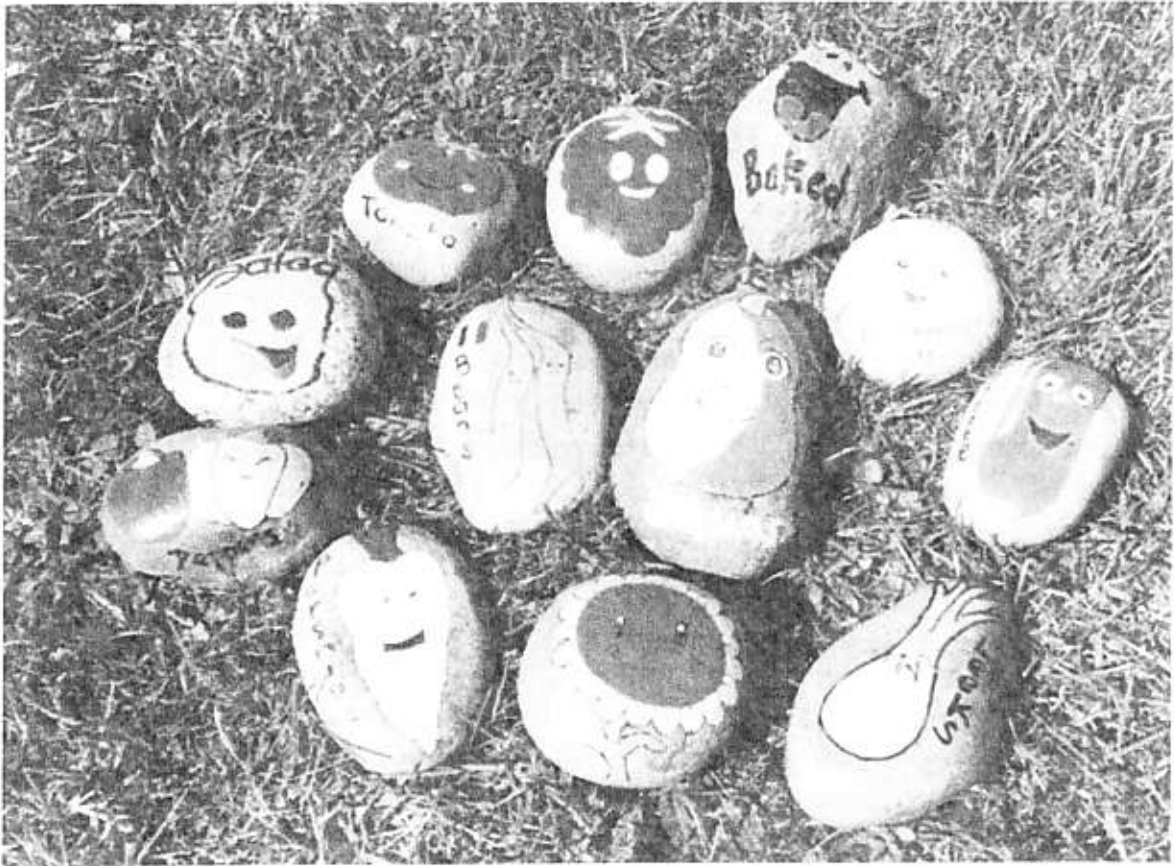


# Whilton Autumn Newsletter



September - November  
2020

## AUTUMN 2020

### LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

*Our usual Newsletter content tends to report on the events of the many groups active in our Community. Covid 19 has meant that each group has had to adapt to a new reality and sadly many of the activities that we would be reporting on in a "normal" year have not taken place.*

*Looking back to the Autumn edition of 2019, we had reports of meetings of Social Lunches, the Pot Luck Supper, Garden Society, History Society, Aperture Photography, Whilton Warblers and many more. The forward calendar was also full of planned activities.*

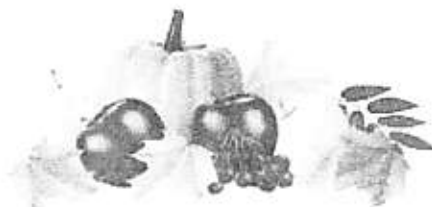
*Whilton people are nothing if not adaptable and we have been able to include information about how some of our residents and groups have coped in lockdown and beyond which we hope will give you some memories of a most unprecedented spring and summer (how quickly we forget!) and a taste of Autumn. Sadly the forward diary still looks a little thin but some of our groups are now able to plan activities, even if they perhaps look very different to what we have seen in the past.*

*Talking of which we are also looking quite a long way back to the time of the Second World War. If we feel that modern village life has been affected by our own recent experiences, it is useful to remember how earlier generations coped with upheaval on a massive scale.*

*We hope you find this Newsletter useful and informative. If you would like to participate in future editions, or have ideas about content, please let the editors know.*

*We wish you a fruitful Autumn.*

*The Editors*



## PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

As the Whilton Parish slowly pulls out of lockdown and isolation to try and get back to normal, or as normal as possible in the current Covid climate, it is great to see so many members of the Parish still pulling together to help each other out, and keep everyone safe. So what has your Parish Council been doing during all of this?

- **A Goodbye and Hello in the Parish Council Team.** After a long session in the thankless role of Whilton Parish Council Treasurer, Mark Thomas has decided that it was time to move on. Mark has been responsible for guiding the team through the minefield of financial regulations and policy, and kept us on track with the Parish Council spending and commitments. So we wish him well and thank him for his sterling efforts with the Parish Council. Mark Hampson has now volunteered to step up and fill the vacant team position, and we welcome him to the Whilton Parish Council team.
- **Irresponsible Dog Owners Around Whilton Village – Again!!**  
I wrote about this issue in a Newsletter article last year, and again in March and June this year. Previously we have also done a 'Spray the Poo' campaign to highlight the extent of the issue in the village, backed up with posters asking owners to clean up after their dogs. We have now put up new posters warning of a potential £1000 fine, and I have also backed all this up with email messages on the Whilton Parish E-Mail Distribution List, and yet, despite all this, we still have a dog fouling issue in the village. On the one hand, the Parish Council receive quite a number of complaints about dog poo on the pavements and around the village. On the other, we receive complaints that my emails indicate that I'm a dog hater (I actually have 4 dogs myself), or that the emails are SPAM, and they want to remove themselves from the Whilton Distribution List as a result.

The bottom line is that dog poo is a health hazard and an unsightly mess. We have pre-school children walking through the village who have to venture into the road to get around the poo, as do some of our elderly residents. It has been dumped on pavements, and more recently by the church gate in the path. We are aware that certain residents allow their dogs to run free around the village, which then also causes a hazard to traffic, and there is a strong suspicion that these animals may be responsible for the 2 recent fouling incidents by the church. This has all been reported to the District Dog Warden who will endeavour to capture these dogs, at which point the owners will then have to pay a hefty fine to recover their animals, and explain why they allow their dogs to run free through the village.

In the meantime, I would urge everyone again, if anyone sees a dog fouling around the village in a public area, and the owner failing to pick the mess up afterwards, please pass on any details you have either to myself or the Parish Council Clerk at [clerk@whiltonpc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@whiltonpc.co.uk). Any information will be treated in the strictest confidence, and we will then forward the details onto the Daventry District Council to deal with the individual accordingly. Together, let's eradicate this problem of irresponsible dog owners in our village.

- **Gigaclear.** Superfast broadband is finally here, and there is a growing number of residents connecting to the network. As with any new installation, there have been a few teething problems which have mostly now been resolved, but generally the feedback that I receive from people is that the connection and the service for many has been great with no problems, and everyone appreciates the greater speed offered.
- **Connecting to the Gigaclear Network – Hints and Tips.** It's worthwhile reiterating the following for those who have yet to connect to the network.
  - **Contracts.** Gigaclear are contacting individuals directly to connect to the service, first working through those who have registered an interest on their website at [www.Gigaclear.com](http://www.Gigaclear.com), and then contacting others via mail shots and advertising. There can be quite a delay, due to the Covid restrictions, from agreeing to the installation to when it actually takes place. However, a loophole is to ask to be put on their cancellations list. For many of the installations thus far in the Parish, this is the route that has been used where you will get a phone call in the morning asking if their engineers can do the installation that afternoon following a cancelled appointment. Also note, that if they call and you don't answer, they will not call you back or leave a message, but just carry on down their list. So it is worth calling them back if you have a missed call.
  - **Packages.** The packages that Gigaclear offer can be found at [www.Gigaclear.com/home-broadband](http://www.Gigaclear.com/home-broadband). Some of the details are a little confusing, but each package will come with a standard router which also broadcasts wifi around your house. If you want a wifi extender for better coverage, or what they call a mesh system, the 300 and 900 mbps packages come with an additional router as part of the package which can be used to extend your wifi into other areas of your home. You can also get an additional router again for an extra £5 per month on top of your package costs if needed.
  - **Discounts.** Through social media, there have been various discount offers from Gigaclear, and these can be found at [www.rural.gigaclear.com](http://www.rural.gigaclear.com). I'm also hearing stories that if you are still under contract with your current provider, Gigaclear will hold and honour any current discount offer for 3 months if you agree a deal now. (eg. You agree to take Gigaclear now, but don't want to be connected to the network for 3 months. So your contract starts in 3 months time.)
- **Whilton VE Day Celebrations 2020 Photos.** Thanks to everyone who offered their photos to be included on a commemorative website of the event. A special thanks also to Gerry Heeley who coordinated it all to get all the photos together and onto the website. We seem to have photos of just about everyone in the village on the site, so spend some time finding yourself and your friends.

For those of you who are interested, the collection can be viewed at [www.whilton-village.net/photo-galleries/ve-day-2020-celebrations/](http://www.whilton-village.net/photo-galleries/ve-day-2020-celebrations/).

- **Daventry Area Community Transport (DACT) Service.** The Parish Council recently worked jointly with the Brington Parish Council to successfully establish a DACT bus service for residents to provide regular trips to Daventry and Northampton. However, with the current health crisis, the decision was taken to cancel the service until further notice. Further updates will be notified on the village notice board and through the Parish e-mail distribution list.
- **Defibrillators.** There are 2 defibrillators located within the Parish – in Whilton (by the Village Hall) and Whilton Locks (next to the BT phone box on the canal bridge). Each cabinet is locked with a code, which can be obtained from the emergency services when you dial 999 should they be required.
- **Whilton Parish E-Mail Distribution List.** The Parish e-mail distribution list is a closed list to keep people informed of the latest issues and information concerning the Parish. If you are interested in being added to the list to find out what is going on in your Parish, please send your e-mail address to [clerk@whiltonnpc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@whiltonnpc.co.uk).
- **Whilton Parish Council Website.** The Whilton Parish Council also do have a website at [www.parish-council.com/whilton/](http://www.parish-council.com/whilton/) which details all the work that they are doing for the community, together with any notices of interest for the Parish. There are also details of who your councillors are, and how to contact them about any matters relating to the Parish. Of note, the e-mail address is [councillors@whiltonnpc.co.uk](mailto:councillors@whiltonnpc.co.uk). The Council also hold a regular meeting in the Whilton Village Hall every 2 months, which is open to the public to attend and raise any issues. However, in the current crisis, all meetings are being held virtually via Zoom, to which everyone is still invited from the comfort of their own homes.
- **The Spinney.** Some of you may be aware that that we have a special place towards the bottom of Whilton village known as The Spinney, comprising of 2.25 acres of mainly wet woodland, with several walkways throughout the area. It was gifted to the people of Whilton as a millennium gift and is free for anyone to visit. The management of the area now comes under the Parish Council, where a separate work party of volunteers are responsible for the general maintenance of the area and the completion of safety checks on a monthly basis. However, following periods of inclement weather, there can be occasions where trees or branches may have fallen and have yet to be cleared away. Hence, I would urge you all to visit and enjoy the Spinney, but also to be vigilant of any hazards that may be in the area. If you do notice anything that may be a danger, please report it to the Parish Council clerk at [clerk@whiltonnpc.co.uk](mailto:clerk@whiltonnpc.co.uk).

Randal Smith, Rose Briar  
Chair of the Whilton Parish Council

## A MATTER FOR CONCERN

In late August village verges and property were damaged when agricultural contractors tried to pass through with excessively wide unsuitable vehicles, as shown here. When their passage was not possible, they were forced to back up, causing traffic disruption and delay.

This matter is now on the agenda for the consideration of the Parish Council on 9<sup>th</sup> September.



## WHILTON GARDENERS' ASSOCIATION



Sadly, WGA members have been without the joys of sharing, boasting and complaining about the ups and downs of gardening at this the most promising, rewarding and sometimes punishing time of the gardening year. Like so many other clubs and associations up and down the country, WGA Committee is watching their programme of talks and outings for 2020, fall apart and unfortunately, there is no certainty when we can all meet again.

In particular, members had to forego their annual visit to some of WGA members' gardens, which takes place in June. However, as a way of sharing with each other the pleasures and delights of our gardens in summer, the committee invited members to join in the **WGA Virtual Open Gardens** initiative, by providing just two photographs of something they love about their gardens. These images, along with some taken of the allotments, also known for many years as The Gardens, can now be viewed by everyone on the Whilton Village website at <http://www.whilton-village.net/photo-galleries/wga-virtual-open-gardens>

The Committee members would also like to thank Gerry Heeley for his patience in uploading and arranging the photos. Thanks Gerry!

Here's wishing everyone well and let's hope we can enjoy our gardening for as long as possible this year.

## WHILTON VILLAGE HALL

### 200 CLUB 2020-2021

We have managed to continue the 200 Club during Covid 19 even though we couldn't use our volunteers who had previously collected door to door.

Unfortunately we ended up with a net loss of five tickets than 2019/2020 due to various reasons, unfortunately some sad. We are still however managing to keep the prizes at £45 for first and £25 for second.

Thanks to modern technology, we were able to collect two thirds of the subscriptions through bank transfers and the rest by cash direct to the Treasurer, Shirley Brown.

Although the start was a little late, we have now caught up with the monthly prizes which have been drawn in safe places under the strict conditions now necessary. The prizes are now issued in cash for convenience.

The Club started in 1991 so will have its 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday next year. It has been a great help to Whilton Village Hall enabling us to purchase various items necessary to the running and furnishing over the years which the rents do not cover.

#### JUNE 2020

<b>1st prize</b>	<b>074</b>	<b>D Jilbert</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Prize</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>G Camps</b>

#### JULY 2020

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Prize</b>	<b>088</b>	<b>P Bennett</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Prize</b>	<b>028</b>	<b>M Clements</b>

### **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS**

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### **VILLAGE HALL NEWS**

We are pleased to report that the Hall has a new door, replacing the old one, which had rotted.

Owing to the on-going Covid 19 crisis, and with current guidelines on social distancing, wearing masks and cleaning regulations, the Management Group has decided it is not feasible at present to open the Hall for public use.

The present priority is for the Pre-school to have access to a safe environment.

This situation will be kept under review as the winter approaches.

## NEWS FROM ST ANDREWS



So, at long last, we have a positive story to tell!

The church was closed during lockdown to comply with legal requirements. This was a frustrating period but as soon as the restrictions started to be eased, we decided that we could safely re-open for private prayer and did this as soon as we could. We were keen to take this step in order to give the building a purpose again and also allow visitors to make use of the church.

This was a statement of intent – after all if you don't open when you are permitted so to do, after a while people will quite rightly ask questions about the future.

The next step was made possible with further easing of guidelines although it took longer than we would have liked to get to the point where we could hold a service in the building, which we were able to do for the first time on 9 August.

To comply with social distancing we have to use alternate pews and having tried this with people, this restricts the congregation to some 20 people or family groups. We were pleased to welcome back our congregation safely and think it was much appreciated and we were pleased to welcome Kathryn to hold her first face to face service for months.

The next service in St Andrew's Church will be Worship for All at 11 a.m. on Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> September. If you wish to book a place, please contact Jon Brierley, as below. News of telephone services, Zoom meetings and other events is sent out weekly by our curate Rev Kathryn Evans. To join her list, please contact Jon Brierley.

An old building still needs to be looked after, even when it is closed, so we are very grateful to Trish Wood for keeping the dust in check and also to Roy Haynes who has kept the churchyard mown and tidy. Helen has worked her magic on the corner bed and we are grateful to Gordon and Marian who supplied us with the petunias again.

Our costs are largely fixed and we have lost some collection income but thankfully we have a good number of supporters who give by regular payment schemes so our finances have not been too badly affected. The main thing for us is to keep the church open as a resource for the village.

If you would like to help us in any way, please let us know.

The building will continue to be open daily.

Jon Brierley [jbrierley1@aol.com](mailto:jbrierley1@aol.com)

Linda Treacy [Lindahalltreacy@gmail.com](mailto:Lindahalltreacy@gmail.com)



## LOCKDOWN PROJECTS IN WHILTON

Over the last few months some of our residents have used their time to develop existing interests or to take up new hobbies and projects. Here we provide a taste of some of them.

If you have a new interest or hobby, we shall be happy to share your news of it in the next Whilton Newsletter. Contact details are at the back of the Newsletter.

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**A lockdown story  
about a lot of veg  
and the tale of the  
painted stones.**



Since we retired, Helen has often suggested that we should take on an allotment. I did think about it, but only briefly, concluding that it could well involve a lot of hard work and that actually there were more interesting ways of spending time.

Fast forward to the Covid 19 crisis and with increasingly depressing news reports, the daily government press conferences, panic buying (including packets of seeds!) and suddenly it did not appear such a bad idea. A quick email to Brian, head of allotments, and we were signed up. We inspected what looked a fairly daunting and neglected half allotment, part of which was covered in plastic sheeting with an overgrown Buddleia bush in the middle of it. That night Boris was due to address the nation so guessing that we were about to be locked down I rushed out to grab whatever I could – seed potatoes, onion sets, and some seeds. To start with we decided to concentrate on what we like to eat and avoid cabbage etc which are attractive to pests. We also planned to grow companion flowering plants to add colour and interest.

Overnight the conservatory floor was covered in seed trays. My job was to do the digging on the plot which was hard work but at least the sun was shining. We quickly decided that half was enough for now leaving the top part to grow grass (thanks to Richard for keeping it trimmed). The next problem was how to get hold of manure and other essentials when the shops were closed. Full marks to Whilton Locks Garden Centre who worked out how to do phone and on line orders and delivered to our door. When Steve suggested we give parsnips a try, we turned to Amazon! We begged some sunflower seeds from Jon H and supplemented these with other ones that we borrowed from the bird's seed packets.

Everyone has been very helpful and especially during the tightest part of lockdown we were fortunate to be able to get out in the fresh air and also have some socially distanced chats with our fellow gardeners. Helen runs a tidy garden and the same rules apply so we have worked hard on the allotment to keep it tidy and try to keep ahead of the bindweed.

It has given us a project to think about in planning the planting plus something to do to keep it weed free and also watered in the dry spells. If you don't water, feed and look after plants they won't grow well but the reward is much excitement when something comes up or starts to ripen. Amazingly what we planted has turned in to a lush and well filled space which has produced flowers and veg in quantity. The freezer is now getting full and it looks as if it might be easier to grow beans than freeze them!



There have been some failures, not least the raspberries, which eventually arrived in the post as sticks and in most cases are still lifeless sticks.



Pretty much everything else has grown well, possibly a few too many nasturtiums, but we are keeping the pollinators busy on the flowers. The sunflowers have been a great success although we have been well beaten in the competition to grow the tallest one.

Finally to the painted stones. Helen has always had an artistic flair and suggested that painted stones would be much more fun than plant labels.



She has produced some clever designs of cartoon plants showing their faces which have been much admired. We have photographed a few to show you. We are not sure what they get up to when no one is looking (a rave party?) but they seem to have sneaked their way on to the front cover.



*Jon and Helen Brierley*

## TERESA'S PROJECTS

Some years ago I started attending upholstery classes and have enjoyed renovating tired furniture ever since. Some of the chairs I acquired needed repairs to their frames which was a bit of a problem for me. Then I heard that Age UK was piloting a Women In Sheds day at two of their Men In Sheds establishments. Fortunately, one of the trial locations was in Loughborough, my home town, so off I went with a chair that needed some expert attention. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and decided to investigate the local Men In Sheds in Northampton. Here I was made very welcome and promptly became a member. Over the last two and half years I've learned a lot about hand and machine tools and techniques. I'm about fifty years away from becoming a woodworking expert but there is always someone willing to give advice and assistance.

One of the members gave me a set of four farmhouse style kitchen chairs which had been in his wife's family for about a hundred years. They were wobbly with some broken bits and generally in need of some TLC. With help I took apart, fixed and reassembled three of the four before The Shed was obliged to close due to the lockdown.

With my newfound confidence I took the final chair apart at home (remembering to number the back pieces) and spent a day in the sunshine happily cleaning off the old glue. Having cleaned and waxed everything Ian and I then set about putting everything back together which was a bit like herding cats as we ran out of hands trying to hold the back pieces in place (can never find an octopus when you need one!) We glued and held it in place with a home made windlass clamp and the final result is rock solid, hopefully good for another 100 years.



Having acquired a new patio set I decided it needed brightening up with some additional cushions but the fabric shop in Northampton hadn't yet reopened and I couldn't find what I needed on its website.



Needs must, so I raided my stash of remnants and samples, cannibalised a few pillows and pillowcases and made five cushions in patchwork: one blue, one red, one orange and two in shades of green. The black and white photo doesn't do them justice but I love them.

Teresa Leadbetter

## BEEKEEPING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

By Roy Haynes



Back in March, when the lockdown was announced, the British Beekeepers' Association, in consultation with DEFRA, determined that honey bees are livestock and should be tended. Beekeepers were issued with a guidance document having a DEFRA logo header, and advised to carry a copy in case we were challenged for breaking the lockdown. Luckily, we never had to put this document to the test, as I doubt if the police had beekeeping on their list of valid excuses for being away from home!

Tricia and I currently have about 30 hives between us. Most are located in the Holdenby and East Haddon area, though we have some in Flore and some on the far side of Staverton. Each hive needs to be inspected weekly between April and August. We need to check for disease (two brood diseases are notifiable). We have to make sure they have enough food and sufficient space for the expanding colony in spring and, importantly, we need to check whether the bees are making preparations to swarm. Swarm prevention was given a high priority by DEFRA, as responding to reports of swarms on people's property was likely to be problematic, with the social distancing rules in force.

Swarming is reproduction at the colony level. Roughly half the colony will depart with the old queen to look for a new nest site, leaving the remaining bees incubating a new queen. A swarm can often be seen as a cluster of bees, as big as a football, hanging from a branch or similar, whilst the scout bees search for a suitable nest site. Swarming is a natural behaviour but it results in the beekeeper losing half their bees and the swarm potentially taking up residence somewhere inconvenient.

We try to prevent, or at least delay, swarming by adding extra boxes (supers) to the hive, to give the expanding colony room for the queen to lay and room for the workers to store the nectar they are bringing in and converting to honey. Very often though, the impulse to swarm wins out and the bees start making preparations. The first thing we see is the building of queen-cells in which the colony will raise a new queen. Once an egg is laid in a queen-cell we have eight days before the cell is sealed and, weather permitting, the swarm will depart. Hence the need for weekly inspections.

There are whole books written on the subject of swarm control and prevention. Suffice to say that most methods of swarm control involve splitting the colony into two. One commonly used method is known as an 'artificial swarm'.

Honey production is very weather-dependant. Flowers have a minimum temperature at which they yield nectar. This temperature varies from one species to another. Oil-seed rape (OSR), for example, has a yield temperature of 16 degrees C. That temperature was rarely reached whilst the OSR was in flower this year. This was reflected in our lower than usual spring honey crop.

Soil moisture is another important factor and the long periods with no rain reduced nectar yields. Deep rooted plants such as blackberry are relatively unaffected by this and remain a reliable source of forage.

Another occurrence familiar to beekeepers is the 'June gap'. That is the period after the spring flowers are over, but before the summer flowers have begun to bloom. This does not happen every year and is not always confined to the month of June. This year it began in late May and was over by mid-June. During this period the bees can find little forage and, as a result, can become quite 'tetchy' during hive inspections.

From the end of the June gap up to mid-July is the period of the main nectar flow. The weather during this period is critical to the honey harvest. This year it turned cool and unsettled, which was not ideal. From mid-July the quantity of stored honey is unlikely to increase significantly and we start to extract what we think is excess to the winter requirements of the colony.

Beekeepers who have their hives on the heather moorlands, however, can expect a crop of heather honey during August and into September. Another plant that yields a late crop is Himalayan balsam, an invasive species disliked by ecologists. However, beekeeping friends of ours who have their hives near the river Nene, to the East of Wellingborough, get a welcome crop of honey right into September from the balsam which flourishes along the riverbanks.

As well as nectar, bees also forage for pollen, which provides the protein for the developing larvae in the nest and is also consumed by the newly emerged adult bees to allow them to finish their development. Pollen is available from the snowdrops and crocuses in late winter, through to the ivy flowers in autumn and is less dependent on temperature.

From mid-August we have to start thinking about preparing the hives for winter. Any treatments that need to be administered to control varroa mites are applied. Any hives that

have insufficient honey stores may need a supplementary feed. Insulation needs to be fitted inside the hive roofs.

Two pests that can be a problem during winter are mice and woodpeckers. We put mouse-guards over the hive entrances. These have holes large enough for the bees, but too small to allow entry to mice. We also wrap wire netting around the hive to prevent the green woodpeckers from pecking holes to gain access to the bees and larvae, when their normal food sources are in short supply.

During the winter months our checks are confined to ensuring that the food stores are sufficient. This can be done by 'hefting' the hives. Experience tells us when the weight is such that the colony is running low on stores. Blocks of fondant can be used to provide extra food to get them through to the spring. Ironically, un-seasonally warm weather during the winter months can have an adverse effect, by tempting the bees out on flights where they do not find any forage. They then consume more of their winter stores to replenish the spent energy. In cold weather they cluster together in a ball to keep warm and use minimal energy.

When March arrives, we hope for a reasonably warm day, so that we can have a quick look inside the hives and make sure that the colonies have come through the winter ok, before resuming our weekly inspections in April.

Overall, this year has been a bit below average in terms of the honey harvest due to the vagaries of the weather. Beekeeping can be hard work and very time-consuming at certain times of the year but we were glad of the excuse to get out and about during the lockdown.

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### **Jane Busby's lockdown**

I've enjoyed being at home during this strange period. This was helped enormously by the great weather we had, lots of walks from the front door in this beautiful area and no commitments.

I've done lots of sewing, making things for myself, friends' children, masks and scrubs for the NHS in Northamptonshire, looking for recipes for low carb cakes and not doing decorating, clearing out the loft or much housework. :-) I'm thankful to be living in this lovely village and hope we all continue to stay well. The housework is still waiting.....

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### **WHILTON LOCKS GARDEN VILLAGE**

For those customers who are still self isolating, or those that would prefer to continue to stay at home – we have been here for you from the beginning of this pandemic and we are still here for you now.

We are still offering our delivery service for all – so you can place an order online at [www.wlgv.co.uk](http://www.wlgv.co.uk) or by phone 01327 843100. Items from any department can be ordered from pet supplies to plants, garden sundries and even cakes!

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# Aperture Photography Group

I was unsure for some time about what I should write for this edition of the Whilton Newsletter. What have I done during the last few months? Certainly I have not been away since February and I've not been inclined to travel far. So after a time it became more difficult to get the enthusiasm to go out and take photos that meant something to me. So what to do? I guess a lot of people have felt that same about their hobby, but then I started thinking about professional sportspeople, they couldn't and wouldn't just hunker down and wait until everything went back to normal. No, they would keep practising, even if the possibility of a competitive event was somewhere over the horizon. They would keep their skills honed and their mind tuned in to ensure they were ready for the next match. That got me thinking; would I go rusty if I didn't pick up a camera for many months? Possibly, even probably. It isn't just keeping the muscle memory in tune so that you know exactly how your camera works, it is also ensuring you keep your eye and your mind focused on finding new images. Now looking back through my image library for this year, I find I have been shooting more images and more types of images. I have been photographing landscapes, wildlife, still life, portraits, abstracts; you name it, I've had a go. Here's two examples of shoots I have been on recently:

In August I walked from Lower Shuckburgh to Upper Shuckburgh (between Staverton and Southam) and took my infrared camera with me. This was a new walk for me and suddenly, as a result of all that boring practice, there were a whole host of things to photograph (see image). The infrared camera enhanced the tones in the image beautifully and rendered the clouds so well that I came back with a good set of images.

A few days later I went down to the Ordnance Depot in Weedon to see what I could find. It's a fascinating place, buzzing with activity and lots of old architecture. But that isn't what caught my eye, oh no! I was drawn to an old narrow boat which was undergoing restoration. My attention was drawn to the flaky paintwork and rust and the patterns created on the hull. I spent a good hour photographing nearly every inch of that boat, finding exciting images, full of colour, texture and form. I am sure the passersby thought I was mad, peering at this boat, but I was happy as Larry.



So, no matter what your hobby, keep practising. Remember, the more you practice the luckier you become!

**If you would like more information about the group, check out our website ([www.aperturephotographygroup.co.uk](http://www.aperturephotographygroup.co.uk)), or contact Neil Phillips on 01327 844182 or via email**

## Whilton Allotment Gardeners

I began my previous jottings about the allotments by asking you to remember February which was the wettest on record for over 150 years. Now however, May and June seem distant yet splendid memories as we enter Autumn and the days' lengths shorten and average temperatures fall. May in the UK was one of the driest and sunniest on record yet there were extremes of wet and wind in parts other than Whilton. We had to water continually but those crystal clear blue sky mornings were unforgettable. June became more unsettled with extra humidity and some thunderstorms. There was more wind at times but Whilton experienced fewer extremes than in other parts of the land and the sowings and plantings of earlier began to take off. July was a month of more extremes -maximum temperatures of 37C yet with colder nights, above average rainfall and strong winds of over 60mph. Phew ! So much weather. However , I believe that is what we shall have to become used to, testing the patience and resilience of all who garden and grow plants.

Whilst the allotments provided a welcome and rewarding diversion from the beginning of Lockdown in March and through April, some other *events* provided distractions .Football returned to TV (Liverpool FC eventually won the Premiership Trophy - Hoorah! ) then horse racing and lately cricket and Test Matches .

However, because we have not attended sports venues or many other places we would normally visit throughout the Summer, the Allotment Gardeners have been able to devote many happy hours to our plots. I quote from The National Allotment Society website: "...every 10% increase in exposure to green space translated into an improvement in health equivalent to being five years younger ...". I particularly like another quote, "Gardening can also help to maintain good gait and balance in older gardeners and help with cognitive decline." The Society alerted me to the fact that Kings Seeds, established in 1888, are sponsors of allotment holders and gardeners and their latest colourful catalogue is available from Nick Busby or directly from the supplier.

Those who have kept on top of the weeds, watered and grafted have benefitted from an abundance of soft fruit, greens, potatoes and recently tomatoes [Though warm and damp days have blighted some of our plants] Thankfully the extremes of adverse weather conditions have mostly been avoided in Whilton . Let us hope this continues as we tidy up our plots and prepare for Autumn planting and sowing in readiness for what could be a long and hard Winter in many respects. We hope all Whilton residents keep healthy and pleasantly occupied whatever they pursue.

Turning to the future, with all our plots occupied and productive, I revisit my earlier enquiry. Despite the many gardeners of Whilton parish having some sizeable 'plots' of their own where they have probably devoted more space this season to vegetable growing, is there any demand for more allotment style plots if extra suitable land could be found? I would be interested to know as we move into the New Normal, whatever that brings with it. Dig for Victory was the slogan 75 years ago. How might the new injunction be phrased? Now that is the big question.

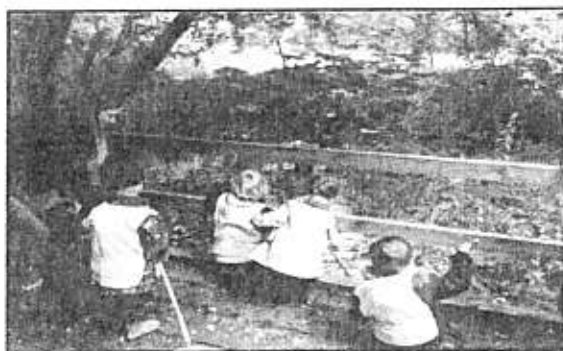
Keep plotting  
Brian Melling [brianmelling47@gmail.com](mailto:brianmelling47@gmail.com)



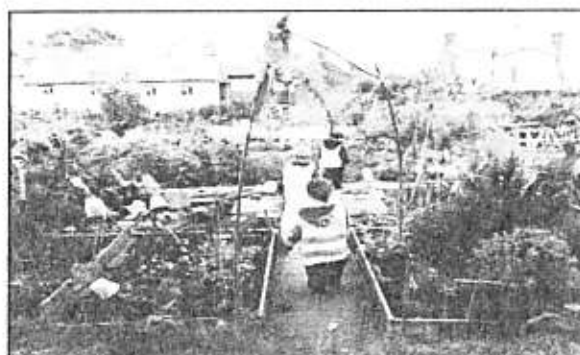
## BRINGTON AND WHILTON PRE-SCHOOL SUMMER 2020

It was lovely to be able to re-open the pre-school on 3<sup>rd</sup> June after being temporarily closed due to the Coronavirus but we all managed to keep in touch with the children weekly through videos, letters, stories and songs being sent. The children came back so happy and excited and they just carried on where they had left off in March which was lovely to see.

With changes to our daily routine, extensive cleaning and reduced opening times we started with the topic of -The world around us looking at- Where we live, Northamptonshire, Great Britain, London and the Royal family. We talked about Summer and all the different types of weather. The children enjoyed lots of outdoor activities, they picked and ate the peas, herbs, raspberries and strawberries we had grown and they planted flowers, tomatoes and sunflowers too.



*In the Spinney*



*On the allotments*

We used our fantastic outside areas taking many nature walks, making nature crowns, leaf rubbing and mud painting and the children enjoyed the spinney area looking for different insects, finding wildflowers, pond dipping and cooling down with some water play.

We said goodbye to 9 children in July who are moving on to primary school but we are looking forward to September when we will welcome new children into our pre-school family. We can also start to promote our fantastic pre-school again and the children can enjoy lots of lovely Autumn/ Winter crafts and activities together.

If you are looking for a small nurturing pre-school for your 2-5 year old, we have places available from September please contact Trisha at [managerbandwpreschool@gmail.com](mailto:managerbandwpreschool@gmail.com) or on 07546 440572.

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## THE CHILDREN OF LOCKDOWN

As Whilton children return to education, we have asked a few of them for their experiences and opinions about this summer.

Peter, nearly 10, is home schooled, and so that has continued as usual. However, he has missed the activities he usually attends, such as football and swimming, and even the social clubs, which usually continue through the holidays, have stopped. He has missed seeing friends there. On the other hand, he has enjoyed the freedom of feeling no pressure. Lockdown had some advantages!

Maisie is looking forward to lessons in school and having people around her again. As she will be going to secondary school, she will hope to be making new friends. The thing she has missed most this summer is outdoor sports, but she has enjoyed face-time with her friends and being able to play outside.

Archie, 9, has missed his lessons, especially maths and outdoor sports, but he has really enjoyed the literacy work he was sent from school. He is looking forward to seeing his friends at school and meeting his new teacher.

Ralph, 11, did go to school last term, but social distancing made it different. He is looking forward to seeing his friends and his first year at senior school. He has missed seeing friends as much as usual; they used to come round often in the holidays. This summer he has had more time to be out on the farm and helping. He has enjoyed horse riding and cycling in the village.

Charlie, 9, is hoping to see friends again and to be nice to those who are new. In Year 5 he will have two teachers and try to work hard. This summer it has been disappointing not to see the friends he would have played with, and he has not been able to go to their homes as in the past. He has missed planning for his school day and organizing the books he needs. On the other hand he has been able to have Zoom lessons in Maths and English. Although he could not go to friends' houses, he has met with them to play outside, and especially enjoyed time with them in the woods at Everdon.

### *From a villager*

I have never heard men of a certain age talk so much about their hair as during lockdown.

On his weekly Zoom catch up my husband and his friends would spend 10 to 15 minutes bemoaning the lack of hairdressing facilities and how long and unruly their hair had become.

This line of discussion would only end when the least hirsute one would whimper: "You're lucky to have that problem."

Cue football, how and when would the season resume....

## WHILTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The Society's new book,  
"THE MYSTERY OF THE WHILTON STONE"  
is now available for purchase at a cost of £15.

If you would like a copy please contact Anthea Hiscock  
[anthea.hiscock@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:anthea.hiscock@tiscali.co.uk)  
843319  
or Brian Melling  
[brianmelling47@gmail.com](mailto:brianmelling47@gmail.com)

### The Canal

During lockdown the canal was closed and walkers on the towpath were discouraged. Volunteer, Richard Oliver, has noticed that since the canal has re-opened it has become busy with hire boats, especially those coming out of Gayton. The cafe at Whilton Locks has also opened again.

Geoff and Sue Woodward recorded the good news that at long last the towpath repairs have been done. Bags of aggregate were delivered to the depot beyond Top Lock, loaded on to a boat provided by the Buckingham Canal Trust and then taken down the canal to commence work where the first section finished at Bridge 12. The boat crane lifted the bags up on to the towpath.



*Volunteers at work.*

Over two days, Whilton and Buckby Locks Association volunteers, local residents, members of Braunston and the Buckingham Canal Societies, with Trust staff, worked solidly and with enthusiasm to create a more user-friendly pathway between Bridge 12 and Lock 9. Finance for this project was generously donated by WBLA members, local residents and grants from Long Buckby Parish Council.

There was a problem with a lock gate cill, which led to a short closure of the canal at Whilton, but this was sorted in less than a week, allowing boats to pass again.



*Swans and cygnets  
on the canal in August*

## Roughmoor Spinney

If you go down to the Spinney today you're sure of a big surprise.....as the song has it. The first working party of 5 for the new season was there on 26<sup>th</sup> August, bathed in sunshine. The walkways were cleared and most of the stream bed cleared of fallen wood and debris.

Autumn colours were beginning to come in the leaves and grasses. It was good to see signs of summer joys with new visitor stick-structures and to see evidence of pond dipping. Most encouraging of all were perhaps green leaves sprouting out of the tops of the transparent jackets of the new trees planted by the preschool group, donated by the Woodland Trust last year, and to marvel at new growth on the upright willow retainers of our supposedly "dead" hedges. These were started at our last two winter working parties, in order to mark the route of the path where the ground can be worn away.



*A young sapling growing out above its tree guard*



*Part of a "dead" hedge, where some of the supporting stakes have taken root.*

As most of you know, the excellent work of the volunteer Spinney Project Group secured, oversaw the clearing, and then maintained this millennium gift to the parish for its first 20 years. Last year the Group handed it over to the Parish Council, the owners, on behalf of us all. The Parish Council undertakes monthly risk assessments and organizes work parties through the winter and early spring to ensure we can all safely enjoy it. If anyone would like to spend a couple of hours helping in a work party (now socially distanced), usually once a month, please contact me at Langton House (843319).

Meanwhile if you, or your children, or grandchildren, have never been to explore or, for younger ones, build camps or bridges over the stream, I urge you to do so. It is always a must for our grandchildren now mostly teenagers, when they visit, now of course as a trip down memory lane with exercise!

Keith Hiscock

## 80 YEARS AGO: WHILTON IN THE AUTUMN OF 1940

Whilton Local History Society is not meeting at present and has postponed the events planned for October. We hope that the remembrance of Percy Fleming and the other young men who died in the Second World War will now take place next year.

Meanwhile, although we may complain about restrictions and problems during the current pandemic, it may be appropriate to consider what our predecessors experienced here 80 years ago, during the Second World War. The following account is based mainly on written and spoken memories of the people who were here.

### THE WAR EFFORT ON THE HOME FRONT

In Whilton the few with sons or husbands serving in the Forces awaited letters with deep concern, but people were trying to carry on with their regular lives. Cows still had to be milked, crops tended and children sent to school. In addition there were extra tasks to support the war effort. Doing something practical may have helped to relieve the stress.

Memories and records show that almost everyone was able to offer something in supporting the war effort. The First World War was still fresh in many memories. Women remembered knitting socks for the troops in the past and now Whilton had its knitting party.

The Home Guard was set up in May 1940 to help defend against invasion. Spinster Laura Emery, who lived in the farmhouse opposite the Plough, was 94, but she allowed her house to become the headquarters of the Whilton Home Guard. They met there on Sunday mornings.

Harold Haynes and Horace Clements working in Rugby in daytime, were younger members of the Home Guard. Horace was also in the ARP at Rugby where he worked. He was on duty once a week, and having been up all night would then work a whole day. He remembered how exhausted he felt that following day.

Charles Herbert Adams was too old to serve, but was very patriotic. Known as "Tudor" Adams, he was keen to serve wherever possible, although people found him over-zealous in some of his duties. He ran the Whilton Post Office and became the Special Constable.

He was a little bumptious with it. This could be annoying, but he created some amusement to others. If he knew the royal train was to pass by, he would station himself by Whilton Bridge and salute it. Children would sneak behind to watch. He and Frank Bates of Holly House were also Air Raid Precaution wardens, being responsible for enforcing the blackout. There is a story told by Stan Haynes as follows:

*"One dark night [Tudor] accosted our neighbour as she cycled home from munition work at Daventry.*

*"Now then," he intoned, "can I see your identity card?"*

*"What on earth for?" asked Anne.*

*"How do I know who you are?" he persisted.*

*"I've had a hard day at work," she said. "Now let me get on home for supper."*

*"I'm going to have to report this incident," said Tudor.*

*"Report this as well, then, you pompous old twerp!" she shouted, clouting him with her lunch bag."*

Whilton had occasional whist drives and dances for comforts for the troops. These were held in the school, although head teacher Mrs Osborne began to complain of the smell of cigarettes after these events. Whilton also joined the movement to raise money for more Spitfires. Jack Wright remembered Spitfire Fund dances in the big hall at Whilton Lodge.

**Food production** was vital from the outset of war. In October 1939 farmers were asked to plough up 10 per cent of their grassland by the spring, so that crops would be ready to harvest in 1940. Much of the nation's bread depended on flour being shipped here across the Atlantic. With the threat to shipping made clear, British farmers made a huge effort.

In Whilton there were directives to grow barley, mangolds and swedes for livestock, and also flax, sugar beet and potatoes for selling on. Agnes Townley said they had to grow potatoes on fields near Home Farm. There was no memory of these being ploughed before. The Emerys were used to growing wheat, barley and beans, but in 1940 they had to add potatoes and flax. Bill Emery, recalled that the Ministry sent round inspectors to make sure more potatoes were grown. Potatoes were particularly seen as a filler if bread supplies failed.

Even the school children helped in the national project to produce food. At potato harvest time, they were allowed time off to help in the fields. The school garden was brought under cultivation and the children were involved. However, this created its own problems. Head teacher Mrs Osborne wrote: "*11 Ap 1940: Betty Steele and Joyce Poole: When I had gone to superintend gardening exercise these two behaved disgracefully. Betty: One on each hand. Joyce: One on hand. Lines.*"

In spite of such setbacks, Mrs Osborne managed to record in May: "*Inspector of Gardens visited and was very pleased indeed with the garden so far. He talked with Mr Adams who has so kindly helped us*"

Tudor Adams was a retired gardener and so would have been able to advise on growing vegetables. Rationing first began in January 1940, with bacon, ham, sugar and butter being included. By March meat was rationed and in July tea, margarine, cooking fat and cheese were added. Any home grown vegetables and other produce were welcome. Although there were fruits to harvest, they required sugar for preserving as jam. Those who made butter could sometimes exchange this or other Whilton produce for sugar with friends in town.

### **Arrival of the evacuees**

By September 1940 the main attacks were on London as the Blitz began. Earlier plans for the evacuation of London children were now being carried out. There was a handful of children who came to this area by private arrangement, staying with relatives or friends, but these were the minority. The main bulk turned up unannounced in September 1940. Schools must have known that they would have to organize the reception of evacuees, but they expected some advance information. In Whilton this did not happen.

Mrs Osborne, the headmistress wrote:

- 18 Sept A party of 25 children have arrived from London today. School closed this afternoon. I was not informed by Billetting Officers and knew nothing until children were here.*
- 19 Sept I wrote to the Office yesterday. Can do nothing about evacuees, have no names or addresses, so cannot classify in any way.*
- 23 Sept Evacuees admitted today. Miss Bent took up duties."*

Miss Bent was a London teacher who arrived with the children. She may have been as bewildered as her young companions. Behind Mrs Osborne's brief statements lies a flurry of activity, in which about 30 children of varying ages, and not all from the same place, were billeted on the people of Whilton. It seems there was very little choice unless, like the Haynes family, you could really show you had no spare room.

Mrs Millie Townley took in 6 evacuees, some of whom were known to the family, and Mrs Emery at Hill Top and Mrs Surridge at Rose Briar each had 3. Most people only had one or at most two, but this did mean some evacuees were separated from their brothers or sisters, and some of these were very young children, who came to start school for the first time at Whilton. 19 households in Whilton and the Locks took in children and a few others were billeted in Brockhall and Muscott. All these children came to Whilton school, at least at first.

Two years before, in 1938, an inspector had described the school as follows:

*"The happy friendly atmosphere of this school is distinctly pleasing. The older scholars' behaviour and attitude towards their work speak well for the Head Mistress's efforts to interest and enliven the children of this remote little village. Formerly the Head Mistress was assisted by a monitress but since the latter left in March this has become a "one teacher" school."*

The records suggest that of the 29 children who arrived at this school on 18<sup>th</sup> September 1940 all but two came from London. Over the following year another 20 or so appeared, mainly from the London area and Essex, with one or two from Coventry and Burton on Trent.

Almost before the first wave of children could settle in, scarlet fever was raging through the school, passing indiscriminately among Londoners and Whilton children. Miss Bent succumbed and was taken off to the isolation hospital near Staverton, with a number of the children. Everything possible was done to reduce infection. Mrs Osborne sadly wrote: *"15 Oct I have burnt all Joyce Poole's books, she did beautiful work and had a goodly collection of reference books but I was ordered to do it."*

Today Joyce recalls:

*"On October 15, my 14<sup>th</sup> birthday, I suffered from Scarlet Fever, as did six other brothers and sisters. Only one child didn't get it, there were eight of us at this time. One by one we were taken to an isolation hospital some miles outside Staverton about fifteen miles away. Brian was over a year old and I was so used to caring for him at home I carried on doing it in the hospital and had to be told to leave it to the nurses now."*

Joyce remembers that they spent about six weeks at the hospital, being allowed to walk outside towards the end, with hands and feet peeling, but knowing the fresh air was good for them.

Meanwhile panic set in in the village. Mrs Osborne recorded: *"20 Oct Many mothers and foster parents refuse to send their children to school as the place has not been fumigated. 28.8% present."* Within a few days the school was closed. When it opened again on 4<sup>th</sup> November, two of the evacuees had already gone back to London. Being so ill and frightened among strangers must have been a terrifying experience. The sudden arrival of the evacuees with their strange ways and habits had been a shock to local people, but equally, life in rural Whilton was traumatic for many of the town-bred children. Derek Frost, the evacuee with the Clements was amazed to see plums on trees. *"Gor blimey!"* he said, *"I thought they came in boxes."*

Parents of evacuees were unsure of rural life and it was too expensive to keep visiting. Harold Haynes recorded that the evacuees started to drift back quickly. At least eleven children had returned home by Christmas.

#### **Arrival of the Army and the requisition of the Rectory**

As Joyce Bristow nee Poole has written: *"The war was still quite far off until 1940 when we began to hear more action from planes going over, most obviously Germans making for the industrial areas around Coventry."*

As the year progressed there were very real fears of invasion and although Whilton was far from any coast, its vicinity to Coventry became significant. Coventry was one of the main industrial centres of the country, especially significant for its munitions factories. It was known that this could be a target for attack and that planes heading for Coventry would be likely to fly over this area. As a result soldiers had been sent to Whilton to man a searchlight set up in Carpenters Field, but they had to be billeted nearby.

In the late 1930s it had already been decided that Whilton would no longer have a resident Rector. By 1940 the new curate in charge, Rev William Slater Hills, was living in Norton.

The Rectory building had been neglected and a survey of the dilapidations of the Whilton Rectory and Glebeland, dated 1<sup>st</sup> February 1940, revealed the woeful state of the property. Broken windows, defective cement, rust, cracked stucco and peeling paint gave the air of an abandoned building. The Rectory was taken over as a base for the soldiers who had come to man the searchlight.



*The dilapidated Rectory*

**Percy Fleming's death** One of the first young men to enlist had been Percy Fleming, whose family lived in a canal house at the Locks. He had attended Whilton School, with the redoubtable Mrs Hilda Osborne. She had great ambitions for her pupils and Percy was one of those who passed the exam to admit him to Daventry Grammar School.

On leaving school, Percy went to work in Rugby in the lamp costing and accounting office of the B.T.H. Engineering Works. In photographs of the 1920s and 30s, Percy's laughing face suggests that he had a sense of fun and many friends. Some friendships were made at the school and others through the community and later through work.



He served in the RAF, had become a Leading Aircraftman and was training as a wireless operator and air gunner or navigator. He wrote home about his experiences, but sadly before his last letter arrived his parents received a very different sort of message. Percy had been killed in a flying accident, while training on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1940. His funeral was held here on 11<sup>th</sup> October, just as scarlet fever was setting in at the school and the bombing raids on Coventry were building up, a crucially difficult time for Whilton.



## Coventry

Through the summer there had been a number of small raids on Coventry. Invading planes over Whilton, terrified those below. Skilled men were drafted in each day to repair bomb damage in the city. Among these were Don Welch, Will Adams and Harold Townley, all of whom were carpenters, experiencing the devastation of war at first hand.

However, there was very little to prepare anyone for the terrible destruction wrought on Coventry on the night of 14<sup>th</sup> November 1940. Over 500 German bombers destroyed the water supply, the electricity network, the telephones and the gas mains. Incendiary bombs set roof tops alight and the huge craters made in roads seriously hampered the fire brigade as houses and factories blazed unhindered. Although this raid was expected, it was not known to be heading for Coventry, and so there was very little resistance; some German pilots were able to fly back to France for fresh fuel and supplies, one remembering that even while crossing the Channel, the fires of the city guided his way back.

The inhabitants of Whilton were not under personal attack, but they were terrified as wave after wave of bombers flew over, with their aggressive roar. Horace Clements recalled this night and how frightening it was. *"No one dared move."* Even in Whilton the sky was lit up by Coventry burning. Joyce Bristow recalled the Poole family hiding under their beds that night. *"The noise was awful, the metal shutters rattled all night...we could see through the cracks that Coventry was ablaze and lit up the sky for miles."*

Mary Houghton, then Mary Townley at Church Gate, remembered going out into the field to watch, terrified. *"Screaming bombs were being dropped all along the railway line. You could hear the door knockers going on the old houses in the village during the bombing."*

That night over 4,300 homes were destroyed and two thirds of Coventry's buildings were damaged. It is now reckoned that this raid almost caused the collapse of the morale of the Midlands area as the people of Coventry lost their moorings in the daze of the aftermath. The rebuilding depended on the unstinting efforts of skilled workmen from the surrounding area, including several from Whilton. At this point carpenters such as Don Welch and Will Adams were still seen as essential to the war effort at home.

The raids on Coventry did not end until late summer 1942, but the night of 14/15<sup>th</sup> November 1940 was the most horrifying. They created a climate of fear. Beatrice Poole of the Plough recalled a terrible storm in the war which caused massive flooding in the village. *"The sky went all colours and some thought it was the end of the world. Some people were so frightened they gathered at the pub for company."* The fear at this storm probably reflects the nervous tension created by disturbed nights and awareness of attacks in the East Midlands. The whole village was affected by lack of sleep during the times of air raids.

Whereas in November 1939 the school managers could slowly consider the possibility of blacking out the school and agree that an estimate should be got, and then move on to how a tea would be provided at Christmas, by 21<sup>st</sup> November 1940 the time for deliberation was over. Mrs Osborne wrote: *"ARP window tape to be put on immediately."* This tape was criss-crossed over the windows to lessen the likelihood of the whole window smashing into the room.

These autumn months of 1940 were particularly difficult for Whilton. The Local History Society hope to share more about the war years in future editions and on their website.

The Whilton Newsletter is published quarterly and circulated to every household within the parish boundary.  
The costs are met by the Parish Council.  
The Newsletter is delivered by volunteers who willingly give up their time to bring this to your door.

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The Editors welcome material for the Newsletter.

The next issue will be the Winter Edition, covering December 2020 – January 2021. The last date for contributions will be 20<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

In the circumstances of the Coronavirus pandemic we are unable to produce the usual “What’s on” page, but we hope the following may be useful.

**USEFUL WEBSITES AND CONTACTS WHILE REGULAR ACTIVITIES ARE CHANGED OR IN ABEYANCE**

Aperture Photography Group: *844182 or via email. [neilp.apg@gmail.com](mailto:neilp.apg@gmail.com)*

Brington and Whilton Pre- School: *[www.bringtonandwhiltonpreschool.org.uk](http://www.bringtonandwhiltonpreschool.org.uk)*

Daventry District Council: *[www.daventrydc.gov.uk](http://www.daventrydc.gov.uk)*

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Whilton Local History Society: *<https://whiltonlhs.org>*

Whilton Locks Garden Village: *[www.wlgv.co.uk](http://www.wlgv.co.uk)*

Whilton Parish Council: *[www.parish-council.com/whilton](http://www.parish-council.com/whilton)*

Whilton Village Website: *[www.whilton-village.net](http://www.whilton-village.net)*