

Sheep and Geese in Hemingford Grey by Bridget Flanagan

Here is a sequence of views of part of the High Street in Hemingford Grey which I thought you might like to follow, and track how the scene gradually develops over c35 years.

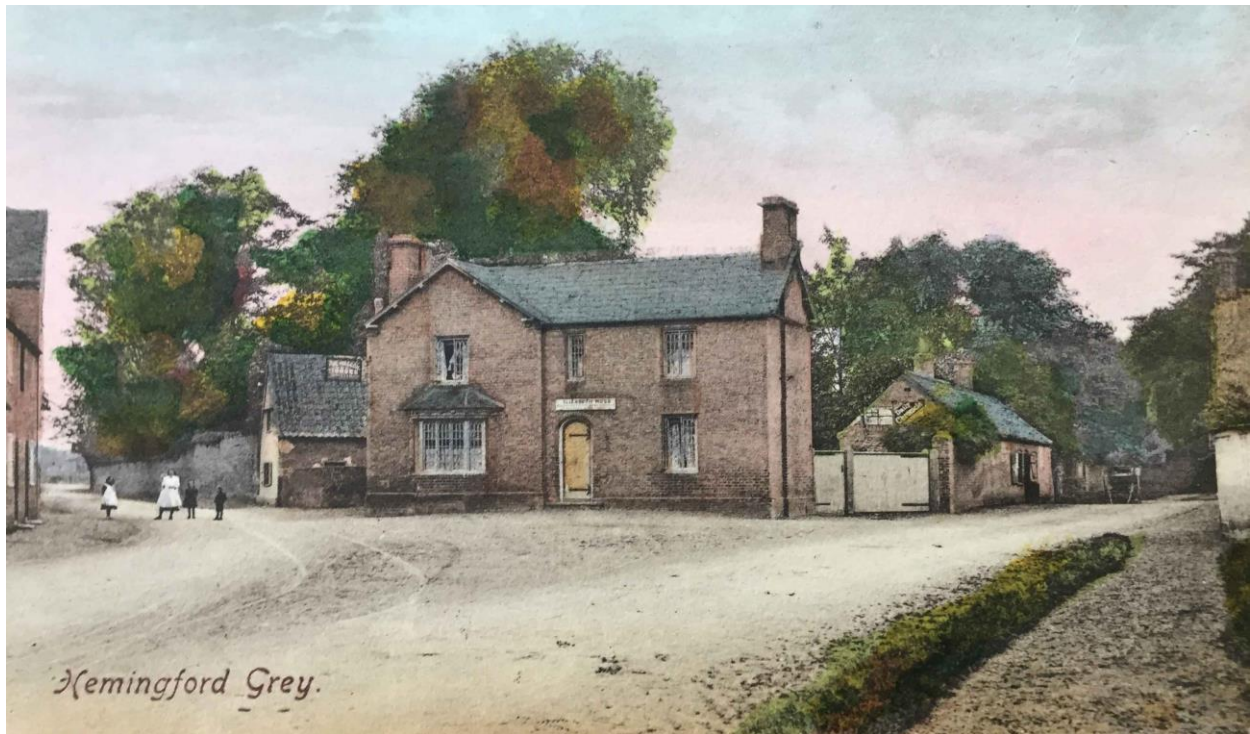
First, a watercolour painting by Sir Ernest Albert Waterlow, RA, PRWS, (1850-1919).



The date is unknown, but as Ernest Waterlow painted several scenes around St Ives that were exhibited between 1902-05, it is probably c1902. I wonder when a flock of sheep was last driven down the village High Street at the same time as someone sat outside their cottage door feeding their geese? Even allowing for some artistic licence, it is a glimpse of a much more rural village.

The cottage was one of three dwellings (see the three front doors in the painting) in the house that we know today as The Glebe. Interestingly the painting shows the whole building as rendered at that time, whereas now we recognise it for a fine display of exposed timber framing. Beyond The Glebe, in the last cottage of the adjacent terrace, of what was then 5 dwellings, can be seen the sign for The Lion pub. Across the road, at what is now The Apex, there is the sign for another pub, The Wagon and Horses.

Following on from the painting are four photos that add later detail to this part of the High Street. The first is of The Wagon and Horses; this is also pre-WWI, but the sign for The Lion pub is no longer to be seen.



We get a good view of the blacksmith's shed on the right – with cart parked outside, maybe waiting for the horse to be shod.



A photo published in 1926 in the Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Huntingdonshire - part of the Victoria County History - shows the western two thirds of The Glebe with exposed timbers and newly painted, and the eastern end still rendered. The building still has three front doors – but perhaps has new owners, as some gentrification seems to be

emerging. Another photo, also of the 1920s, shows the Post Office and its neighbouring cottages.



The final photo is of the mid 1930s. It is another postcard view and dating clues are the George V stamp (but unfortunately the postmark date is obscured) and the car registration plate which is of the Southend area c1930-37.



We immediately notice the new road surface and kerbed footpaths. This is a significant change for the village - the days of the watercolour painting of a street with livestock, and of the photo with a blacksmith's and horse-drawn cart look to be long gone. An entirely different era has begun - a modern street with a metalled road for cars and a separated footpath for pedestrians. And no place for sheep or geese.