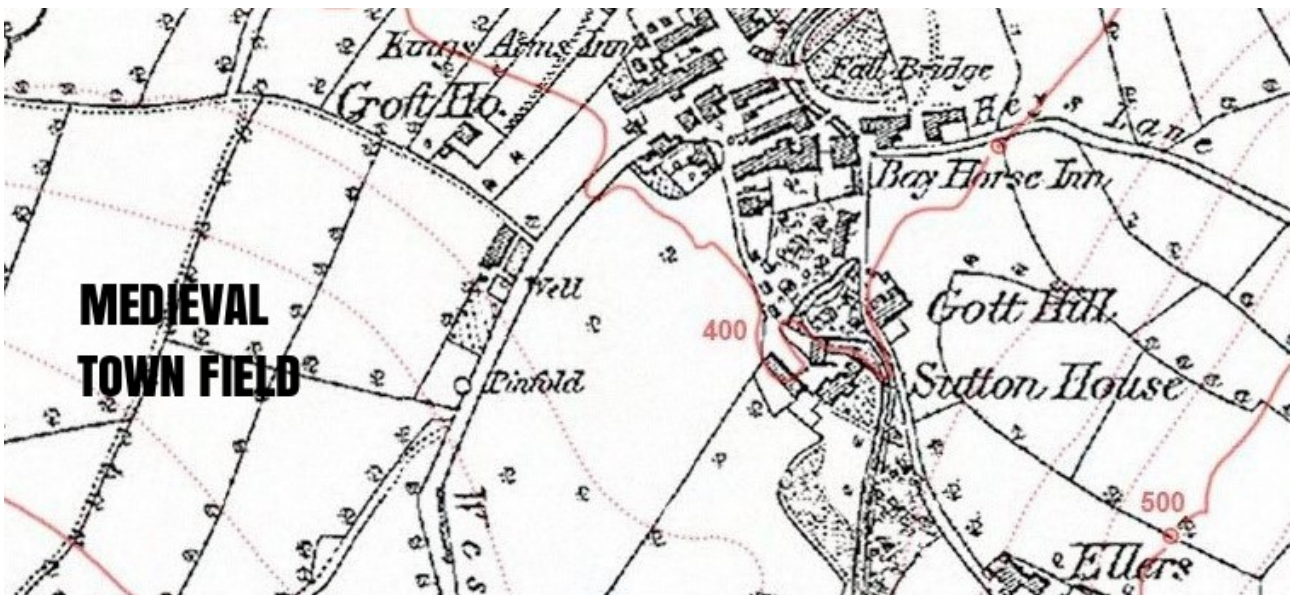


SUTTONS LOST PINFOLD

On Tuesday the 30th of June 1896 the Sutton Parish Council voted to dispose of the village pinfold. A resolution was passed that Mr J.W. Hartley ... *be allowed to purchase all that plot of land containing 60 sq. yards bounded on the east by the highway leading from the village of Sutton to Aden, and on all the other sides by a close of land the property of John William Hartley; the site whereof was formerly used as a Pinfold of the Township. The sum of £5 agreed upon.* The pinfold, a circular structure with a diameter of about 9 yards, was demolished soon after the purchase and so brought to an end an institution that had existed for centuries.



The Sutton Pinfold shown to have been a circular structure on the 1853 Ordnance Survey map. It stood in West Lane on the edge of what had once been the medieval Town Field.

A pinfold or village pound was once part of the fabric of every town and village in England. Its origins date back to the days of the Anglo-Saxons and its purpose was to enclose and detain stray animals that were found wandering through both village and open fields and prevent them from damaging crops and gardens.

The earliest reference to the pinfold in Sutton appears in a plea to the Court of Star Chamber made by John Copley, Lord of the Manor of Sutton, about 1541/2. In his plea he makes mention that Hugh Blakey ... *hath eight several tymys broken the*

comen pound in Sutton, and toke out of the same pound his catell, being laufully impounded for hurtes and damages don to your seid orator and his tenauntes

Damage to the pinfold, its walls and gate, appear to have been a common occurrence and numerous repairs are recorded in the 18th century township account books. In 1733 John Wright was paid 10 pence for repairing the pinfold wall, and further repairs were required the following year. Repairs continued through the 1740's and in 1749 the pinfold had to be pulled down and completely rebuilt at a cost of 8 shillings and 6 pence, with an additional 5s shillings being paid for bringing new walling



The pinfold in Stocks Lane, outside Luddenden near Halifax, is almost identical to the one that existed in Sutton until it was demolished in 1896.

stone. Later entries in the records refer to the repair of the pinfold gate and the replacement of the locks.

The village constable had overall responsibility for keeping law and order and it may well have been his duty to appoint a pinder, whose official duty it was to round up

stray animals and impound them in the pinfold. Unfortunately no records of the early Sutton pinders have survived, however, there were bye laws in force that set out his duties and stated that if any horse, sheep, swine, or cattle of any kind ... *shall be found wandering or straying, or lying or being depastured on any highway, or the side thereof, without a keeper (except on any such parts of any road as lead or pass through or over any common or unenclosed ground) ... the pinder, or others authorised, are required to seize and impound them in the common pound and be so detained until one shilling has been paid for each ("thruppence a foot" as the local wits said), plus reasonable charges for impounding If animals were not redeemed in five days the same were to be sold. The balance remaining, after the pinder's dues were paid, was handed to the owner. However, if ... the owner did not turn up at the end of one month from the date of the sale the whole proceeds went to the parish chest ... and could not be recovered later.*



The site of the Sutton pinfold in West Lane. It once stood in the area just above the garden gate to the right of the photograph.

If impounded animals were unlawfully removed the act constituted a criminal offence known as “Pound-breach.” Whilst there are no records of prosecutions in Sutton other townships took cases to the Quarter Sessions, but many found that it was not worthwhile, for example on the 22nd of June 1771 it cost the township of Midgley one shilling to recover 6 pence for the repair of their pinfold.

The last Sutton pinder is said to have been Peter Petty, a worsted weaver by trade. He no doubt took up the position, and that of mole catcher, as hand loom weaving declined. He was aged 74 in 1861 and died three years later. In March 1864 a meeting was held at the Dog and Gun with a view to appointing, among other officials, a new pinder. However, the vacancy does not appear to have been filled and the pinfold subsequently fell into disuse.



The pinfold at Coniston Cold.

A number of pinfolds have survived in the South Craven area, including a square one at Elslack and circular ones at Eastby and Coniston Cold.

Robin Longbottom, January 2018.