The Histon Stone - Moses Carter, the Histon Giant

In the garden of The Boot public house in Histon, Cambridgeshire, sits a large stone with a remarkable connection to one of the village's most famous characters.

Known as the Histon Stone, it is associated with Moses Carter (c.1801–1860), a local strongman remembered as the "Histon Giant". Nearly seven feet tall and weighing more than 23 stone, Carter became well known locally for his extraordinary size and physical strength.[1][2]





Figures 1 & 2. The Histon Stone 152kg and Histon Village sigh.

Carter lived in Histon and worked as a vegetable grower, regularly travelling around the village and into Cambridge with a large handcart. Local accounts describe him as exceptionally strong, with stories claiming that he could pull agricultural equipment himself and carry heavy sacks of grain under his arms.[1]

His reputation for strength extended beyond farm work. Carter was known to take part in boxing at Stourbridge Fair, where accounts describe him defeating other competitors. He also became the subject of numerous local stories and memories, helping establish his place in Histon folklore.[1][3]

The most famous story associated with Carter, however, concerns the stone that now sits at The Boot.

According to local tradition, Carter entered into a wager to carry a large boulder from the Ballast Hole on Park Lane into the village. The Ballast Hole had been excavated to provide material for the railway and later filled with water before eventually being filled in during the 20th century.[1]

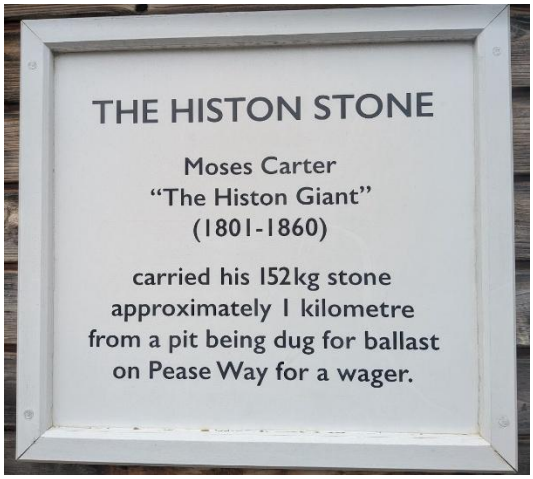


Figure 3. Histon Stone Plaque.

Carter is said to have lifted the boulder, carried it into Histon and placed it at the corner by The Boot public house. The feat became one of the defining stories of the Histon Giant, and the stone remains at The Boot today, although it has since been moved from its former position on the corner into the pub garden.[1][2]



Figure 4. The Boot Public House.

The story is also preserved through Histon's local heritage. The village sign depicts Moses Carter carrying a large boulder, while a memorial to Carter was unveiled at St Andrew's Church in 1998.[2][4]

The Boot itself continues to acknowledge the connection. Its history describes the large stone in the garden as the stone carried there by the Histon Giant in the 1800s.[5]

The surviving accounts do not provide a precise weight for the stone or establish exactly how Carter carried it. As with many traditional feats of strength, the story has been preserved primarily through local history, folklore and oral tradition rather than contemporary records of the lift.

That uncertainty is part of what makes the Histon Stone interesting. The stone itself survives, the location of Carter's feat is remembered, and the story has continued to form part of Histon's identity for generations.





Figures 5 & 6. Carters Memorial with plaque – Not the lifting stone...

For English Stonelifting, the Histon Stone is particularly significant as an example of an English lifting tradition connected to an identifiable historical figure. Rather than being simply a heavy stone, it represents a story of strength, wager and local character that has survived alongside the stone itself. Although not liftable today due to being cemented to the monument stone it sits on.

The Histon Stone is a reminder that England's lifting history may not always be found in formal records or dedicated lifting sites. Sometimes it survives in village stories, local landmarks and the stones that remain where those stories took place.

References

[1] Histon and Impington Village Society — *The Histon Giant*. Local historical material concerning Moses Carter, his life, reputation for strength and the story of his carrying the boulder to The Boot.[2]

[2] Histon and Impington Village Society — *A Histon Character of 100 Years Ago: Moses Carter 1801–1860*. Historical account describing Carter as the Histon Giant and recording the story of the boulder carried from the Ballast Hole to the Boot.[3]

[3] Capturing Cambridge — *Clay Street, Histon*. Historical account of Moses Carter, his strength, boxing and the wager involving the large rock carried into the village.[4]

[4] Histon and Impington Village Society — *The Histon Giant*. Material relating to Carter's memorial, local remembrance and representations of the Histon Giant.[5]

[5] The Boot, Histon — *Our Story / About*. The present-day pub's account identifying the large stone in its garden as the stone carried there by the Histon Giant in the 1800s.[6]