

## Thomas Arnold, 19th century Publican and Farmer

From 'The Protected Valley: A History of Little Munden' by Anne Rowe

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At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were three licensed public houses in the parish of Little Munden: The Red Lion at Green End, The Boot at Dane End, and The Bell at Haultwick. The licensee of The Boot from 1817 was Thomas Arnold, whose gravestone can be found in the churchyard today. The inscription reads:

To the memory of  
THOMAS ARNOLD  
35 years FARMER & INNKEEPER  
OF THIS PARISH  
who died May 14 1850  
In the 68th year of his age.  
Reader prepare to meet thy God.

Thomas was one of the third generation of Arnolds found in the parish records and was baptised in All Saints' church on 20 January 1782. He was the youngest of nine children born to Joseph and Mary Arnold between 1766 and 1782 and the family lived at Green End. From the age of two Thomas was probably looked after by his eldest sister, Sarah, who was eighteen when their mother died in 1784. Their father, Joseph, had been baptised in 1741 and was recorded in the Militia Lists between 1762 and 1785 as a Labourer - probably working at Green End Farm for Thomas Kitchin Lookes.

The details of Thomas's early life are unknown but aspects of his apparently prosperous adult life can be pieced together from a series of fire insurance certificates held in the Hertfordshire Archives at County Hall. By the time Thomas was thirty-three he had become a Shopkeeper and Victualler and in November 1815 he took out fire insurance to the value of one hundred pounds 'on household furniture, plate, linen and wearing apparel' in his dwelling house (which was of timber and plaster with a tiled roof), and another one hundred pounds to cover the 'utensils and stock in trade in his said dwelling'. A similar insurance policy dated August 1821 included the utensils and stock in trade in his house and also 'in a shop adjoining'.

Thomas and his wife Mary, who came from Datchworth, do not appear to have had any children and any profits made as a publican and shopkeeper seem to have been invested in renting land. A policy of 1837 records him as 'Mr Thomas Arnold of the Boot, Little Munden, victualler and farmer' and covers the insurance of his agricultural produce and farming stock (live and dead) and the 'implements and utensils of husbandry' on his two farms: one at Stag Hall in Great Munden was insured for £200, and the other at 'Artic' for £100. In 1846 the insurance at Stag Hall was discontinued, but that on the farm at Artic was doubled to £200.

A policy of 1839 was still providing fire insurance cover for his 'cottage, timber, plaster and tiled, situate at Dane End' but four years later the policy covering his household contents is transferred to a new house at Little Munden built of 'brick stud and tiled'. Unfortunately we cannot be sure whether his new house was in Dane End or at Haultwick.

At the time of the 1841 census Thomas Arnold, 'Victualler', was living with his wife in Dane End with a female servant. The 1840 Tithe Map and Award shows them occupying a Public House and a garden and stable in Dane End. Thomas owned a cottage and garden in Dane

End, which in 1840 was occupied by Richard Cakebread. In addition to his property in Dane End, Thomas also rented a homestead at Haultwick, Stag Hall Farm in Great Munden and a total of just over 108 acres of land. This land was distributed in both enclosed fields and in strips throughout the common fields of both Great and Little Munden and was rented from four different landowners: Thomas Home, Thomas Mott, Charles Snell Chauncy and Samuel Adams.

In his will, made two months before he died in November 1850, Thomas called himself simply 'Farmer' and left all his property to his wife, Mary. His executors were Mary and his friend, farmer William Mardle [Mardell] of Dane End Farm. When Mary died nine years later she left the freehold property to two Little Munden farmers: John Cole of Lordship Farm and George Mardell of Green End Farm. She also left all her clothes to her sister, Peggy Cox, along with 'so much of my household furniture as will be sufficient ... to furnish two rooms in a cottage'.

An inventory was made of the contents of Mary Arnold's house at Haultwick on 21 June 1859, the total value of which came to £52 10s. The house had two bedrooms. In one of these were two beds, one of which was a four-poster with mahogany feet. There was also a mahogany chest of drawers, a deal table and swing glass, a walnut chest of drawers, a Japanned washstand and 3 Japanned chairs, carpets and wool rugs. The other bedroom contained a 'Coach top bedstead', a mahogany chest of drawers and washstand and a Japanned dressing table with a swing glass.

In 1851 the widowed Mary was recorded in the census as living at Haultwick with one female servant. Her occupation was given as 'proprietor of cottages'. The house where the Arnolds lived in Haultwick no longer exists.