

# HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING STREET GUIDES: DURHAM ROAD



ONE OF THE MAJOR routes out of Sunderland centre is the A690, or Durham Road as it is aptly known for it runs from Sunderland to the historic City of Durham. A stretch of this ancient road passes through Houghton-le-Spring however it is now off the beaten track since the opening of the A690 dual-carriageway in the summer 1970.

In the days before motorcars, the old Durham Road would have brought many a weary traveller to Houghton, from either direction. The town's numerous inns offered refreshments and a comfortable bed for the night – not forgetting stables where your horses could have rest.

In those days, Durham Road was a lane surrounded by fields and it is on one of those fields that Houghton Cemetery opened on March 1st 1892, at the southern end of the town. The cemetery grounds, timber clad lodge and iron railings cost £4,000, about £250,000 in today's money. Prior to this, burials were in the Church's detached burial ground, known as Houghton Hillside Cemetery, which had opened in 1854 but was vastly overcrowded. When the new cemetery opened, the Local Board of Health Attempted to close Hillside Cemetery, however the Rector, Rev John Grey, objected as the new cemetery had not been consecrated. The Local



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Board continued to refuse to consecrate the new cemetery and the Church was left with no other option than to extend the dilapidated Hillside Cemetery, which it did in 1894. This was despite neighbouring Hetton-le-Hole's municipal cemetery having a consecrated section and it was only resolved when Houghton Cemetery was finally consecrated in 1907. In the 1930s, the cemetery was extended to the east, seeing the burial ground extend from Durham Road up to Hetton Road.



Durham Road had other significant buildings built alongside it. St Michael's Roman Catholic Church opened for divine service on November 7<sup>th</sup> 1837 having been designed by Ignatius Bonomi, an architect who worked on Lambton Castle, Durham Castle and Durham Prison. The Church originally occupied the upper floor with the ground floor used as a school, however a detached school was built later and has since been rebuilt on the opposite side of Durham Road.

Nearer the town centre stands the former malting house of the Robinson Brothers brewery, which was converted into luxury apartments in 1999. Indeed, the Robinson family owned many of the properties along Durham Road, particularly those known as Imperial Buildings, which also housed the Kings Hall, the one-time dole office and place where residents enlisted during the Second World War.

Like many of Houghton's other streets, Durham Road has seen great changes over the years. One of the biggest is the change of name for the section in the very centre of Houghton. This became known as the Broadway when it was widened in the 1950s and landscaped at the time the Urban District Council acquired the nearby Rectory grounds for use as a public park.

*Paul Lanagan*

PAUL LANAGAN BA HONS  
LOCAL HISTORIAN  
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DURHAM ROAD IN 2012



❖ **Hatfield House, Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring**

1881 Census – Occupied by Thomas William Usherwood Robinson, brewer employing 18 men.

1911 Census – James Oswald, brewer.

???? – Northumbria Financial Management Ltd.

2009 - Houghton Cuts (photographed in October 2009; still present in 2014).

❖ **1 Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring**

???? – Elsbury Priddin, 1 Imperial Buildings.

1980 – Sunderland Borough Council granted permission for change of use from Confectionery Shop to a Solarium.

1985 – Sunderland Borough Council granted permission for change of use from Retail Shop to an Insurance Brokers Office.

1986 – London Gazette, Deed Poll notice – made on behalf of a client by Geoffrey Elsbury & Co, Red Lion Corner, 1 Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring.

1994 – advert – Casting, suppliers of fishing tackle to the specialist angler. Props: B & N Hughes.

2010 – Power Custom Tattoos, photographed by Houghton Heritage Society in 2010.

2012 – Sweet Tooth, confectionery emporium, photographed by Houghton Heritage Society in 2012.

2013 – Georgie Porgie Pudding & Pies opened in 1 Imperial Buildings, DH4 4DJ, at the beginning of July 213.

2014 – eCigarette shop (name tbc).



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❖ **2/3 Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring**

1934 & 1935 – advert – A. Dimambro, ices of the finest quality. Durham Road.

1954 - advert – A. Dimambro, 3 Durham Road, for morning coffee, ices, cigarettes, and confectionery. Open until 10pm daily.

2009 – Halifax Building Society photographed by Houghton Heritage Society in 2009.

2010 – Your Move, Chris Stonock, photographed by Houghton Heritage Society in 2010.

Business still present in July 2013.

❖ **4A Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring**

2010 – Deli Delicious hot & cold sandwiches photographed by Houghton Heritage Society in 2010.

2011 – Houghton Barbers.

❖ **4 Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring**

???? – David Burns Limited.

???? – Nationwide Splicing & Rope Services Limited.

2012 – Satchi hairdressing photographed by Houghton Heritage Society in 2012.

❖ **Kings Hall, Houghton-le-Spring**

Doorway is presently located to the right of 4 Imperial Buildings.

1940s – Kings Hall was the 'dole office' and where men enlisted during WWII.

Robert Miller & Co, Unit 4, Imperial Buildings.

1992 & 1993 & 1996 – advert – Robert Miller & Co, Chartered Accountants, Kings Hall, Imperial Buildings.

❖ **5 Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring**

???? – Bankbridge Ltd

c1987 - Pizza Dial started operating from 5 Imperial Buildings.

1992 – advert – Pizza Dial, hot takeaway served, Telephone 0191 512 0906.

❖ **5A Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring**

Doorway leading to Houghton-Rainton Taxis (based upstairs).



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ABUS ON DURHAM ROAD IN 1962

#### ❖ 6 Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring

1940s receipt – C. Nutman, Fruiterer and Florist. Nutman's also had a shop at Front Street, Hetton-le-Hole.

1961 – advert – C. Nutman, 6 Imperial Buildings.

1962 photograph – C. Nutman, Fruit and Flowers (see 1977 28/29 Mautland Square).

???? – Simpsons Refrigeration.

1982 – Permission was granted by Sunderland Borough Council for the change of use "from refrigeration to ice cream parlour".

2010 – Photographed by Houghton Heritage Society as an empty shop.

2012 – Photographed by Houghton Heritage Society as Pizza Dial in April 2012; at the same time, the original Pizza Dial shop was still present in the property to the left. Apparently this property is now used for storage for the takeaway next door.

#### ❖ 7 Imperial Buildings, Houghton-le-Spring

1954 photograph – Kemps.

1971 – F. Bescoby, commercial photographer. Telephone 3409 or 2369.

1977 & 1978 – advert – Autostock, 7 Imperial Buildings, Telephone 842912.

???? – Autostock. Some list Autostock's address as 7 Durham Road, Houghton-le-Spring.

1992 & 1993 – advert – Auto Stock, 7 Imperial Buildings, 0191 584 2912.

#### ❖ Durham Road Garage, Durham Road, Houghton-le-Spring

1973 & 1974 – advert – Bennisons for Morris, MG, Wolseley, Tel. 842844.

1976 & 1978 – advert – Bennisons of Houghton, Frank Bennison, Durham Road Garage.



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GEORGE REYNOLDS OUTSIDE HIS SHOP AT 1 IMPERIAL BUILDINGS, DURHAM ROAD, 2013

❖ **Motor & Coach Works, Durham Road, Houghton-le-Spring**

1934 & 1935 – advert - George Westwick, joiner, blacksmith and painter. Phone Houghton 56.

❖ **Bus Stand, Durham Road, Houghton-le-Spring**

1934 – advert - Cafe Imperial, noted for luncheons, teas and suppers. Open 10am to 10pm Saturdays and Sundays.

❖ **Robinson Brothers Brewery, Durham Road**

See Public Houses section for further information.



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

:: With thanks to Glenys Gibson for information.

:: Founding year of Pizza Dial, 5 Imperial Buildings, from [www.pizzadial.co.uk/about\\_us.asp](http://www.pizzadial.co.uk/about_us.asp)

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