



# PUBLIC HOUSES

## THE JOLLY FARMERS

Formerly **THE MARKET TAVERN** and most recently **THE SPRING INN**

Houghton's Market Place was a prime location for public houses. In fact at one time it had six, one of which was the Jolly Farmers Inn, formerly the Market Tavern, on Gilbert Street. In recent years this pub was known as the Spring Inn until its closure in early 2009, and took the address of 9 Market Place, as the surrounding properties of Gilbert Street were demolished long ago.

The Spring Inn now stands boarded up, sad and lonely and bereft of the regulars who once graced its bar. The front exterior is almost fully covered in ivy growth and the metal letters from the pub's twin signs have fallen down. It is now hard to believe that this pub was once a hive of activity and would have been 'alive and jumping' with Houghtonians, visitors and showmen alike at Houghton Feast time.



THE JOLLY FARMERS PUB WAS ORIGINALLY KNOWN AS THE MARKET TAVERN



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Noteworthy occurrences and/or landlords for this pub include:

**1861** – George Bell, Jolly Farmers.

**????** – Arthur Smith and his wife, Sarah Ann.

**1894** – George Haswell, victualler and farmer, Jolly Farmers, Market Place.

**1901** - John Wheatley b. 1863, publican. His son, also John, aged 18 years, worked at the Mill House sweet factory opposite.

**1904** – The Jolly Farmers Inn was owned by John Wheatley, confectioner, in March 1904, his son Sidney Wheatley, 20m, died at the premises, and was buried at Hillside Cemetery.

**1911** – The Jolly Farmers was occupied by John Wheatley, 48 years, inn keeper, with his wife Mary Ann Wheatley, and others. His son, Albert Wheatley, aged 19 years, worked as a sugar boiler at the Mill House sweet factory.

**1930s** – The showmen from the Houghton Feast fairground in the Market Place were kindly allowed to use the wash house of the Jolly Farmers Inn for water and washing.

Mid-1950s – Robert 'Bob' Hunter, worked for Vaux and managed the Jolly Farmer.

**c1984** – The Jolly Farmers was managed by Pauline Charlton and Dave Cave.

**2009** – The Spring Inn ceased trading around March 2009.

**2011** – The Spring Inn, 9 Market Place, listed as for sale with a guide price of £225,000.

Members of Houghton Heritage Society reported activity at the boarded up pub in September 2012 and it is wondered what the future has in store for this old drinking hole.

*Paul Lanagan*

PAUL LANAGAN BA HONS  
LOCAL HISTORIAN  
H-L-S HERITAGE SOCIETY



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THE BOARDED UP SPRING INN PUB, AUGUST 2011



THE IVY STARTS TO TAKE OVER THE SPRING INN



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