

A Short History of Beck House, Nettleham.

19th April 2022

Beck House probably dates back over 700 years to the early 14th century and is thought to be oldest private dwelling still standing in Nettleham, retaining much of its original form.

It is thought provoking to take a moment and think of the events that have shaped our lives in that time, from the end of the 100 years war in medieval times, the Tudor, Stuart, Georgian and Victorian ages, the 'wars to end all wars' of the 20th century, to the present day.

Pearls of wisdom...

Luckily in the 20th Century, Nettleham was blessed with a resident dedicated Amateur Historian, Florence Baker, who published her work in 1938. This interesting and highly respected lady had a famous Grandfather and mentor, one Henry Winn who was a renowned 19th century Lincolnshire historian who lived until his 98th year, producing a mass of work which is treasured to this day as part of the Lincolnshire Historical Archives. Florence spent many hours in the newly opened Lincolnshire Archives, researching Nettleham history and would have no doubt been influenced by Henry Winn's work when conducting her own research. You can learn more about Henry Winn by clicking [here](#)

Additional to this, we have also more recent information, or '*pearls of wisdom*', from Pearl Vose who has written her own book containing photographs and information concerning families and history in Nettleham's more recent past.

And finally, our own research, using the Lincolnshire Archives, British Newspaper Archive, Land registry and Census records.

Early History, the story begins ...

In her research, back in the 1930's Florence writes - King Edward 1st stayed in Nettleham on the 25th January 1301 as the guest of Bishop D' Alderby. At this time, the Church would be about 75 years old, still fresh and bright, an impressive sight, central to the community. The population of Nettleham measured in the low hundreds and private dwellings would have been constructed from mud and stud; they are long gone, but Florence states that Beck House, then known as 'Pond House'* would probably have already been built by then and home to someone of substantial means, along with a handful of other stone buildings.

This, of course, would date the house as 14th century at least, rather than the 16th century stated by 'Historic England'. What we can see today is that surviving original timbers are joined together without nails and metal fittings, using wooden pegs.

There is then a time gap to the ca. 1777 Inclosure Act. This Act brought about massive changes to society and the countryside, creating farmsteads much as we know them today, albeit smaller ones. Florence writes that it was this Act that brought about the sale of Beck House by Lord Monson in order to buy land and that Beck House was originally 'Lord Monson's ancient Homestead'. We may assume this is the same family line of Lord Monson, who are now based nearby in Burton.

In ancient times prior to the Inclosure Act, settlements like Nettleham often had a 'pinfold' or 'pound' where stray animals were enclosed before being reclaimed by their owners or sold on if unclaimed. After the Inclosure Act, these 'pounds' became less important because animals could not stray so easily for obvious reasons.

In Nettleham we can imagine the 'pound' was probably particularly important as animals would stray onto the Bishop's or Lord's private land. Florence again writes that Nettleham's 'pound' was located on Mill Hill to the east and west of The Beck, which is of course adjacent to Beck House. It is likely the house have was connected to the management of this 'pound'.



See above a plan of the house and land as sold in 1906, outlined in red showing its land extending beyond the Beck and up Mill Hill. Is this therefore the site of the ancient pound?

So, was the name 'Pond House' a semantic development of 'Pound House'? Certainly, there was a pond nearby the house but it seems was still in existence in the early part of the 20th century, yet the house was already by then being referred to as 'Beck House', long before the pond disappeared. In the 1891 census, the property is definitively called 'Beck House', despite the pond still being in existence.

At this 1891 census, Beck House was owned and occupied by a farmer called William Parker, his wife Annie and two of their children. There is also a Sick Nurse, Kate Pointon from Louth living there.

Ten years later, at the 1901 census, Annie is no longer listed and given the presence of a sick nurse at the 1891 census, has presumably died. A different son, Stephen is listed, both he and his father are farmers of 'own account' and Gertrude Parker is now stated to be 'housekeeper'.

The Parkers had become an influential family in Nettleham during the 18th and 19th century owning many properties and we assume William Parker was part of this family. It was Zebedee Parker who also had a son of the same name who amassed land and property and they may well have established, amongst other enterprises, a 'general store' in the Village. Several Parker family graves can be found adjacent to the entrance to the church, to your left as you approach from the north.

By 1872 though, the Mansford family had arrived in Nettleham from Aubourn and they became influential in the village, quickly building and owning a substantial Grocery and Drapery store overlooking The Green on Walnut Close (where the Co-op now stands) and also building the large 'Red House' at 16 The Green, as well as owning many other properties. Herbert was the first person in Nettleham to own a car which he often used for good deeds, such as taking locals to visit relatives in hospital.

The Mansford's were also instrumental in the building of the Wesleyan Chapel on the High Street.

Alfred and Herbert outside their new store in 1897:



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The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrative County of <u>Lincoln</u> | Municipal Borough of <u>Mettleham</u> | Municipal Ward of <u>Mettleham</u> | Urban Sanitary District of <u>Mettleham</u> | Town or Village or Hamlet of <u>Mettleham</u> | Rural Sanitary District of <u>Lincoln Union</u> | Parliamentary Borough or Division of <u>Grimsby</u> | Ecclesiastical Parish or District of <u>Mettleham</u> |
|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|

| Code | No. of Schedule | ROAD, STREET, &c. and No. or NAME of HOUSE | HOUSES | | NAME and Surname of each Person | RELATION to Head of Family | CON. DITION as to Marriage | AGE last Birthday of | PROFESSION or OCCUPATION | Employer | Municipal | Parliamentary | Ecclesiastical | WHEELS BORN | (1) Deaf-and-Dumb (2) Blind (3) Lame, Imbecile or idiot |
|------|-----------------|--|---------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------------|----------------|-------------|---|
| | | | No. of Houses | Number of Persons | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 165 <i>Continued</i> | | | Annie Parker | Son | S | | General Edward Parker | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | 166 <i>Beck House</i> | 1 | | William Parker | Head | M | 50 | Farmer | | | X | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Annie Do | Wife | M | 52 | | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Elizabeth Do | Daughter | F | 18 | Scholar | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Richard Do | Son | M | 17 | Do | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Elizabeth Do | Daughter | F | 11 | Do | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | 165 <i>The Green</i> | 1 | | Alfred Mansfield | Head | M | 44 | Druggist & Grocer | X | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Charlotte Do | Wife | M | 52 | | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Herbert Do | Son | M | 14 | Scholar | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | George W. Wright | Wife | F | 20 | Wife of George W. Wright | | X | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Joseph W. Park | Do | S | 16 | Do | | X | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | James F. Jones | Son | S | 18 | General Manager of Postoffice | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | 166 <i>Do</i> | 1 | | George E. Parker | Head | M | 43 | Master Baker | | | X | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | William Do | Wife | M | 40 | | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | James Do | Son | S | 16 | | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | John W. Do | Son | M | 18 | Team Lead | | | X | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Sophia Do | Daughter | F | 14 | | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | George Do | Son | M | 10 | Scholar | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Beulah Do | Daughter | F | 8 | Do | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Mary E. Do | Daughter | F | 6 | Do | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Charles Do | Son | M | 5 | Do | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Emma Do | Daughter | F | 4 | Do | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Edwin Do | Son | M | 1 | Do | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | 167 <i>Do</i> | 1 | | Charles Watson | Head | M | 48 | Saddler | | X | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Christina Do | Wife | M | 46 | | | | X | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Charles Do | Son | S | 16 | Saddler & Saddleryman | | | X | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | John Do | Son | S | 10 | Do | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | | | | Bartholomew Do | Daughter | F | 11 | Living on her own means | | | | | Lincoln | |
| | | 168 | 1 | | Edmund Do | Head | M | 40 | Living on his own means | | | X | | Lincoln | |
| | | 169 | 1 | | Henry Do | Daughter | F | 12 | Do | | | X | | Lincoln | |
| | | | 6 | 2 | Total of Males and Females.. | | | 46 | 14 | | | | | | |

NOTE.—Draw the pen through each of the words of the headings as are inappropriate.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

The 20th and 21st century

By 1906, William Parker had died, survived by his daughter Gertrude, what had become of his two sons we are not sure. Gertrude decided to sell Beck House at auction with its barn, stables, out-house, cowsheds, granary, loose boxes, crew yards, orchard and yard for £260, along with the adjoining land on Mill Hill for £210. The auction was held at The Plough and both lots sold to Mr Brooks of Lincoln.

Lincolnshire Chronicle ...
AA 19th Oct 1906 britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk

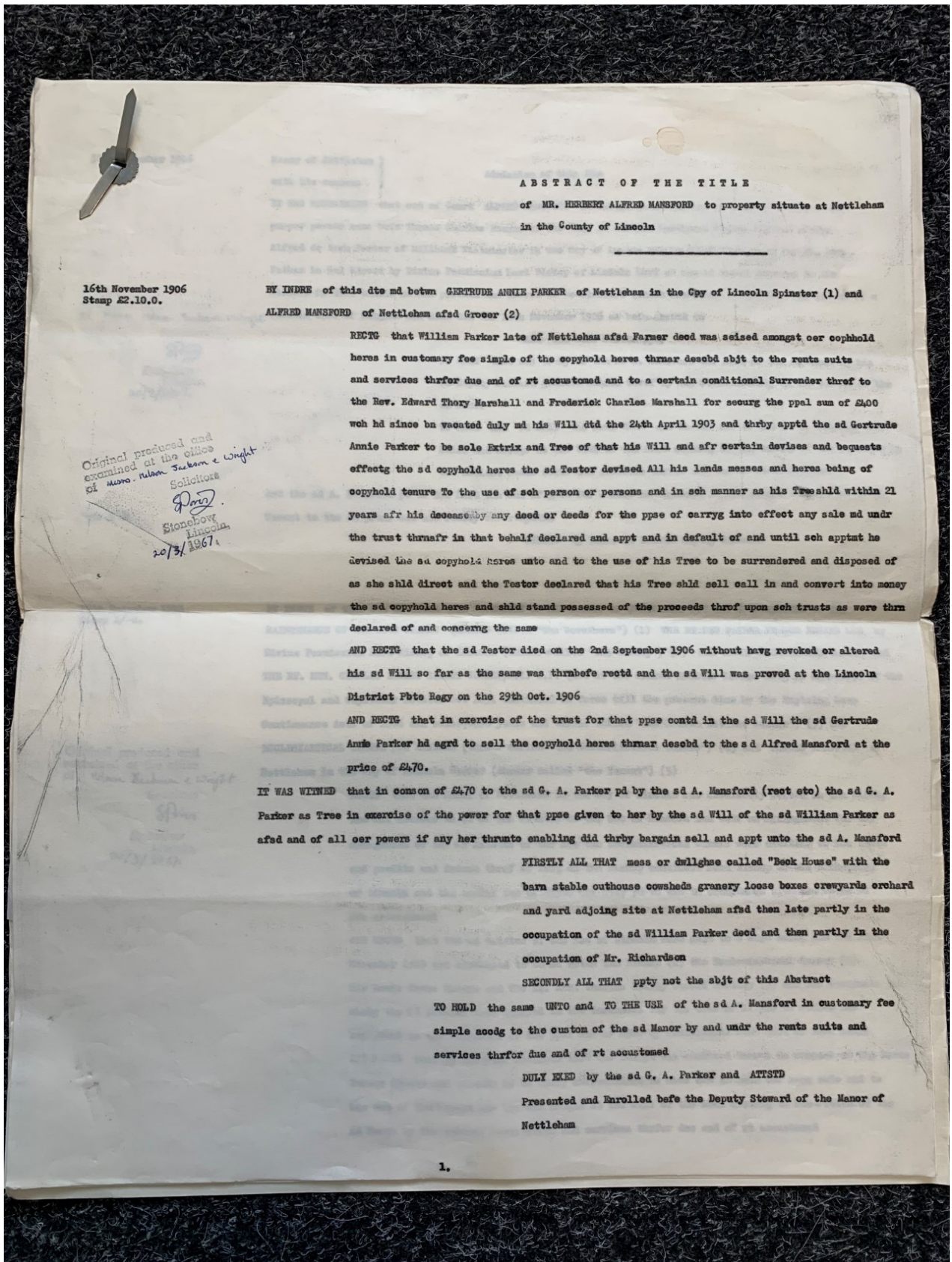
property In... Census retur... Robert Dunn... Marriages -... Census |

view

On Tuesday evening, at the Plough Inn, Nettleham, several lots of property, situate in the parish, and also at Langworth, were submitted by auction by Mr. R. N. Whaley, of Lincoln, in accordance with instructions received from Miss Parker, Nettleham the trustee for sale. There was a large gathering present. The first lot consisted of a dwelling house at Nettleham known as "Beck House," with barn, stables, out-house, cowsheds, granary, loose boxes, crewyards, orchard, and yard, lately occupied by Mr. William Parker, deceased. This sold to Mr. W. M. Brooks, of Lincoln, for £260. A close of accommodation grass land, of 3a. 2r. 7p., at Nettleham, lately occupied by Mr. Wm. Parker, formed the second lot, and it was acquired by the same purchaser for £210. The third lot was a close of arable land, situate near the village, and containing 10a. 3r. 26p., and this was also lately occupied by Mr. Wm. Parker, deceased. It was knocked down at £300 to Mr. Wm. Bailey. The last lot consisted of a freehold dwelling house and butcher's shop, in the Village-street at Langworth, occupied by Mr. Owen and Mr. Skelton, at £6 10s. yearly, and went at £79 to Mr. Wm. Lusby. Messrs. Danby and Epton, of Lincoln, were the solicitors interested.

A farmhouse and buildings, and 115a, 3r. 38p. of land, at Boston West, in the occupation of Councillor E. Richardson, was offered at auction on Wednesday, but was withdrawn at £4,400.

However, Mr Brooks did not own the property for long, if at all as the property passed straight to Alfred Mansford, as seen in the Title Deeds:



16th November 1906
Stamp £2.10.0.

Original produced and
examined at the office
of Messrs. Nelson Jackson & Wright
Solicitors

[Signature]
Stonebow
Lincoln
20/3/1967

ABSTRACT OF THE TITLE

of MR. HERBERT ALFRED MANSFORD to property situate at Nettleham
in the County of Lincoln

BY INDRE of this dte md betwn GERTRUDE ANNIE PARKER of Nettleham in the Cpy of Lincoln Spinster (1) and
ALFRED MANSFORD of Nettleham afsd Grocer (2)

RECTE that William Parker late of Nettleham afsd Farmer decd was seised amongst oer copphold
heres in customary fee simple of the copphold heres thmar descd abjt to the rents suits
and services thrfre due and of rt accustomed and to a certain conditonal Surrender thraf to
the Rev. Edward Thory Marshall and Frederick Charles Marshall for securg the ppal sum of £400
wh hd since bn vacated duly md his Will dtd the 24th April 1903 and thry apptd the sd Gertrude
Annie Parker to be sole Extriix and Tree of that his Will and afr certain devises and bequests
effectg the sd copphold heres the sd Testor devised All his lands messes and heres being of
copphold tenure To the use of seh person or persons and in seh manner as his Treeshld within 21
years afr his decesse by any deed or deeds for the ppse of carryg into effect any sale md undr
the trust thrafr in that behalf declared and appt and in default of and until seh apptmt he
devised the sd copphold heres unto and to the use of his Tree to be surrendered and disposed of
as she shld direct and the Testor declared that his Tree shld sell call in and convert into money
the sd copphold heres and shld stand possessed of the proceeds throf upon seh trusts as were thrn
declared of and concerng the same

AND RECTE that the sd Testor died on the 2nd September 1906 without havg revoked or altered
his sd Will so far as the same was thrafrfore rectd and the sd Will was proved at the Lincoln
District Pkte Regy on the 29th Oct. 1906

AND RECTE that in exercise of the trust for that ppse contd in the sd Will the sd Gertrude
Annie Parker hd agrd to sell the copphold heres thmar descd to the sd Alfred Mansford at the
price of £470.

IT WAS WITNESD that in conson of £470 to the sd G. A. Parker pd by the sd A. Mansford (rect etc) the sd G. A.
Parker as Tree in exercise of the power for that ppse given to her by the sd Will of the sd William Parker as
afsd and of all oer powers if any her thrunto enabling did thry bargain sell and appt unto the sd A. Mansford

FIRSTLY ALL THAT mess or dwellgse called "Beek House" with the
barn stable outhouse cowsheds granery loose boxes crewyards orchard
and yard adjoining site at Nettleham afsd then late partly in the
occupation of the sd William Parker decd and then partly in the
occupation of Mr. Richardson

SECONDLY ALL THAT ppty not the sbjt of this Abstract

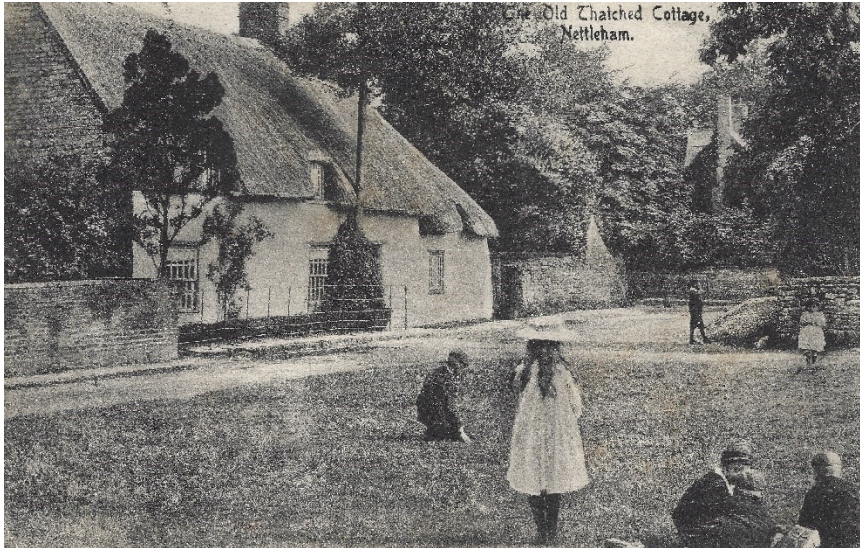
TO HOLD the same UNTO and TO THE USE of the sd A. Mansford in customary fee
simple accdg to the custom of the sd Manor by and undr the rents suits and
services thrfre due and of rt accustomed

DULY EXED by the sd G. A. Parker and ATTESTD

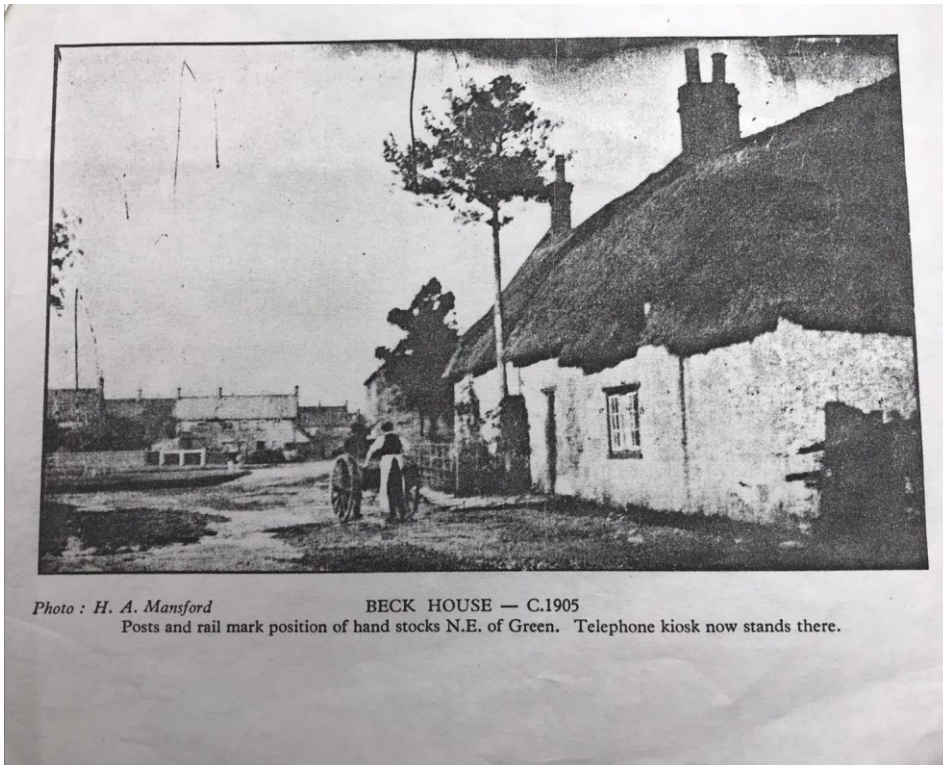
Presented and Enrolled befe the Deputy Steward of the Manor of
Nettleham

The purchase of the house in 1906 by Alfred Mansford coincides with some 'improvements', possibly the first of any real substance since it was built, although still fairly limited. Beck House was the last thatched roof house in Nettleham and in 1906 the thatch was removed and at the same time the southern half of the roof frame was lifted slightly to create more headroom upstairs in this part of the house – possibly to make room for a bathroom.

There are quite a few pictures of the house surviving from this period in its history ; photography was becoming a middle-class hobby and, of course, Beck House was interesting as the last thatched house. Below are the before and after pictures:



So, look who takes credit for the picture below, none other than Alfred Mansford's son, Herbert;





But later in 1906 the thatch has gone in favour of pantiles...

In those days Beck House was white washed and if you look carefully under the eaves today traces of white wash can still be seen.

It seems though that at this time, there was a Mr Richardson living in Beck House, he is referred to in the Deeds of 1906, so could this be the same Richardson who is also mentioned in the Newspaper report of the auction? Or is he related to Mrs Charlotte Mansford whose maiden name was Richardson?

Mr Richardson seems to have been a farming contractor for threshing and, much like today, he would have had the machinery to do this as farms did not always want to invest in modern machinery of their own. A woman called Alice Sawyer, yet another well-known surname in the Village worked for Mr Richardson repairing machinery belts. The Richardsons lived in Beck House until the late 1920's, possibly as sole occupants, but by the mid-thirties the Mansfords have taken up residence and are beginning to sell off building plots on Mill Hill.

Alfred Mansford had died in 1922 and Herbert Mansford lived in the 'Red House' at this time (16 The Green) with his family. However, as they also owned Beck House, the outbuildings and surrounding land on Mill Hill, his family would have had considerable freedom. This would match the account Pearl Vose gives of Kathleen Mansford's early memories.

Herbert Mansford and his family continued living in Beck House throughout WW2 and post war. Herbert's daughter, Margaret married in 1950 but sadly his wife 'Nellie' died later the same year after a long illness. Herbert died in 1957 and his effects were valued at £7,700 which was, of course, a substantial sum. Kathleen Mansford later married and along with her brother sold the house to Mr and Mrs Woods in 1967. The house was Grade II listed in 1966 and the barn and stables also Grade II listed in 1985.

Today...

Mrs Woods sold Beck House including the, by then, derelict barn and stables in 2011. The stables have now been converted into a successful holiday let and the house itself has undergone sympathetic renovation and updates. Many people look at the house and assume it has sunk into the ground; this is not the case and in fact what they are looking at is a ramp built in front of the house so as to bridge the Beck where once there was a ford.

So, is Beck House really the oldest private house in Nettleham?

Well, it very possibly is, and could be much older than was once thought, but there are a handful of other properties in the village, still in existence, that may also claim to date back a very long way.

What seems certain is that Beck House is the oldest private property still retaining the majority of its original floor plan and external appearance that even today, would still be recognisable to the original occupants.

Below are photos showing Beck House from similar positions on The Green, also showing the location of Alfred Mansford's store, where the Co-Op now stands.

