

# Caistor St Edmund

## The Smithy



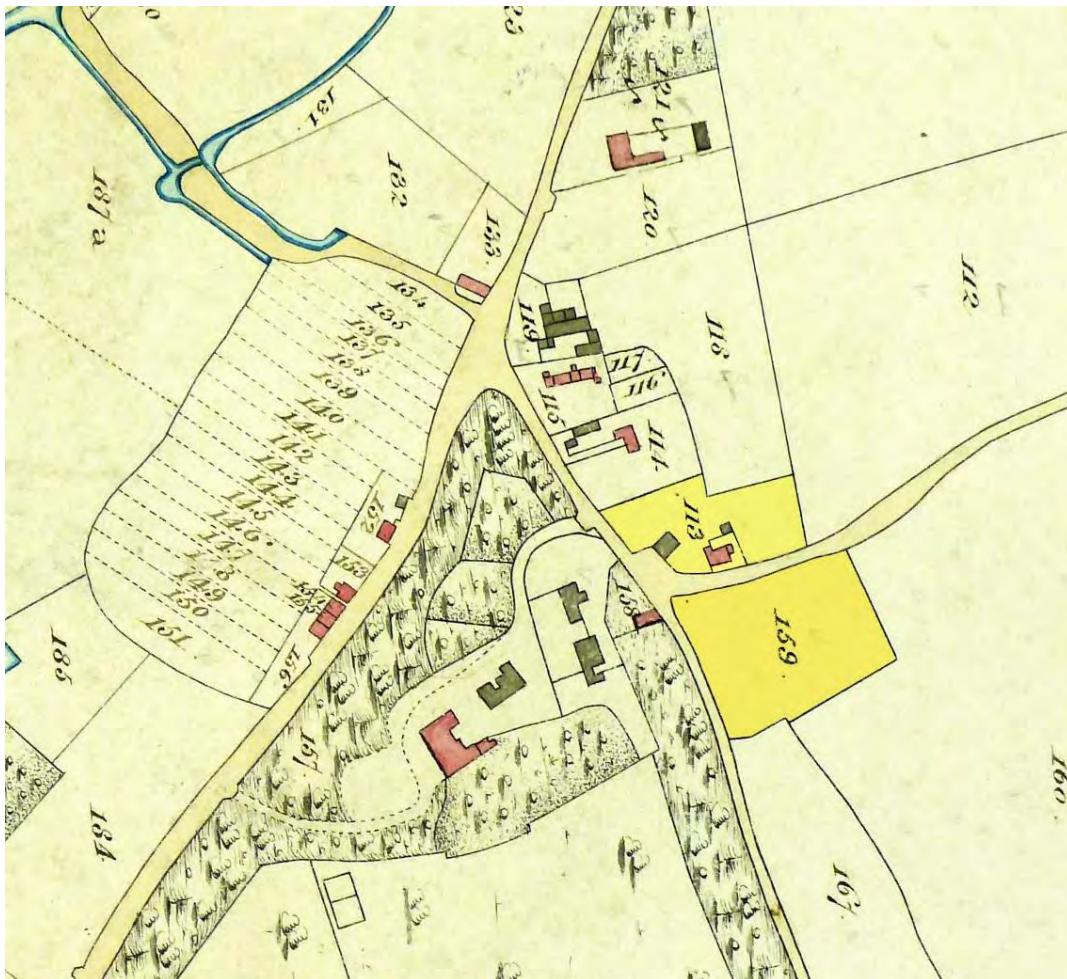
and

## Queen Anne Cottage



# The Smithy and Queen Anne Cottage

Benjamin Cogman moved to Caistor St. Edmund in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century. He set up as a blacksmith in the old forge, near the green on the bend as *Caistor Lane* sweeps round to the left towards Poringland, and lived in the house opposite. Some years later his house burnt down and gave its name to the field in which it stood, *Burnt House Meadow*, which is shown below on the 1840 Tithe map (plot 159). Today there is a bungalow called *Burnt House Farm* on that piece of land. This was built in the 1970s when the plot of land was given to Chris Skinner, farmer of High Ash Farm, as a wedding present in 1974. During the construction of the bungalow, footings and burnt remains of the original building were unearthed. Indeed, some of the bricks, Chris thinks, had been used in the building of *Queen Anne Cottage*. This was built in 1729 next to the old forge by Benjamin and his son, John, for Benjamin and subsequent Cogman blacksmiths. These buildings are marked on the 1795 Draft map of the Parish of Caistor with Stoke, Faden's map of 1797, and the Tithe map of 1840 (plot 113). Chris remembers there being a carborundum stone wheel at the smithy on an oak pedestal. This provided a hand-cranked means to sharpen tools.

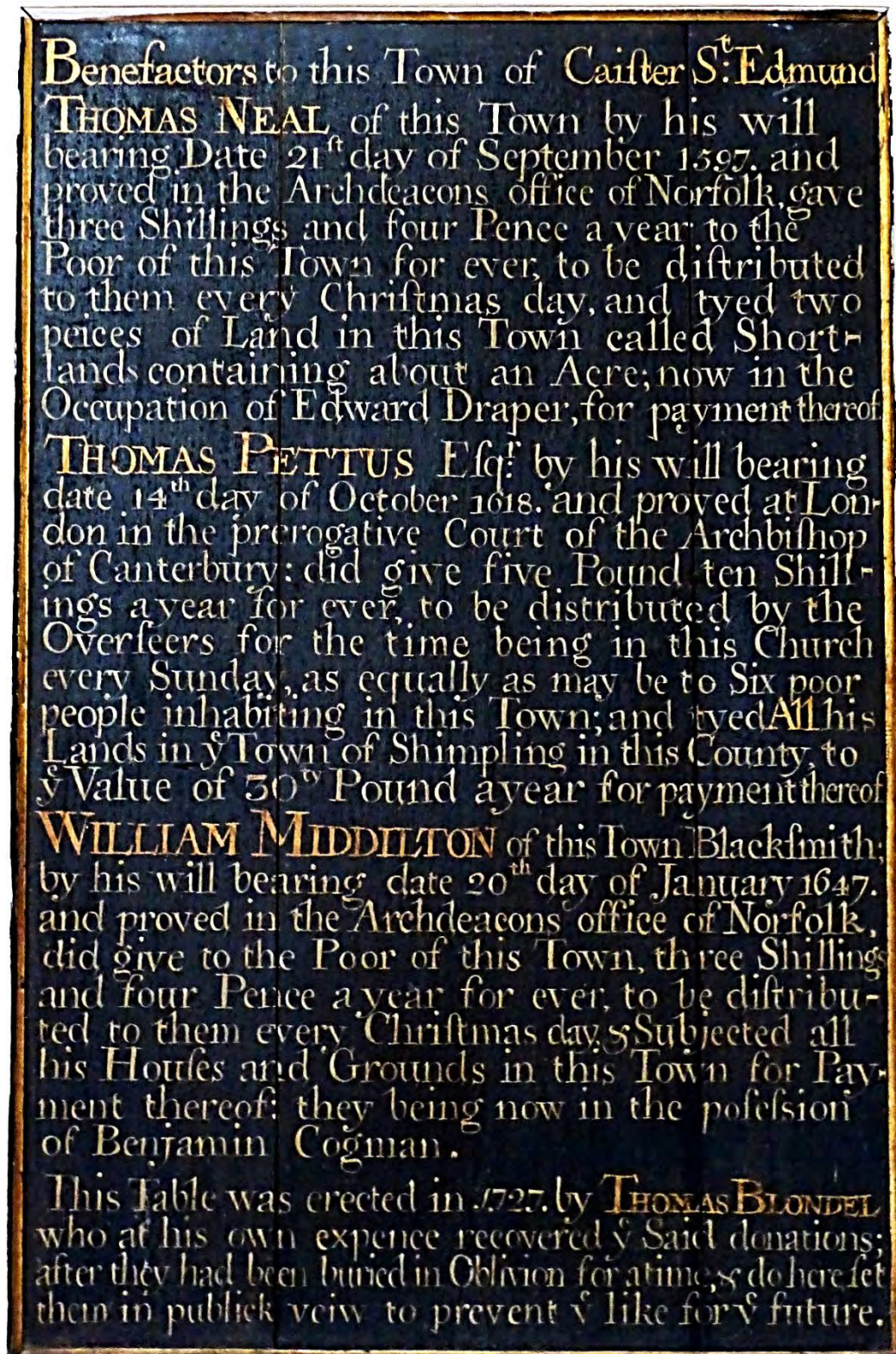


*Tithe map of 1840*

The earliest recorded mention of a blacksmith in Caistor St. Edmund is 1647. However, it must be assumed that one existed before this written record because, in 1647 William Middilton, blacksmith of Caistor, bequeathed a sum of 3s 4d for the poor to be distributed every Christmas Day. His will, proved in the Archdeacon's office, "tied all his house and ground in this town for the



payment thereof." The plaque in Caistor St. Edmund Church erected in 1727 by Thomas Blondel (shown below) refers to the house and grounds of William Middilton now being in the possession of Benjamin Cogman. This bequest still survives to this day as the Caistor and Markshall Fuel Allotment Charity. In 1946 it was amalgamated with other land gifts and bequests for clothing, coal and bread from people such as Pettus, Neale and Dashwood, some dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It is today administered by four trustees and distributed to deserving persons of the locality. During his lifetime, John Cogman, (1844-1927) was one of the trustees managing the charities. There is a plaque in the village church displaying the names and bequests of these benefactors.





The name of Cogman was synonymous with the smithy for over 200 years, from the early eighteenth century until the middle of the twentieth century when the smithy fell into ruin.

The 1840 Apportionment of the Rent-Charge records Robert Cogman as owner of the house, smithy and garden, and in the 1841 census as blacksmith, aged 60, living with his wife, Deborah. He served as parish clerk for thirty years and has a sculptured gravestone in the local churchyard (see photo on page 10). A decade later in 1851, his son, John Sheen Cogman, aged 39, was blacksmith employing two men. He also was parish clerk and churchwarden and all his children were baptised at Caistor in 1858. His eldest son, John, was born in 1845 after four daughters and was the sixth generation of blacksmiths living on the site. In 1861 this son was recorded as blacksmith with his father as master blacksmith.

At Queen Anne Cottage, above the old front door (which has now been bricked up on the inside and is no longer used) there is a stone plaque engraved with the initials B and C, and the date, 1729. These refer to Benjamin Cogman. On closer scrutiny of the triangle above them, it can be identified as a mason's mark. The plaque's position can be seen in the modern photograph of the house below.



*Queen Anne Cottage, Caistor Lane. 2017*



*John Cogman, blacksmith, outside Queen Anne Cottage in 1910, with his wife, Emily, and daughter, Margaret. John was the 6th generation of Cogmans to be blacksmiths here. (Pic. John Cogman)*

John must have been a stalwart of the village, holding the position of parish clerk from at least as early as 1864, according to White's Directory, and in 1884, that of parish constable. In 1924 just a few years before his death (in 1927), he and his wife, Emily, celebrated their diamond wedding. They had married in Scottow Church on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1864. It was their son, William, who was the last blacksmith of Caistor. John's unmarried sister, Maria, was governess to John's children and in her later life was employed by Jeremiah and Caroline Colman as governess. She was school-mistress at their first school in Stoke which had twenty pupils, and later in 1857 at the next school they established after moving to Norwich. This was held in a small room over a carpenter's shop in King Street, Norwich, and was accessed by a step ladder and handrail. Daniel Fisher was appointed Headmaster and Miss Cogman sewing mistress. There were fifty-seven pupils. In 1864 another school was opened on Carrow Hill which had six hundred children and infants on its register by 1899.

John and Emily's two eldest sons, Herbert (born 1865) and Ernest (born 1868), did not become blacksmiths. However, their third son, William, (born 1875) was recorded as a blacksmith's apprentice, aged 16, in the 1891 census. He took over from his father as blacksmith of Caistor St. Edmund around the time of the First World War.



*C. 1910 John is seen here with his son, William, who took over the business and became the blacksmith when John retired. (Pic. John Cogman)*



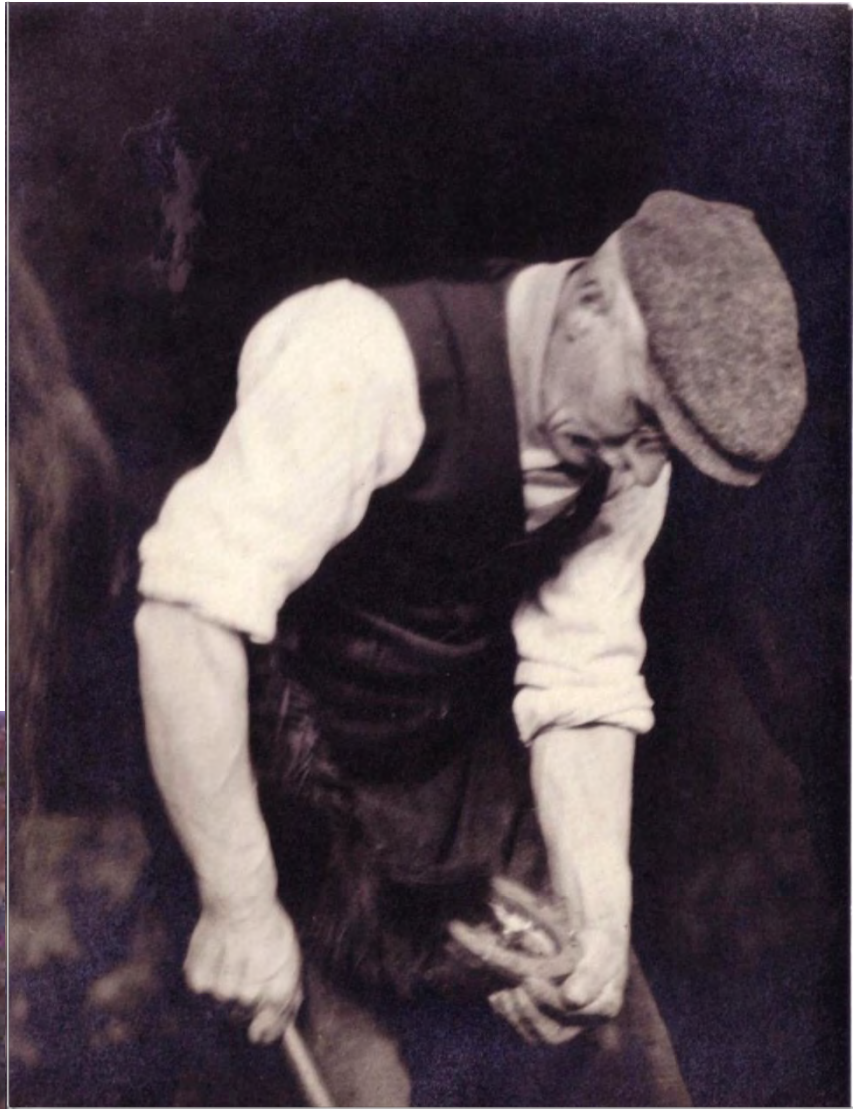
William retired as blacksmith in 1944 and the smithy was closed. His grandson (John Cogman who now lives in Stoke Holy Cross) remembers a sign over the door of the smithy which read something to the effect that "the wages of sin are death." William's retirement was a fruitful and happy one. His hobbies included keeping birds in aviaries and gardening, growing sweet peas a particular favourite pastime. He died in December, 1962, at the grand old age of 88, leaving his wife, Gertrude, who survived him by 6 years.



*1964 Aerial photograph. The smithy can be seen in the bottom right corner*



*William Cogman still busy in the early 1940's. (Pic. John Cogman)*



*William busy at the furnace in c.1915. (Pic. John Cogman).*



*Photos of the inside of the derelict smithy, by kind permission of the Norfolk Heritage Centre, the Forum, Norwich.*



*Blacksmith's seat in the derelict old smithy at Caistor St. Edmund*



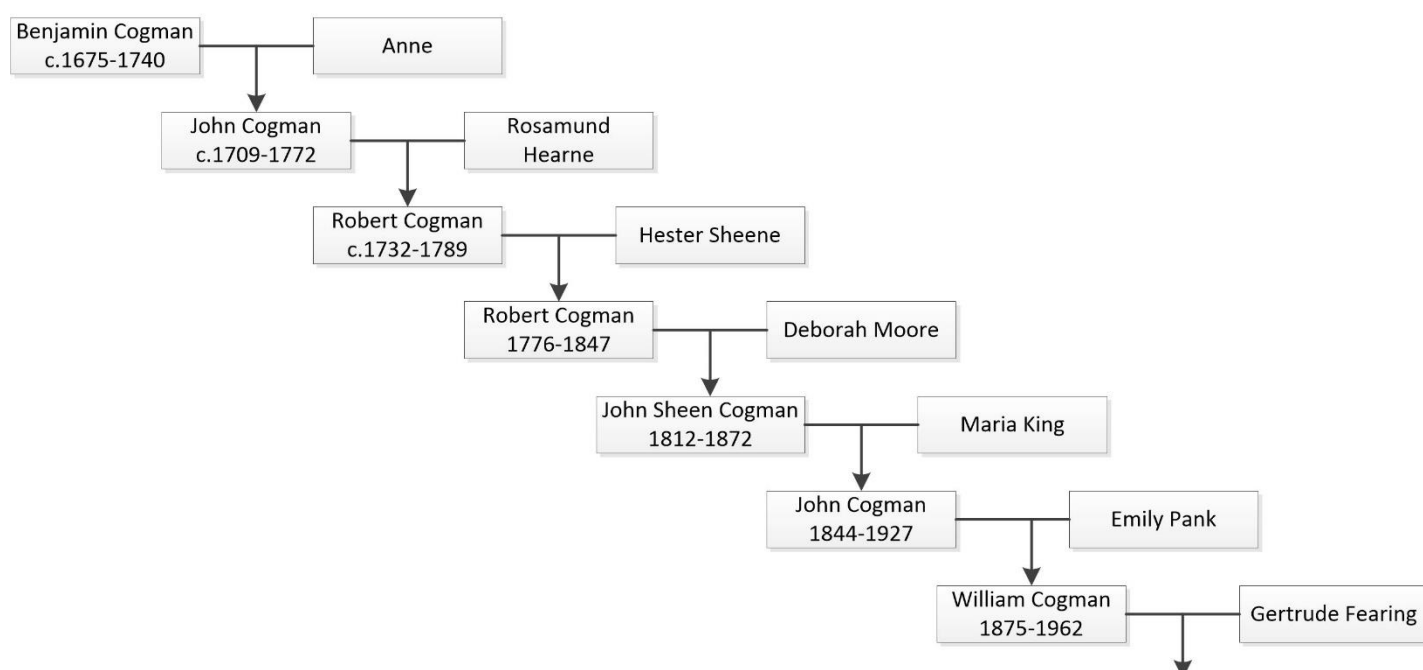
*Bellows in the derelict old smithy at Caistor St. Edmund*





*William Cogman's apron hanging on the wall of the derelict old smithy at Caistor St. Edmund*

### Caistor St. Edmund – Cogman line of blacksmiths







*The old forge as seen in 1950. Sadly, the building was demolished in 1970.  
(Pic. John Cogman)*

William and Gertrude's son Edward (Eddie) had already been apprenticed to Henry Taylor who ran a carpentry business, motor garage and smithy in Poringland. When bankruptcy threatened the firm in 1934 Edward Cogman and Bertie Woolnough set up in partnership as builders, and it is only recently that the business of Woolnough & Cogman closed on Poringland's main street near the Fiveways junction. Church Close in Caistor St. Edmund with its council houses was built in the 1950s by the building firm of Woolnough and Cogman. Edward was instrumental in the building of Framingham Earl's Methodist Chapel. It was his great grandfather who had been churchwarden in Caistor St. Edmund, but both his great grandsons, Edward and Claude, became non-conformists.

After their father died in 1927, William moved with his family from Upper Stoke to Queen Anne Cottage. Claude had also not followed his father into blacksmithing but been farming at Heath Farm and French Church Farm (both of which he purchased when the Caistor Hall estate was sold up) further along Caistor Lane towards Poringland. He also rented a few acres from the Fuel Allotment Charity mentioned earlier. He lived with his parents, a bachelor all his life, and it was Claude who had the smithy demolished in 1970 as it had become a safety hazard. When he died in 1982 the farms were sold but Queen Anne Cottage was left in his will to the Cogman family. There it would have remained but Claude had had few modern improvements made and no-one in the family wanted it, so it was sold, and the proceeds divided. After the sale, Queen Anne Cottage was extended and, when purchased by the present owners, it was extended further to the rear and a new porch added.



The long association of the Cogman family with Caistor St. Edmund is evidenced in the churchyard



In Memory of

Deborah the  
beloved Wife of  
Robt COGMAN  
who Died Aug 5th  
1847  
Aged 73 years



In Memory of

Robert COGMAN  
who departed this  
Life March 8<sup>th</sup>  
1847  
Aged 70 years  
who was for thirty  
Years Clerk of this  
Parish





## Details for Cogman blacksmiths from the 1840 Tithe Map, 1841-1911 Census and 1939 Register

### TITHE MAP

**1840** Robert Cogman: House, Smithy and Garden.

### CENSUS

#### 1841

Robert Cogman	Head	60	Blacksmith
Deborah Cogman	Wife	65	

#### 1851

John Cogman	Head	39	Blacksmith Master employing 2 men
Maria Cogman	Wife	38	
Deborah Cogman	Daughter	14	
Maria Cogman	Daughter	11	Scholar
Sarah Cogman	Daughter	10	Scholar
Anne Cogman	Daughter	8	Scholar
John Cogman	Son	6	Scholar
William Cogman	Son	4	
Benjamin Cogman	Son	3 months	
Maria Cogman	Sister	44	School Governess
Maria Fullar	Nurse	22	Charwoman
Stephen Rivet	Journeyman	24	Blacksmith Journeyman

#### 1861

John Cogman	Head	49	Blacksmith Master employing 1 man & 1 boy
Maria Cogman	Wife	48	
Sarah Cogman	Daughter	20	House Keeper
John Cogman	Son	16	Blacksmith
William Cogman	Son	14	
Margaret Cogman	Daughter	8	Scholar
Rebecca Galley	Servant	11	Servant

#### 1871

John Cogman	Head	26	Blacksmith, Journeyman
Emily Cogman	Wife	28	
Herbert John Cogman	Son	6	Scholar
Kate Margaret Cogman	Daughter	4	
Ernest Matthew Cogman	Son	3	

#### 1881

John Cogman	Head	36	Blacksmith
Emily Cogman	Wife	38	
Kate Cogman	Daughter	14	Apprentice to Drapery business?
Ernest Cogman	Son	13	Scholar
Maria Cogman	Daughter	9	Scholar
William Cogman	Son	6	Scholar
Margaret Cogman	Daughter	3	
Matthew Pank	Father-in-law	75	Formerly Agricultural Labourer

#### 1891

John Cogman	Head	46	Blacksmith
Emily Cogman	Wife	47	
Maria Cogman	Daughter	19	Draper's Assistant
William Cogman	Son	16	Blacksmith's Apprentice
Margaret Cogman	Daughter	14	School Teacher

#### 1901

John Cogman	Head	56	Blacksmith
Emily Cogman	Wife	58	

#### 1911

John Cogman	Head	66	Blacksmith General?
Emily Cogman	Wife	70	

### 1939 Register

Queen Anne Cottage			
William E Cogman	Male	23 Oct 1874	Married Shoeing and General Smith
Gertrude Cogman	Female	12 Aug 1874	Married Unpaid domestic duties
Cissie W Cogman Ratcliff	Female	8 Sept 1902	Secretary
Claude J Cogman	Male	5 Mar 1905	Farmer, Market Gardener, Haulage Contractor, Air Raid Warden.



There were ancestors of Benjamin (the first Cogman to be a blacksmith in Caistor St. Edmund) who lived in Hingham; Arthur, born c. 1610, who married Dorothe Lincolne on the 6th November 1627. Dorothe was a member of the Lincoln family of Hingham, Norfolk, from which was descended President Abraham Lincoln. According to the book "*The Ancestry of Abraham Lincoln*" by Lea & Hutchinson, Samuel Lincolne, the fourth great grandfather of Abraham Lincoln, was born in 1622 in Hingham, Norfolk (christened 24<sup>th</sup> August 1622). Later he emigrated to America.

Samuel was apprenticed to Francis Lawes, weaver and mariner of Norwich, who lived in Carleton Rode, just outside the city. When Samuel was 18 he accompanied his master and family to New England in 1637, sailing on the 'John & Dorethy' from Ipswich, arriving in Boston on 20<sup>th</sup> June. Once settled in America he joined his two brothers, Thomas and Daniel, who had emigrated from Hingham earlier. They lived in a place called Bare Cove which was later renamed Hingham. Samuel died aged 71 in 1690.



*Queen Anne Cottage  
Caistor St. Edmund, Norfolk*

*Built 1729 by Benjamin and John Cogman*

*Drawing found among correspondence from the 1920s between Cissie, daughter of William, the last Caistor blacksmith, and a relative, Herbert Burrell, who resided in America*

---



## ***Sources & Bibliography***

*John Cogman*

*Nigel Orme*

*Caroline Page*

*Chris Skinner*

*Jeanette Utting*

*John Cogman's family papers*

*Archant Newspaper Archives*

*Poringland Archive: b <http://www.poringlandarchive.co.uk/>*

*Joe Mason: <https://joemasonspage.wordpress.com/>*

*Norwich Heritage Library*

*Norfolk County Council, The Archive Centre*

*Norfolk Family History Society*

*Kelly and White Directories*

*Census records*

*Parish records*

*1939 Register*

*"History of Norfolk" by Blomefield*

*"Hingham in History" by M.E. Lonsdale*