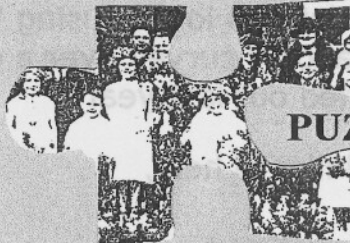


WHILTON NEWSLETTER

APRIL AND MAY 2010



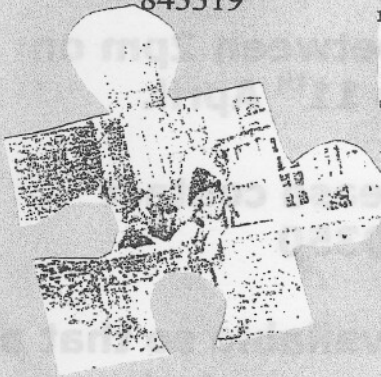
PUZZLE OF THE PAST

As many parishioners will know, I have been working on the history of Whilton for several years, and hope to produce a history of Whilton in the next few months.

I would like to thank all who have lent or shown me items about the past, but I am aware that there may be others who would like to share their deeds, papers, photos or other records, which will help to piece together the "puzzle of the past".

If you have any items, which you would like to share, could you please contact me before Easter, as I am now coming near the end of my writing.

Anthea Hiscock
Langton House
843319



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In this issue

- Parish News
- Church News
- Whilton Gardeners' Assoc.
- Whilton Local History Society.
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- Bird Notes
- Photographic Club
- Village Hall News
- Pre-School Activities

* HAPPY *
* EASTER *

SPEEDWATCH

The Community Engineer is supportive of 20mph in the village But judging by the response to the Dec/Jan newsletter article we do not have a speeding problem. If we think there is, then we should back it with some real data and show some commitment to reducing speed and improving safety.

It is not too late to start Community Speedwatch – we require 20% of the electoral population to support the project, a volunteer coordinator and a minimum of 10 volunteers to be trained to use the laser speed gun to monitor traffic speeds.

Also to obtain a lorry weight limit we need hard data on lorries using Whilton as a through route, any volunteers to carry out a lorry survey over a couple of days to support the automated traffic count carried out last year.

Please contact any parish councillor if you would like to help,
Mike Lewis,
Chairman WPC

Dates for Parish Council meetings 2010/2011

Annual Parish Meeting 26th April.

PC AGM 12th May.

14th July.

8th Sept.

10th Nov.

12th Jan 2011.

9th March 2011.

PARISH LITTER PICK

**This will take place between 2pm on
9th April to 5pm 11th April.**

**Any volunteers please contact
07791 030350**

**with days and times available so that a
schedule can be generated.**

Litter grabbers, gloves etc will be provided.

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY MOBILE LIBRARY SERVICE

**VISITS WHILTON EVERY THIRD TUESDAY AND STOPS OUTSIDE THE OLD PLOUGH,
MAIN STREET AT 9.15 AM UNTIL 9.30 AM.**

THE DATES FOR APRIL ARE 6TH & 27TH & THE MAY DATE IS 18TH

PARISH MATTERS

Report on Parish Council meeting held 1st March, five councillors and two parishioners were present.

A letter had been sent to MGWSP referring to a number of outstanding highway issues, requesting a response by 12 Feb. No response had been received so our County Councillor suggested either we did the works ourselves under the Road Act and charged MGWSP and/or made our case at a County Council meeting.

Post meeting note: *-South View fence has been replaced, temporary repair carried out again on potholes at Whilton Locks, water at railway bridge has been inspected by MGWSP who may pump the ditch to inspect the pipe from the ditch to the road drain .*

The water problem at Brington Lane is now entering its second decade and as it appeared that many properties were affected it was agreed to compile a record of all the issues to present to MGWSP.

A parish litter pick would take place between 9th April and 12th April – see separate notice. It was observed that some of the roadside litter appeared to come from the refuse lorry – this would be followed up with the DDC.

We have received a new Code of Conduct to replace the one we approved in 2008. This is 37 pages long and we will assess the impact on our functioning as soon as possible before accepting it.

To make life easier for the volunteers who cut the churchyard grass we agreed to purchase a trolley for the new hover mower as it was awkward to transport from the storage place to the churchyard.

There was some debate about having a shelter on the Green for bus users. We agreed to investigate further re costs, also the area around the seat would be graded/levelled and seeded.

Three problems at the allotments were discussed: excess rubbish on some plots, tools left on plots and paths and the cover of the stop tap in the verge was broken. **Action to be taken on all these issues.**

Annual Parish Meeting is 26th April – notices will be put up soon.
AGM of the Parish Council is 12th May.

A WHILTON SOCIAL LUNCH took place on Thursday 25th February and 17 parishioners sat down to lunch. As advertised, many of the ingredients used were Fair Trade. It was again a very happy and successful social occasion. The next one will be in early summer and the date will be notified in the June Newsletter.

TUESDAY CHAT dates for April will be Tuesday 20th and May will be Tuesday 18th from 2.30 pm – 4.00 pm in the village hall. All welcome

WHILTON VILLAGE HALL 200 CLUB

1st April 2010 is the start of the new year for the 200 Club and our dedicated voluntary collectors will shortly be calling on members who we hope will renew their membership for 2010 / 2011.

Janet Bowers and Philip Waights have now retired as collectors; Janet after nearly 20 years and Philip nearly 15 years. The Management Committee are extremely grateful for their loyalty over the years.

We have been fortunate in replacing Janet and Philip with Jonathan Hanslip and Ian Woods and we do appreciate their willingness to carry on with the good work.

Our thanks also go to Barbara Morris who is a long serving member of the team and has kindly agreed to continue this year. Our fourth volunteer is Keith Hiscock who took over from Margaret Webster last year and has also agreed to continue.

The proceeds from the 200 Club play an important role in financing various projects to improve the building and facilities in the village hall for the benefit of the community.

If you are not already a member and would like to know more, please contact Shirley or Derek Brown on 01327 842968.

WHILTON VILLAGE HALL 200 CLUB 2010/2011

JANUARY 2010

1 st Prize	081	G Haynes	£45
2 nd Prize	050	T Leadbetter	£25

FEBRUARY 2010

1 st Prize	105	A Gilbert	£45
2 nd Prize	009	G Denbigh	£25

MARCH 2010

1 st Prize	096	M Seth-Smith	£45
2 nd Prize	003	J Fisher	£25

Congratulations to All



Karen & Tony Whitcombe, Inglenook, are pleased to announce the early arrival of Benjamin Michael born on the 15th January 2010 (expected 6th March); a lovely little brother for Louise.

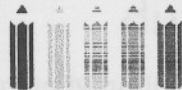
Karen & Tony thank friends and neighbours for their support and care.

POSTAGE STAMPS

Used postage stamps are still being collected in the village by Trudy Haynes (please leave on the windowsill by the back door of the Old Plough). The charity supported is the Leprosy Mission.

Teresa Leadbetter, Wood View, also collects stamps for charity

You are invited to the..



BRINGTON & WHILTON PRE-SCHOOL EASTER EGG HUNT



Great Brington Church
Saturday 3rd April 2010
Easter Egg Hunt 10.00am – 11.00am
Raffle
Build an Easter Garden 11.00am
Tea, Coffee and Light refreshments
£2.00 per child



If you have or know of any child aged 2yrs 6mths to rising 5yrs who would benefit from attending a caring setting, please do not hesitate to contact **Jenny Holman 01604 770083 or 07948724415.**

Bird Notes

Since Christmas, Richard and I have been watching an increasingly large flock of yellowhammers – we estimated 50 or 60 eventually – roosting and feeding in the Whilton fields where we walk the dogs. These attractive birds – the males have canary yellow heads – are now in full view as they start mating and their call, ‘a little bit of bread and no cheeeese’ seems to ring from



every hedgerow. This is great news from a birding point of view as yellowhammers are in decline in many areas.

We also saw and heard our first skylark singing, way above Gordon and Mary Emery’s sheep and lambs on Tuesday 23rd March. Surely, Spring is here.

Ann Gilbert

WHILTON VILLAGE HALL

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE FACILITY OF THE VILLAGE HALL TO YOU?

The AGM was held on 3rd March 2010 at 7.30 pm in the village hall and although the public are invited to attend and express their views and thoughts and maybe join the small Committee, another year goes by with a total lack of support.

The present Management Committee members all agreed to stand for a further year and were duly elected. However we are still without a Secretary and our Chairman is acting in this capacity. We are also short of one Committee member due to a retirement. The majority of the current committee members have served for many years and the time is fast approaching when there will be further retirements. Interest shown by people with fresh ideas and prepared to serve as a member of the Management Committee would be very welcome.

It is vital that we plan for the future at this stage and unless there is an input by new members on the Committee, with retirements looming, the prospects for the village hall must be in question. If there is anyone with a minimal amount of time to spare to secure its future, please contact **Mike Lewis (Chairman) on 01327 842404**

Whilton Village Hall Management Committee

Whilton Photography Club



It's been a few months now since the Whilton Photography Club went into temporary hibernation, but I am pleased to say that it has returned.

The 2010 meetings will be on:

Friday 9th April
Friday 7th May
Friday 4th June
Friday 9th July
Friday 6th August
Friday 3rd September
Friday 15th October
Friday 5th November
Friday 3rd December

The meetings will usually take place in Whilton Village Hall, starting at 7.30pm. Weather permitting; we may venture out in the summer months to make some photographs in and around Whilton and then finish off with a pint. There is also the possibility of some outings at weekend as well.

The topics we intend to cover will be suitable for everyone from true beginners to more seasoned photographers. At our March meeting we started to look at composition and our meeting in April will expand on this, covering the use of colour and black and white in composition. We also plan to take time out in each meeting to discuss the photos we are taking so that we can learn how to improve our photography.

If you would like to get more from your camera and learn how to take better photographs, feel free to come along to a meeting, or call me for further information.

Neil Phillips (Tel: 01327 844182,
E-mail: neiljphillips@hotmail.com)

Derek Coates formerly of Lane Cottage, Buckby Lane who is now resident in France, sent the following email earlier this year to those for whom he had email addresses.

Hello everyone

I hope you all had a peaceful and enjoyable Christmas and wish you all a prosperous, healthy and happy New Year.

This was our 6th 'Festive Season' here, and was spent quietly, having postponed Christmas Day till Sunday in order to allow to friends to come and share it with us.

We have had a relatively quiet year with no major accidents or injuries - the first since we moved here. The only real problem has been the weakness of the pound, which has caused our income to drop by 30%!

One highlight of the year was a holiday in Killarney with my brothers & sister and their spouses, in my sister's 1951 Bedford Duple coach, together with the joint owners. Lovely place & wonderful Guinness, with musicians playing in most pubs every night - I even got to drive the bus!

Most of you will remember Maxine, my 'little' dog - probably with a shudder - she is still with us, though deaf and very wobbly on her back legs - she will be 16 this month. Both horses are well and enjoying the freedom of outdoor living and working only twice a week.

Best wishes to all

Derek & Viv

Ps - please forward to Paul & Sara - I haven't got their e-mail address - thanks.

ST ANDREWS CHURCH SERVICES APRIL 2010

2ND GOOD FRIDAY	7.30 PM	COMPLINE
4TH EASTER DAY	9.15 AM	FAMILY COMMUNION
11TH	11.00 AM	FAMILY SERVICE
18TH	9.15 AM	HOLY COMMUNION
25TH	11.00 AM	FAMILY SERVICE

CHURCH NEWS

Since the last newsletter **GREAT NEWS** an incumbent has been appointed. Patrons had failed to appoint a Rector within the nine months set by CoE Law so the matter was referred to the Archbishop of Canterbury who then takes on the responsibility of appointing an incumbent. Within a short time the Parish representatives met with the Revd. Sue Kipling. The result was that she was appointed. Sue will be Instituted and Inducted on Tuesday 27th April 2010 in Brington Church by the new Bishop of Peterborough, Donald Allister.

She has been curate in 12 rural parishes in the Basingstoke area of Hampshire in the diocese of Winchester and is very much looking forward to moving and working in the Spencer Benefice. She will live at the Rectory in Gt Brington and hopes to be moving in during early April and is planning to take her first service on 2nd May which will be the Benefice Service at Church Brampton.

I escorted her around some of the churches recently, all so different in their own way and on entering St Andrews Whilton, she stood looking up the aisle and said 'WOW'. Surprised, I queried the remark to be told what a lovely church with its east window and reredos in the sanctuary. Her impression she said was of a peaceful and friendly atmosphere.

I am looking forward to her joining us.

FUND RAISING

Although an unusual time to have a **BAZAAR** after Christmas and before Easter, the ten stalls plus donations raised £406. 50 for church funds. Many thanks to all who helped in any way and maybe Whilton has started a new fashion!

QUIZ An enjoyable evening headed by Neil Phillips as quizmaster was held on Friday 19th March in the village hall. The organising was expertly carried out by the Mitchell family. Jacket potatoes with fillings gave a break from the questions. Together with a raffle the evening raised £287.60 for St Andrews. Again many thanks to all who helped to make a lively and entertaining evening.

CAR BOOT to be held on **Sunday 18th April 2010 1.00 -4.00 pm in Wadd Close** by kind permission of the Emery family. This is your chance to sell those unwanted items, make yourselves some money, have a great afternoon and help the fundraising for the church. Setting up from 11.00 am, £6 per car or £5 if pre-booked, £10 per van or £8 pre-booked on **01327 842851 or 01327 842034**

Janet Bowers



WHILTON GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION



Spring welcomes in the start of a new gardening year, so why not try to forget the economic troubles in your life and spend more time in planting and enjoying the garden. To help to achieve that aim Whilton Gardeners' Association has put together an interesting programme of events for 2010:-

7th April Mrs Janet Copley will give a talk on "Scent in our Gardens"
(a selection of plants on sale)

2nd June Mr Andrew Patmore will give a talk on "The Natural History of Salcey Forest".

Non members are particularly welcome (£3.00 including refreshments)

A well attended AGM was held on 3rd February in the Village Hall. All existing officers agreed to stand again and were re-elected to serve in 2010. The evening rounded off with a very enjoyable "Fun Quiz" followed by refreshments. Thank you to all who participated.

Please check Village Green noticeboard for future dates and events.

Thank you

Olive (general dogsbody) Tel.0792149228 or 01327 843069

A prayer of thankfulness

When I feel like grumbling at chores that must be done,
The washing up, the polishing, the jobs that are not fun,
I think of all the other ones in wheelchairs or in bed,
How they would love to take my place and do those chores instead.

When I see the trees and flowers, the rainbow in the sky,
The newly hatched out little birds just about to fly,
I think of those who've lost their sight, or have been blind from birth.
And thank my God that I can see as well as feel the earth.

When I hear a piano played, a song so sweetly sung,
A howling wind, a rushing stream, a church bell gladly rung,
I think of those who cannot even hear a loved one speak,
As I can hear, it makes me feel so grateful and so meek.

All of us from time to time have things that won't go right,
But don't forget that we can work, and hear, and have our sight,
Be grateful then for blessings we know we've all been given,
And offer up a little prayer of thankfulness to heaven.

Neighbourhood Watch

As reported in the last newsletter we now have a new PSCO Sarah Gray. The changeover period has been very busy but Sarah is hoping to meet as many members of our community as possible in the near future. The Neighbourhood Watch Surgery dates for the next two months are as follows:-

Tuesday 20th April 3-4pm.

Tuesday 18th May 3-4pm.

These surgeries are held in the Village Hall and give members of our community the opportunity to meet and discuss any issues with our PCSO.

Unfortunately earlier in the year a vehicle was stolen from the village and scrap metal was reported stolen from an industrial unit at Whilton Locks.

If you should see or hear anything suspicious, call Northamptonshire Police switchboard Telephone 03000 111 222 or the dedicated Neighbourhood Watch 01604 432436 or 999 in an emergency. Alternatively you can call Crimestoppers anonymously 0800 555 111.

[NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COMMUNITY MESSAGING - Northamptonshire West - 22.03.10 - WB/CMS/3274/09 - DAN Message]

This is a message from Northamptonshire West Police to all members of Neighbourhood Watch in the Northamptonshire. Northamptonshire Police and partners are predicting that doorstep crime is likely to peak this March and April.

Rogue Doorstep Traders will use a trade as a means to extract large sums of money from vulnerable people. These traders will offer services such as driveway re-surfacing, block paving, roofing, fascias, gardening or selling goods at the door. Typically, they will give a very low quote that will increase as the work progresses. If you think that work needs to be carried out always get a number of reputable traders to quote for the work. Sometimes these criminals will drive victims to the bank and will often come back on future occasions to get more money.

Please pass this message on to those you care about and help reduce doorstep crime.

If you are concerned about a caller at your door or suspect that distraction burglars or rogue doorstep traders are operating in your community, please call our dedicated Doorstep crime Action Network (DAN) number 0345 23 07 702. **** PLEASE REMEMBER: If a crime is in progress you must call 999 ****

Ros Gardner NHW Co-ordinator

This is a message from Northamptonshire West Police to all residents on behalf of the Crime Prevention Officer for Northampton.

We would like to draw your notice to the recent News Release dated 8 March 2010 featured on the Bank of England website regarding the withdrawal of the Elgar £20 Banknote.

The £20 banknote carrying the portrait of composer Sir Edward Elgar is to be finally withdrawn from circulation from 30 June this year. This note has been gradually replaced by the Adam Smith £20 which was introduced in 2007.

The Bank of England assures holders of the Elgar £20 banknote that they could certainly use the notes up to, and including, 30 June. After that date the note will no longer have 'legal tender' status. The note will not be accepted in payment, or in change, in retail outlets after this date.

For several months from the end of June banks, building societies and Post Offices will accept Elgar £20 notes for deposit to customer accounts and for other customer transactions.

Agreeing to exchange the notes for non-customers is at the discretion of the individual institution. The Bank of England will always give value for these notes (and all other banknotes the Bank has issued).

Please be aware of the potential for criminals to target the elderly and more vulnerable who may have these bank notes in their homes.

Tales of the Locks—6

by Tom Price

The pub joker who made world headlines

The opening of the Bannaventa pub in 1975 had an explosive effect on the social fabric of the locks. Nevertheless, the big new pub was largely avoided by folk from the main village, where the Plough had closed some years previously. And most of the boaters who moored in the Marina, or passed by on the Grand Union canal, did not frequent it. They preferred the more modest and picturesque taverns waiting to be discovered along the banks of the waterway.

But for those who became regulars, including people from the many small businesses scattered around the locks, the new place was a revelation, a haven of cosmopolitan life and conviviality. Other drinkers and diners popped in from all over the county and beyond. Whilton Locks was no longer a sleepy little hamlet!

The pub was the brainchild of Marina creator David Steele and he expected it to flourish. It certainly did so in its early days. But there soon appeared a darker side to the story. Thatcher's recession years struck a fatal blow to many businesses and jobs. There were vigorous drink-driving campaigns and cheap booze in the big new supermarkets. Pubs were struggling and closing everywhere in a process that still goes on now, with the added problem of the smoking ban.

Inside, the Bannaventa resembled a big city pub, bright and well-furnished, with several bars and games rooms and an upper banqueting room seating 150. Its exterior, however, was somewhat gaunt and unwelcoming. One critic said it looked like a blacking factory. Clearly the style of architecture did not help, and as the recession deepened, Mr Steele's dream of creating a magnet for the upper crust of the county began to fade.

His well-patronised Sunday markets on the car park boosted the pub's customer numbers for a while. A succession of managers and tenants tried many different ideas to improve trade. In one period the pub attracted jazz lovers from a wide area with bands that included talented soloists and a remarkable male singer whose eyes continually swivelled from side to side, like synchronised metronomes, in time with the drumbeat.

Another attraction was a night club, set up in the area originally reserved for banqueting. For a while it drew hordes of teenagers from all over the Daventry area (they suddenly disappeared when an even trendier spot opened elsewhere).

The pub's core problems, reflecting an economic disaster that killed off locals throughout Britain, were evident in the rapid turnover of managers and licensees. Among its occasional patrons was Fred Housego, the London cabbie who became an instant celebrity on winning TV's *Mastermind* contest. One of his fans was Pat Freeman from Whilton village, who often remarked that if he ever came to be selected for the *Mastermind* contest his specialised subject would be "Managers of the Bannaventa."

The managers and license holders were a mixed bunch. Some had had no previous experience of running even a small pub. There was the young Scottish couple who got the job and soon lost it. Homeless, they squatted for months on a huge broadbeamed fibreglass rivergoing catamaran, the *Knightliner*, whose wealthy owner had abandoned it near the bottom lock. There was Bet Harrison, who lived in a farm cottage near Brockhall with her husband Jack, a noted local horse-coper. She was a true countrywoman whose homely cooking delivered tasty treats in mammoth platefuls. There was Tony Dixon, a former marketing executive who had been based in Africa for a big-name British food company. His impersonation of Basil from *Faulty Towers* is fondly remembered by locals. He now lives in Daventry and occasionally enjoys a drink at the White Horse pub in Norton.

The Bannaventa's unusual name, a reference to the area's long-vanished historic Roman garrison township, was eventually changed by Ken Gane, its final and perhaps most successful host. It became *The Locks* for several years before closing in 1991, reopening a year later as a thriving carpet and flooring emporium. Ken sometimes wowed customers by jumping on a table, in straw boater and cricket blazer, and leading a rousing sing-song. He recently celebrated his eightieth birthday with a party at a posh golf club to which his daughter Kelly invited many former regulars including Whilton's Tom Treacy, proprietor of a pub supplies business.

I suspect that one reason for Ken's decision to change the name was the risqué reputation the Bannaventa acquired when landlord Barry Baker fell victim to the cavortings of two lady striptease "artistes" At that time, strippers were popular in city pubs as a (perhaps desperate) way of building custom.

Barry felt they might buck up his trade, and several "gentlemen's nights" were advertised. At the last of these events, the well-built blondes discarded gauzy veils and performed graceful dances in front of some 60 customers. When their act ended they were persuaded, by the circulation of a hat into which donations were thrown, to provide a special "encore." This included postures which could then be classed as indecent and illegal – though in present times many late-night Channel 4 films are far raunchier.

The extra performance, at any rate, was grimly observed from the back of the room by a policeman and policewoman in plain clothes. They called a halt to the show and proceeded to locate and charge the licensee. When they found Barry he was lying prostrate in bed with the 'flu, totally unaware of what had been going on in the big room below. This made no difference to the law. He alone was responsible, as licensee, for maintaining an orderly house.

He duly appeared before Daventry magistrates and the fine and legal costs amounting to some £600 was a cruel blow. The strippers and their minder/manager – the real culprits, some might argue – escaped penalty and probably benefited from the publicity.

My favourite Bannaventa story concerns jovial Ken Gray, a Coventry factory owner who loved good food and had long yearned to run his own pub. When he took over the "Banny" he was assisted by his daughter and her fiancé, who had both received professional training in catering. Unfortunately they took over in midwinter, when the effects of the recession and drink-driving laws were worsened by a long spell of heavy snows.

Trade became almost non-existent – until it was miraculously revived by Ken's favourite pastime. He enjoyed telling quick-fire jokes, and possessed an enormous repertoire.

He was happy to take up a suggestion that he could cheer up his customers by giving away a free joke with every pint of beer they ordered.

News of this offer got around like magic. Newspapers saw it as a wonderful anti-depression story. It made headlines as far away as Australia. BBC TV crews arrived to film Ken serving a crowd of chuckling drinkers with beer and gags.

Business boomed to such an extent that within a few days he exhausted his repertoire and was forced to repeat one-liners he had delivered at the beginning of the operation. He was thus able to remain solvent, with laughs all the way to the bank!

Next issue: Britain's biggest little tourist board

Elliot Patching of Whilton

Elliot has been a Motorsport Photographer for four years and was one of a staff of four photographers of the largest independent Motorsport Photography Agency. He has covered Formula 1 all over the globe and worked for F1 Teams and their sponsors. There have been numerous highlights during this time including a ride in a two-seater F1 car and the first F1 night race in Singapore.

The nature of his work meant that he was constantly away from home and his loved ones and also the workload was extremely heavy which included extensive travelling around the world (a lot of time spent on planes) and one year he worked 42 weekends.

He has now decided to run his own Company (**Elliot W Patching Photography**) specialising in wedding, family and child photography. He finds this profession to be very enjoyable and satisfying and also challenging. Meeting new people and providing clients with fun and exciting imagery which they can cherish forever is a very satisfying profession.

For his work he has been awarded the title. " **The Society's Motorsport Photographer of the Year**" This is an International Award and one that Photographers from all corners of the world enter hoping to receive this prestigious award.

Congratulations Elliot

WHILTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

“WORN IN WHILTON” was the title of our meeting on 23rd March, when we considered some aspects of clothing worn here over the centuries. Until the eighteenth century the main fabrics used were wool and linen, the wool being produced locally. The rector had a right to a tenth of the fleeces, and in 1631 two Whilton men, who had been involved in shearing at Brockhall, gave evidence about the collection of tithes there. After the farmer's sister had laid out the fleeces in tens, the Brockhall rector would send his factor to look over them. He would then choose one from each group as the rector's tithe. It is likely that a similar system operated in Whilton.

In this area the wool was mostly used to make worsted cloth, which was made of long-staple fibres which were combed to remove unwanted short fibres and make them lie parallel. In the spinning operation, which gives the necessary twist to hold the fibres together, worsted yarns are more tightly twisted than are the bulkier woollen yarns. The soft, heavy yarn is strong and durable and is often used for fine materials. There is a record of a Whilton farm being sold in 1437 for money and armour, which included a red worsted doublet, perhaps locally made.

Wool used for worsted cloth required more than carding, as the fibres to be laid parallel to each other and unwanted short staple wool had to be removed. This process was called woolcombing. It was an apprenticed trade, a seven year apprenticeship being the norm in the mid eighteenth century with apprenticeship starting at about the age of 12 or 13.

The comb, which was like a short handled rake, had several rows of long teeth, or broitches - originally made of wood, later of metal. The broitches were heated in a charcoal fuelled comb-pot, as heated combs softened the lanolin and the extra oil used which made the process easier. The wool comber would take a tress of wool, sprinkle it with oil and massage this well into the wool. He then attached a heated comb to a post or wooden framework, threw the wool over the teeth and drew it through them repeatedly, leaving a few straight strands of wool upon the comb each time. When the comb had collected all the wool, the woolcomber would place it back into the comb-pot with the wool hanging down outside to keep warm. A second hank of wool was heated in the same way.

When both combs were full of the heated wool (about four ounces) the comber would sit on a low stool with a comb in each hand and comb one tress of wool into the other by inserting the teeth of one comb into the wool stuck in the other, repeating the process until the fibres were laid parallel. To complete the process the combed wool was formed into slivers, several slivers making a top, which weighed exactly a pound.

The cloth industry was relatively important in Whilton by the late eighteenth century. With a fast growing national population the production of clothing was essential. In 1781 there were three weavers and nine woolcombers in Whilton. Just as the numbers were reaching their peak, disaster struck, as new methods of making cloth were invented further north. As factories took over, there was no work left for Whilton woolcombers. We have the story of one of these men.

A WHILTON WOOLCOMBER

The records suggest that Richard Constable probably lived in Tudor House. He had a number of children baptized at St Andrew's and after his first wife died, he married Ann Townley of Whilton. Like other woolcombers he had various business interests. He had a shop in Whilton, but he was almost certainly part of the "harateen" or worsted industry for which Long Buckby was well known. He was probably more than an ordinary cottage woolcomber, being involved in collecting and delivering to other home workers in the area, and in this way may have had the opportunity to meet a variety of other people. This would have suited him because he was one of earliest Methodists in this area.

Sometimes those he met were not trustworthy, as in 1796 when some of his jersey wool was stolen by a Dodford woman. "Jersey wool" was wool which had been combed but not yet spun. By the 1800s the home based woollen cloth industry was in serious decline in the face of industrialization. Richard was one of those left without work. He and his new wife had a baby daughter in 1811 and sometime after this he moved to Northampton in the search of employment. All the woollen industry had now moved further north and there was no congenial work available. Ann was pregnant again. With another new baby to feed and no income, he took on work on a canal wharf in Northampton. The winter of 1813-14 was bitterly cold, and perhaps it was this freezing weather and snow, which must also have prevented canal trade, which led to his final illness and his return to Whilton. By February 1814 he had died and the fatherless new baby was christened here in the following May.

SOME CLOTHES WORN IN WHILTON

We heard about some of the clothes passed on through generations in the past, when hard wearing qualities were more important than the latest fashions. In 1601 Thomas Linnell inherited his father's russet coat and hose, and in 1641 William Reeve a Whilton husbandman left his wearing clothes of linen and woolen to his brother Richard. However, it was usually women who described their clothes in more detail, when leaving them in their wills.

We looked particularly at the clothes of the interestingly-named Philip Smith, a widow, who died in 1707. She was comfortably off and left a variety of money gifts to various relatives and friends. She had also given thought to all her dresses, and divided them up among several women, some of whom may have been her daughters. Elizabeth Langton received two "pettycoats and a sute of my best linen". Elizabeth Smith, the daughter of Widow Smith of Wootton near Northampton got a black gown and petticoat. Mary Russell, wife of Sam Russell of Long Buckby inherited a sad coloured gown and petticoat. "Sad" in those days, as we would expect, meant dull. There was a mixed serge gown and petticoat for Alice, wife of John Smith of Stow, and Elizabeth Hedg of Daventry had a different sad coloured gown and a grey petticoat. But Elizabeth Green of East Haddon received a black tawny gown and petticoat with a silver lace. A petticoat at this period was an underskirt, sometimes decorated, and not a piece of underwear.

All are welcome to the next meeting of Whilton Local History Society in the Village Hall at 7.30 p.m. on Thursday 27th May 2010.

Anthea Hiscock

SUMMARY OF EVENTS

Sat	3 rd	Apr	10.00 am	Brington & Whilton Pre-School Easter Egg Hunt in Brington church
Sun	4 th	Apr	9.15 am	Easter Day Communion in St Andrews Church
Tues	6 th	April	9.15 am	Library van in village outside the Old Plough
Wed	7 th	April	7.30 pm	WGA meeting in village hall 'Scent in our Gardens' by Mrs Janet Copley.
Fri	9 th	April	7.30 pm	Whilton Photographic Club in village hall
Sun	18 th	April	1.00 pm	Car Boot Sale in Wadd Close field.
Tues	20 th	April	2.30 pm	Tuesday Chat in the village hall
			2.30 pm	Police Surgery in village hall
Mon	26 th	April	7.30 pm	Annual Parish Council Meeting in village hall
Tues	27 th	April	9.15 am	Library van in village outside the Old Plough
Fri	7 th	May	7.30 pm	Whilton Photographic Club in village hall
Weds	12 th	May	7.30 pm	Parish Council AGM in village hall
Tues	18 th	May	9.15 am	Library van in village outside the Old Plough
			2.30 pm	Tuesday Chat in village hall
			2.30 pm	Police Surgery in village hall
Fri	21 st	May		DEADLINE FOR JUNE/JULY NEWSLETTER Please hand in your contribution before this date or otherwise we cannot guarantee it will be included in the next edition.
Thurs	27 th	May	7.30 pm	Whilton History Society in village hall

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Please supply a disk or memory card with your contribution if not email us so that we can manipulate the text to fit as necessary. If you do not have a PC or typewriter the editors will type the articles as they have always done in the past.

Articles of local interest, poems, recipes puzzles or drawings will always be considered for inclusion in the Newsletter.