

In the 1890s the number of people selling groceries in the village seems higher than ever before or since. The 1890 trade directory lists 10 such outlets, if one includes those vaguely described as 'shop-keeper' - a surprisingly large total in a population of about 1500. However, some of these 'shops' may have been quite limited and part-time, probably involving sales from a private house rather than from a building with a shop front and display windows. For instance, Thomas Biggins of California enters himself as grocer in the directory but this was very likely a side occupation for him (or his wife), since he is classed in the census records as 'agricultural labourer' in 1881, 'quarryman' in 1891, and 'whinstone miner' in 1901. Selling a few groceries from his home (for which, of course, no planning permission was then required) must have been merely an additional effort on his part to provide support for his wife and nine children. To take another example, David Bottomley is described in the 1890 directory as 'grocer, joiner and wheelwright'. From other sources we know that as well as being a joiner and cartwright he was also a great buyer and seller of property and that he was responsible for converting several cottages along the western end of the High Street from one storey to two. And William Bailes, a 72-year-old widower who lived by himself in 'Mill Row' (i.e. Mill Terrace) is 'shop-keeper' in the 1890 directory but a 'gardener' in the 1891 census.

### Dodsworth

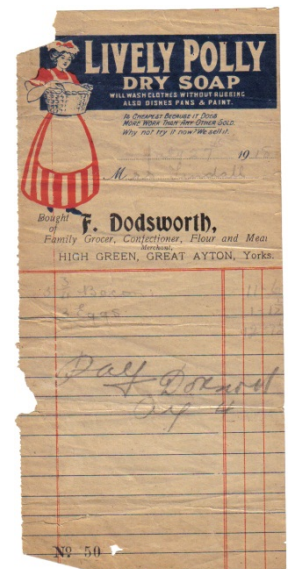
There were, however, more established and permanent grocers who certainly possessed proper shops. One such in 1890 was Foster Dodsworth, grocer, whose shop was next to the Royal Oak (on its eastern side).



Foster Dodsworth came to the village between 1879 and 1881, having previously lived in Ormesby where his wife and his two daughters were all born. His shop premises had previously been occupied by another grocer, Charles Airey, who features in the 1872 and 1879 directories. When Foster Dodsworth died, sometime after 1891, his wife Margaret carried on the business until their grandson, Frank Dodsworth (the son of their eldest daughter Isabella) was old enough to take over. Frank continued until at least until the outbreak of the 2nd world war (he would

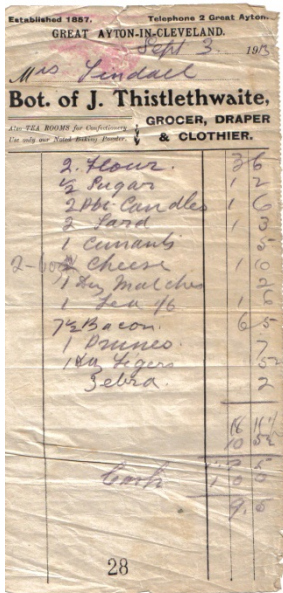
have been 60 in 1939). In about 1970 the building was sold to the National Westminster Bank who replaced it with the present premises.

This bill, from 27 July 1918, was presented to Mrs Tindall of Eagle Street  
It was for 5¾ ozs of bacon at 11/6d, and 3 eggs at 1/1½d.



### Thistlethwaites

Another grocer's shop which was purpose-built was Eagle House, where the Bistro is today. This was built for Jeremiah Thistlethwaite, who arrived in the village in 1857, probably at the invitation of the managers of the new Quaker school opposite. Eagle House and the two adjoining houses were designed by Alfred Waterhouse, a celebrated Quaker architect. Jeremiah clearly prospered because in 1890 he was able to buy a partnership in the Gribdale whinstone mine. Earlier, in 1884, his son, William Henry, aged 20, started to help him in the business. We know a good deal about William Henry since he was a prolific photographer of local scenes, and also he kept a diary which has survived. He married Alice Dixon, daughter of the Friends' School headmaster, and they rented Harborgill next door to the grocery. He helped his father develop the business, although in his diary he complains about competition from other village grocers, writing 'Alex Holmes and other pushing men have been constantly moving on whilst we still have been making no effort'. (Unfortunately the name Alex Holmes does not appear in any of the



local records.). In 1900 William Henry took over from an aunt a cafe situated on the north west corner of the High Green, where the post office was until recently. He sold his share in the Gribdale mine in 1912 not long after his father's death. He retired in 1923, selling Eagle House and the business to the Cockerill family. Bruce Cockerill was the proprietor during the 1930s, and later, until the mid-seventies, it was run by his daughter Josie and her husband, Jack Morris.

Mrs Tindall again. A bill from 1913.

## Dixons

Another long-established family of grocers, this time at the west end of the village, were the Dixons. William Dixon came to Ayton, probably from Skelton where he was born, in about 1858. and set up in Bridge street, first as a joiner but apparently inclining towards the grocery business in subsequent years. In the 1861 census he is described as 'cabinet maker', but in the 1872 directory he is 'grocer, china and glass dealer and joiner' whereas in the 1881 and 1891 censuses he is merely a 'grocer and general dealer'. On first coming to the village he had married Hannah Hauxwell, daughter of the millwright in the mill round the corner from Bridge street. William Dixon died in 1891 and his four sons took over the business as 'Dixon Brothers' of Bridge street. One brother, George, died in 1903, but the others, William, Hansell and Arnold, continued for many years, moving sometime before 1919 to the west end of the High Street, to the site now occupied by the 'Alternative Store'. The brothers also owned more property in the vicinity, including 'Cooks cottage', removed to Melbourne in 1934. Arnold and Hansell married two sisters, Anne and Elizabeth Hunter, and it was Anne, by all accounts a forceful lady, who negotiated the deal on behalf of her husband and his two elder brothers.