction of sugar beet, the only one of the three farms

to grow anything different from the normal range of crops was Grasby Top Farm which had 12 acres under carrots for human consumption. The acreages under potatoes were negligible with respect to the size of the farms.

The medium and small size farms followed a very similar pattern of land use to the above, just on a smaller scale. In two instances pigs were more in evidence (Wilmore 34; Willey & Feirn 22). Three of the medium size farms had a tractor each, all had work horses and all had at least one full time farm worker. William Wilmore grew nearly two acres of carrots and 0.25 acre of peas for human consumption.

The small holders tended to grow small amounts of barley, oats and sugar beet as well as some potatoes. Cattle were kept in small numbers, all had a pig or two, but none had sheep. Those small holders with more than 10 acres each had one or two work horses and sometimes a full time farm worker. Nearly every holding, large and small, had a significant poultry flock

In terms of simple numbers, in the new parish of Grasby & Clixby there were 292 cattle, 1,787 sheep, 144 pigs, 5,827 fowls, 76 horses, 9 tractors and 54 full time farm workers. Piped water had arrived in the villages around 1935, but hadn't reached Grasby Top Farm or Beck House. No farm had electricity at this time.

SUMMARY TABLE, MAF SURVEY GRASBY & CLIXBY 1941/2

Farmer	Farm size	P	A	W	B	O	SB	Po	T/S	M	TM	TG	PM	PG	K	Ctl	Shp	Pig	Fwl	Hor	Tr	Lab
E Barron	15	5	10	0	2.5	2	5	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	2	600	1	0	1
HG Burnett	12	6	6	0.5	0	1.5	0	0.5	0	0.5	2	0	3	3	.5	6	0	3	276	1	0	0
C Coupland	15	7.5	7.5	0	4	1	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	3.5	4	0	4	0	1	115	2	0	0
A Good	26	0	26	0	7	4	7	0.5	0	0	3	0	0	4	0	0	0	6	60	2	0	1
CF Foster	23	6	17	2	8.5	2	7	0.1	0.5	0.5	2	0	0	7.5	0	6	0	4	150	2	0	0
Willey&Feirn	109	18.5	90.5	14	15	15	20	5	3	1	8	13	0	15	0	18	104	22	80	6	1	3
CW Harriman	76	16.5	59.5	5.5	18.5	10.5	8	4	3.5	1.5	3	0	0	16	.5	11	70	3	100	4	0	3
G&R Middleton	87	28.5	58.5	6.5	19	5	9	4	3	1	5	9.5	9.5	15	0	10	77	0	123	3	0	2
AJ Hilton	622	180	442	58	179	46	119	5	29	6	15	104	0	50	0	49	643	6	110	14	3	17
T Page	1.5	0	1.5	0	0	1.25	0	.25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
W Harriman	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	2	251	0	0	0
E Foster	170	26	144	17	43	20	23	1	9	2	7	22	5	21	0	26	176	11	376	5	1	5
S Spolton	4.5	4.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.5	0	0	0	0	20	1^	0	0
W Turner	37.5	11.5	26	0	8	2.25	11	.25	.25	.25	0	3	0	10	0	8	17	5	19	3	0	1
A Steer	19	14	5	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	0	11	0	5	400	1	0	1
WD Wilmore	118	39	79	13	22	10.5	10	5	3	1	3	9	8	32	0	22	75	34	216	4	1	3
GW Markham*	408	90	318	3	114	36	40	4	54	1	26	30	0	95	5	52	286	2	0	12	2	8
HC Spilman*	306	69	237	29	82	35	20	2	34	3	14	30	17	39	0	48	298	10	348	11	1	7
J Willey*	112	29	83	0	12	15	6	2	15	1.5	9	0	0	29	0	14	41	5	429	3	0	1
J Dobbs	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.5	2	0	5	0	3	519	0	0	0
H Frankish	5.75	2	3.75	0	.75	0	2.3	.25	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	85	0	0	0
GC Ashley	4.5	0	4.5	1	1	0	2	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	60	1	0	0
CW Scott	4	1	3	0	0	0	.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	12	326	0	0	0
E Senior	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	3.5	0	2	0	2	312	0	0	0
FW Enderby	1.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	852	0	0	0
Totals	2192	556	1629	149	536	210	293	36	154	19	100	217	56	370	7	292	1787	144	5827	76	9	54

P=pasture; A=arable; W=wheat; B=barley; O=oats; SB=sugar beet; Po=potatoes; T/S=turnips or swede; M=mangolds; TM= temp. grass for mowing; TG=temp.grass for grazing; PM=permanent grass for mowing; PG=permanent grass for grazing; K=kale; Ctl=cattle; Shp=sheep; Fwl=poultry; Hor= horses; Tr=tractors; Lab=agricultural labourers; ^=stallion; *= Clixby farmer; (Other crops-carrots, peas, mustard); Farm and crop areas in acres

Farming In Grasby & Clixby 1941/2

Total number of farms	25	
Total acres	2,192 farmed by resident farmers (total size parish =2961 acres)	This figure may include land outside parish farmed by resident farmers
Farms over 300 acres	3	70% of farmed land
Farms 100 - 299 acres	4	23% of farmed land
Farms 30 - 99 acres	3	9 % of farmed land
Farms 10 - 29 acres	6	5 % of farmed land
Farms under 10 acres	9	1.7% of farmed land
Arable	1629 acres	75% farmed land
Pasture	556 acres	25% of farmed land
Cereals	895 acres	62% of arable land farmed
Roots	516 acres	35 % of arable land farmed
Cattle & calves	292	Kept on 16 farms
Sheep & lambs	1787	Kept on 10 largest farms
Pigs	144	All bar 3 farms have min 1 pig
Poultry	5827	All bar 2 farms keep poultry
Horses	76	14 max no. on single farm
Tractors	9	Used on only 5 farms
Workers	54	17 max no. on single farm

Note: "missing "acres of parish not included in analysis above, data unavailable as farmed by non-resident farmers