

A riddle from the grocery store

Can a man's pocket be empty when he's got something in it? Yes, when he's got a hole in it! This is one of the riddles printed underneath a series of cartoons on a large sheet of paper with "Richard Amiss Grocer, Draper & General Dealer" and "Reepham" beneath each one.



The paper is broadsheet size and looks like an early form of advertising. One side contains 12 cartoons with an extra riddle underneath. The other side has snippets of songs that come from familiar folk songs, such as The Keel Row, sentimental ditties and humorous music hall songs popular in the mid-19th century, such I won't be a nun.

Maybe the whole sheet was used for wrapping large items bought in Richard Amiss's shop?

It would not have been cheap to have sheets like this printed so we assume that Amiss was a fairly prosperous merchant; he is mentioned in various early directories as a Grocer, Draper & Tailor. In 1841 he was working as a tailor in Norwich Road with two young apprentices. Ten years later he is named as a Master Tailor, Grocer & Draper employing a Journeyman Tailor with two apprentices and by 1861 his shop was in the Market Place.

Richard Amiss had at least four children: two boys, Alfred and Elijah, who died in their youth, and two daughters, Louise and Pamela. Louise married Samuel Sewell Eglington. Pamela, the youngest daughter, married Edward Page, a carpenter and coal merchant. By 1871 the Pages were running the Crown Inn and Pamela continued to run the Crown after Edward's death in 1911.