

Most villages once had a 'pound' for stray livestock

The Reepham Life 2021 Calendar picture (below) for February shows the Towns End crossing with railings of the old Pound just visible at the bottom right.



It is thought this photo was taken in the 1890s when Dereham Road was called Pound Road. Another place used more recently as a pound was the grassed area in front of St Michael's. A pound was a necessary feature of many English villages and towns, especially useful on market days – it was used to hold stray sheep, pigs and cattle until they were claimed by the owners. Early pounds just had hedges; later ones were built in stone or brick, making them more stock-proof, like the one shown in the photograph (below) that is still in existence at North Elmham.



Above: North Elmham Pound: built around 1830 to pen stray animals.
Photo: John Wernham/The Village Pound/CC BY-SA 2.0

A typical market day in Reepham in the 1880s would include the sale of pigs, poultry, sheep and cattle. By 1881 Ireland's, the auctioneers, were advertising that Reepham Station was open for cattle and the following year stated that drovers could be hired at both Whitwell and Reepham stations.

1877 saw the setting up of Ireland's sale ground on what is now the car park on Station Road; sales continued there until 1972.

The amount of stock involved, with cattle being driven from the station and other stock arriving in horse-drawn carts, inevitably led to accidents.

In 1886, a cart of pigs from Heydon was nearing the sale ground when a pig broke loose from the market and frightened the horse, causing it to break away from the cart and set off at great pace down the hill.

It was eventually stopped near the cemetery on Whitwell Road, but not until after it had collided with a cartload of ducks, belonging to a Mr Hubbard, going to market.

Mr Hubbard's cart was wrecked, but neither his horse nor the runaway horse were badly injured and the ducks escaped unhurt.

Information from Norwich Mercury, 3 October 1903, and Wikipedia.

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