

In the nineteenth century

Dane End

In 1840/41, Dane End contained three households of ‘independent means’: Charles Snell Chauncy, plus his wife and six servants at Dane End House; Joseph White, with his grown-up daughters and one servant at The White House; and Mr and Mrs George Graves, with their servant in the house to the south of Dane End Farm. These wealthier households probably also provided employment for the gardener, gamekeeper and charwoman who were recorded in Dane End in the 1841 census return.

All the main providers of food and drink were present in the village in 1841: a butcher, baker and a victualler – Thomas Arnold at The Boot. He had some competition from Widow Fordham who ran a beer shop half way between The Boot and the Smithy. Other traders included a tailor and two shoemakers, three blacksmiths (all members of the Williams family), a wheelwright, at least five carpenters and a bricklayer.

There were two farmers, William Mardell and Barnard Acres, who provided work for the twenty-six agricultural labourers in the village. They both lived at what is now Home Farm, Dane End: William Mardell in the old farmhouse which no longer exists and Barnard Acres in the house on the corner of the Whempstead Road.

Just outside Dane End were another two farms (actually in Great Munden parish) – Park Farm, which disappeared in the mid-nineteenth century, and Lodge Farm, now the golf driving range. Park Farm was farmed by James Smart, and his household included five agricultural labourers and two female servants in 1841. The name of the farm commemorates the medieval deerpark (of Great Munden) which continued to exist until the eighteenth century. The farm was not recorded in the 1861 census and all that is shown on the OS map of 1884 is the name ‘Smart’s Hill’ and the position of the well. Lodge Farm was farmed by William Gutteridge and contained his family, plus one other female servant and one young male servant, who probably worked on the farm.

Most of the properties in the village of Dane End were rented out by one of five landlords: Joseph White – who owned three other properties besides his own home at The White House; James Nunn – who owned two cottages and a shop; Jane Curby – who owned a house, cottage and stable, and lived at Haultwick; Charles Snell Chauncy – who owned two shops, a cottage and a house, in addition to Dane End House; and John Warpole – who owned one other cottage besides the one in which he lived.

By 1891, the number of households in Dane End had reduced from 39 to 32 and there was no longer a butcher, baker or any carpenters. In their stead was a grocer, a sub-postmaster and a milkman.

Green End

This hamlet seems to have had the most stable community over the fifty year period 1841–91, with its labour-force divided between agriculture and providing staff for ‘the big house’, Green Elms, built in about 1820. In 1841 the house was

occupied by Nathaniel Snell Chauncy and his large household, which included twelve children, a governess and eight servants living-in. He probably also employed the four gardeners living nearby with their families and two male servants, Josiah Percy and James Grainge, who headed two other households in the hamlet.

There were two farmers at Green End in 1841 – George Mardell at Green End Farm, who employed three men and a woman, and William Gardner at Yew Tree Farm. Apart from a single carpenter, there were no crafts or tradesmen in the hamlet – just the publican at the Red Lion and one other couple of independent means. The remaining seven households relied on agricultural labour for income.~ Between 1841 and 1891, the population of Green End fell from 113 to 77. Most of the households in 1891 relied on the same two sources of income, with 44% working on the land and 39% working at ‘the big house’, now called Green End House. Here the local people were employed as gardeners and domestic servants, including Albert Crittle, the coachman. Other occupations in Green End included the Rector at Munden Parva, a school teacher who worked in the village school next to the church, a painter and a baker.

Little Munden

The little settlement around Lordship Farm consisted of three households in the nineteenth century. In the farm itself in 1841 was John Cole and his family, plus a female servant and four male servants, presumably farmworkers, and in the cottages across the road were Sarah Farr, the School Mistress, and William and Mary Vigus with their eight children. William Vigus was a carpenter.

Fifty years later, the Smith family had arrived at Lordship Farm, headed by Alfred Smith, aged 50, and born in Birchanger, Essex. The Teacher’s house was occupied by Mary Perkins, the School Mistress (from Worcestershire) and the assistant teacher (from Suffolk) who boarded with her. Next door was James Overall, an agricultural labourer, and his family.

Little Munden School was built in 1825 on the initiative of the rector, the Rev. J P Reynolds. Appalled at the illiteracy of the village children, he started classes in the church soon after his arrival in the parish in 1819. Reynolds also raised money to build a teacher’s house, now known as Orchard Cottage, although parts of the building are considered to be eighteenth century or older.

Haultwick

During the nineteenth century at least, Haultwick was the largest settlement in Little Munden with a population of 202 in 1841, compared with 176 in Dane End. Nearly 85% of the households depended upon agriculture for their income, including those of one farmer and a pig dealer, and 34 households supported by agricultural labourers. Traders included a baker, two shoemakers, a female straw carter, a carpenter and a blacksmith. There were also two households living on ‘independent means’: Mr and Mrs Andrew Pope at Rose Cottage and Jane Kirby at what is now called Woolston Farm – a plot that was still labelled ‘Kirby’s’ on the 1st edition OS map of 1884. This lady also owned property in Dane End which she rented out. No. 82 on the Tithe map was The Bell Public House.

The farmer at Libury in 1841 was John Cock who employed one young female servant and five labourers who all 'lived in'. He was leasing the farm from Graciana Spence and, when she died in 1858, Libury became the property of her heir, Henry Lowry Jearrad Esq, who became Lord of the Manor of Libury. At the turn of the century, Libury was converted into a German Industrial and Farm Colony to provide work and shelter for German-speaking unemployed and destitute people.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the number of households in Haultwick had fallen from 42 to 34, but there was still a good range of traders and services available in the hamlet. These included a blacksmith, who was also a beer retailer, situated opposite The Bell, a shopkeeper, a laundress a dressmaker, a saddlwoman, a gardener and a police constable. Two of the three farmers listed in 1891 had second occupations: one was a cattle dealer, the other a grocer, and there was also a cowman and three shepherds.

White Hill

In the nineteenth century, White Hill was probably a rather impoverished community of 77 people divided between 18 households in 1841 and declining to about 45 people in just 11 households in 1891. Apart from one gamekeeper and one gardener, all the workers in 1841 were agricultural labourers. The census return does not include an entry for White Hill, so presumably the occupants were absent on census night, but by 1891 the farmer was John Sinclair from Scotland, who was running the farm with the help of three sons ranging in age from 17 to 27 years. There was still a gardener living at White Hill, but the remaining workers were all labourers. The first edition OS map shows the cottages clustered together to the south of the lane on White Hill. Today, just two of those cottages appear to survive.

Potters Green

The settlement at Potters Green in the nineteenth century was also almost entirely devoted to agriculture, the only exception in 1891 being two domestic servants, one of whom was a gardener. The rest of the working community at that time consisted of a farm bailiff, two shepherds, a cowman and his assistant, a dairy maid and six agricultural labourers. By 1891, the twelve households recorded in 1841 had dwindled to just nine and four houses stood empty.

Into the Twentieth Century

There can be no doubt that the twentieth century is the one that has witnessed the most profound changes to the parish of Little Munden and its inhabitants over the last millennium. The structure of parish society and land-ownership started the century much as it must have been when William the Conqueror shared out the former Saxon territories amongst his own supporters, with the majority of the land owned by just a few – and principally the Lord of the Manor of Little Munden. The villagers were largely dependent upon the descendants of the Chauncy family for their homes and their livelihoods – the feudal ties were not as strong as in the medieval period, but they were there nevertheless. However, by the 1960s, this arrangement had all but disintegrated as the Dane End Estate was broken up:

cottages and farms were sold to individuals and plots of land were allocated for housing development.

Since then, the village of Dane End has grown rapidly. From a starting point of 30 dwellings in 1903, the total rose to 81 in 1965 and 253 in 1977. The expansion of the village was made possible by the sale of manor lands in the 1950s by Sir Christopher Chancellor, whose wife, born Sylvia Mary Paget, had inherited the estate. Ware Council purchased 9 acres to build 10 bungalows which were the start of Founceley Avenue. During the 1960s, Mr Trundle of Hunsdon built the first bungalows in Kennedy Road (at the time of the assassination of the American president) and provided access to the properties by demolishing the shop and Post Office which had formerly been adjacent to the Smithy on the main road. The houses in Easington Road and Kingsfield Road followed soon after.

Pearmans Drive was built in the mid-1960s and named after Mr R G Pearman of Green End Farm, who retired from the Parish Council after many years' service in 1965. Between 1968 and 1973, Whiteley Close, Windy Rise and the remainder of Founceley Avenue were built. The last properties to go up, in the later 1970s, were in and around the walled kitchen garden of Dane End House, at the eastern end of Kingsfield Road and the western end of Gladstone Road.

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