

From the Willoughby Society Archives



# Willoughby

A Warwickshire Village

# PREFACE

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For many years now the village elders have been dissatisfied with the 1828 version of the "History of Willoughby" which largely evolved from the discovery of the Willoughby Saline Baths around 1824, and as such was more of an account of the district rather than a village history.

It was with this in mind that we gathered together a number of friends in 1985. During successive winter months they researched, assembled, and edited a completely new book of knowledge on our village.

Willoughby has never boasted more houses than now (1988) although the population has fluctuated from 580 in 1280 to 410 in 1988.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Dwellings</i>	<i>Population</i>
1280	71	580
1563	60	610
1663	74	590
1726	56	↓
1828	92	461
1988	120	410

The researches have been quite fascinating and a genuine labour of love — may we commend this work for your delectation and enjoyment. The proceeds of sale will only defray publication costs.

W. L. CARLISLE S. G. IVENS F. L. MITCHELL  
M. J. REYNOLDS S. J. TROMAN R. J. WITFIELD

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## CHAPTER ONE

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### INTRODUCTION AND EARLY HISTORY

Willoughby is an ancient village of Warwickshire, in the Hundred of Knightlow, once forming part of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Mercia. It is situated adjacent to the A45 Birmingham-Ipswich Road (formerly the Great Chester Road) and is midway between Daventry (Northants) and Dunchurch (Warwicks) and close to the county boundary of Northamptonshire. A very small part of the village is visible from this main road, the principal part extending for half a mile westward. Geographically, the parish forms a square of one mile. The village consists of some one hundred and twenty dwellings and approximately one thousand eight hundred acres. Some 90 of the houses are privately owned, the remainder being owned by the Rugby Borough Council. There are nine farms in the Parish, seven of which are substantial in acreage and the land is well tended and productive. There has been a great improvement in agriculture since the Second World War (1939-1945) especially since 1952 when the majority of farms became privately owned and in consequence of these two events there was a combined need to survive.

Willoughby is within reasonable distance of Rugby, Coventry, Northampton and Warwick, and is quite close (6 miles) to the country's motorway systems



Main Street.

1876.

which gives it a convenient position for commerce and transport. The main feature of the central part of the village is the stream that flows through it, and it is thought that the name Willoughby is derived from the willow trees which border the stream for some distance. There have been various spellings of the village name. In the Domesday Book (1068) it appears as Wilebere, Wilebei and Wilbec. The latter seems ver<sup>y</sup> relevant with its connection with "bec" or small stream.

In the year 1090 the village was owned by William II (1087-1100). This in

itself was not unusual although how the King became owner is not recorded. It is known that there was a settlement on the site as early as 850-900 A.D. when it is thought that there was a place of worship on or near the present site of St. Nicholas' Church.

In 1100 Henry I (1100-1135) entrusted the village to one Will Wigan, his servant who, together with his family, held it until 1232. The Wigan family, who also held Dunchurch and Thurlaston, had to provide the King with "a man in armour for the King's service with two horses" in every army called by the King within England and Wales. At the demise of Wigan's third son Ivo, who had no heirs, the ownership of the village reverted to Thurstane, his uncle, who in turn granted the entire Manor of Willoughby, with the patronage of the Church to the Hospital of St. John, Oxford, founded by Henry III (1216-1272) in 1232. In 1220 a nephew of Will Wigan, one Henry Waltham, was also granted a portion of the village originally given to Wigan. He was to act as "King's Marshal".

In 1247 Henry III the Guardian of the Hospital, being possessed of such proportion of lands in Willoughby, obtained a Charter for a weekly market on a Tuesday and an annual fair at Whitsun for two days (Mon.-Tues.). These fairs were thought to have been held in the Hamlet of Pie Court within the village of Wyleb. (spelling in 1200). At around this time a family bearing the name Hamond or Hamund (alias Clarke) came into prominence and were the probable link with the Thurstane family as representatives of the Hospital of St. John. In 1447 the Bishop of Winchester began the Foundation of Magdalen College



Main Street.

1988.

in Oxford on the site of the original Hospital of St. John. By 1456, when presumably the bulk of the college had been built, the "Lordship of Willoughby" was granted to the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford. Until 1952, when most of the ownership was sold back to the tenants, Willoughby was the most ancient property the college possessed.

Whilst in the college's ownership the village lands were leased out to the descendants of the Hamond or Clarke family who in turn were men of estate (notably at Watford, Northants). In fact the Clarke pedigree is the most well

known of any that can be traced in Willoughby dating back (1988) some 650 years.

### Pie Court

Pie (or Pye) Court is a small hamlet within the precincts of the parish containing some half-a-dozen houses erected on the site of a large house which used to stand there.

The house used to stage the Court of Justice which was incident to all fairs and markets and held for the purpose of administering summary justice to buyers and sellers who were in attendance. This was called "The Pie Powder Court" (Old English) from the ancient French term "Pied Poldreaux" or "pedlar", therefore signifying the court of such petty chapmen as resort to fairs and markets!

The Court of Pie Powder was the lowest and most expeditious court of justice known to the law of England. The disuse of this court is attributed to the falling off of fairs and markets which used to be held in the area we know today as "Pye Court".

### Natural History

There have been a number of discoveries in the general area of Willoughby of antediluvian remains.

Both teeth and tusks of the mammoth or Asiatic elephant have been found. Perhaps the most famous or infamous was in "Gaol Close" in 1826 by workmen who were digging gravel for the roads, but due to their ignorance the tusk was broken. The remains of it together with a number of teeth were rescued by the village schoolmaster William Wilkinson who, in turn, was anxious to have the pit further explored. Unhappily the workmen would not permit this. There may of course still be relics in this area. During the past two hundred years many hones, teeth, and fossils have been found in the Rugby area, of animals one does not now associate with England such as elephants, rhinoceroses, and hyaenas.

## CHAPTER TWO

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### THINGS TO SEE AT WILLOUGHBY

A tour starting on the site of the Willoughby railway station (1898-1966).

1. Facing the village — to your right was the iron bridge (removed 1969) which conveyed the railway line over the A45 trunk road.

In similar position can be seen the culvert excavated in 1937 to relieve floodwater from the trunk road via the fields of "White House" and "College" farms to outflow opposite the Village Hall into the stream.

2. Also on this site was cattle wharfage and a small loading area where local people could assemble goods or livestock for rail transportation. Much of this commercial activity ceased in the mid-1950's when road transport increased considerably to the eventual demise of the railway at Willoughby.

3. To the south of this site at approx 700 yards distant there stood a quite remarkable viaduct built over the Learn Valley in 1897 almost entirely of blue engineering bricks. This was demolished in 1981 for reasons of safety and the ground beneath reverted to its original 19th century condition.

4. Directly in front of you stands the only memorial to the railway at Willoughby, the old station master's house (now privately owned). The old L.N.E.R. railway company looked after its senior employees. The local railway chief was a pillar of the local community.

5. Some 200 yards in front of you at the junction of the A45 trunk road and Main Street, stands the old "Four Crosses" public house, now (1989) used as transport accommodation. This building was erected in 1900 as a replacement for the original and now famous "Four Crosses" hostelry which is thought to have stood on the site of the present "Four Crosses Cottage" built in 1971.

It was at the original "Three Crosses" that the English satirist Jonathan Swift — Dean of St. Patrick's — lodged in 1725 and following a disagreement with the landlord's wife, engraved onto a diamond shaped window pane the following verse:-

"There are three crosses at your door  
Hang up your wife and you'll count four"

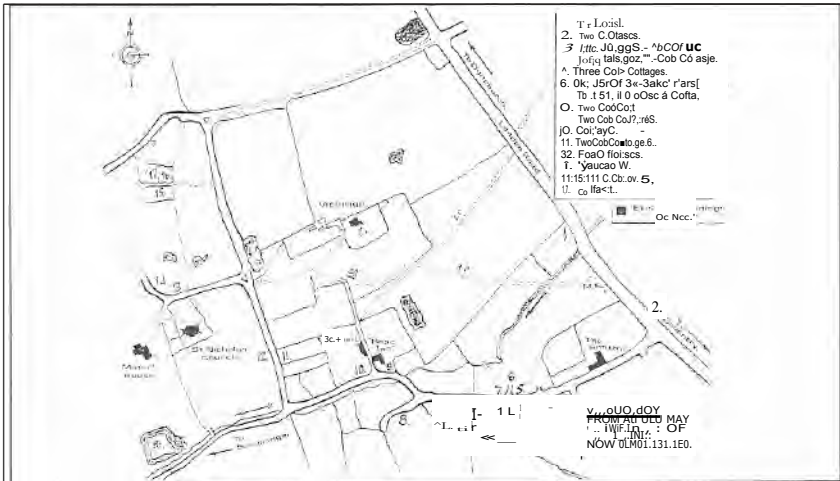
ever after the establishment was known as "Four Crosses"

*Note:* Swift became a powerful figure in the Tory party so much so, he was courted and flattered with the result that he became unbearably arrogant.

6. On the opposite side of this junction of the A45 stands 3x cottage — type dwellings known locally as Tattle Bank. The derivation of the name is unknown! It is thought that this site or close by is where the Willoughby saline baths stood which made the village so famous in the early 19th century. The owner of the baths, William Crupper, was either the owner or landlord of the "Four Crosses".

7. Some 200 yards further northwards, along the A45 to the west, lies Hayward Lodge, a recently (1988) restored village conservation area. On this site (some 2x acres) stood a large house known as Willoughby Lodge built around 1793 for Dr. Nathaniel Bridges the local vicar who had become famous for his pulpit oratory. The house was subsequently demolished in 1951 following a quite disastrous fire. The site was taken over by Rugby Borough Council and the Warwickshire County Council, before being purchased by the village in 1987.

8. Retracing one's steps to the "Four Crosses" and proceeding due west down Main Street, some 100 yards to the right stands the building of the old village smithy, closed in 1977.



9. A further 100 yards on the right is the Methodist Chapel built on a minute piece of ground in 1898 and still in regular use today (1989).

10. Moving toward the geographical centre of the village, one comes to the Village Hall, built in 1933 following five years of fund raising. The hall stands in its own grounds purchased from Magdalen College in 1948, and is entirely self-financing under the control a sixteen-strong management committee.

11. Adjacent to the hall is the Rose Inn, the only thatched building remaining in the village. The Rose was known for many years as the Red Rose, but at the time of the Wars of the Roses in 1460, the colour was dropped from its title.

12. Next to the inn is a small plot of land owned by the Willoughby Educational Foundation (a village charity). The Charity owned considerable lands and property during the 19th century, but during the past seventy years (1989) all, with the exception of this plot and land at Kates Hardwick, have been sold. This surviving village plot has been landscaped as a village amenity complete with seats for use by the general public.

13. To the north of this "plot" stands two privately owned residences, which together were formerly the village school and school house, built originally in 1816. "There is a stone tablet above the entrance door to the old school house commemorating the date.

14. Opposite and to the rear of the Rose Inn lies the village playing field, formerly owned by the Willoughby Charity. Following a survey carried out in 1935, when the cost of vehicular access to the site was found to be prohibitive, it was converted to a village playing field and opened officially in 1955.

15. Returning to Main Street, the first building past the telephone kiosk is the former village bakehouse now the village post office. The bakehouse flourished from 1900 until 1984 when the present owner purchased the property following the demise of coke or coal fired ovens.

16. Proceeding westward to the junction of Main and Lower Streets, there is Moor Lane, which leads out of the village towards Sawbridge and Shuckburgh. The third building on the left, in Moor Lane, is the old Bath Farm so named because of its connections with the saline baths, famous in 1828. Bath Farm has recently (1988) been completely renovated and extended.

17. Some 150 yards further along Moor Lane on the right hand side facing west, is an island of trees, some 1 acre in all, which is surrounded by a moat. This is Gaol Close, which was the site of the village gaol and where gravel workings yielded antedevlian remains around the year 1830.

18. A further half-mile to the south west, stands Willoughby House, originally known as Willoughby Bath Spa which, in 1828, was the mecca for anyone seeking the spa water remedy for the illnesses and ailments of the day. The spa waters were very famous at a time when skin disorders were quite easily treated by bathing in the "saline waters" which were said to be most beneficial.

19. Retracing one's steps to the Lower Street/Moor Lane junction, diagonally opposite stands "White Barn" which is exactly what was its former use. A converted barn, also used as an abattoir and converted to a dwelling house in 1948.

20. The roadside houses in Lower Street are among the oldest in the village. One, known as Russell Cottage, has an ancient fire insurance plate still affixed to its front wall.

21. On the right stands Vale House, built in the late 16th century. Its front porch visible from the road, being partly made from timbers taken from the Brooks Close Manor House, demolished in 1780.



*Vale House,*

1960

22. To the left is Brooks Close, 13 bungalows erected in 1964, on the site of the former Manor house which was most probably used for some three hundred years until 1780 as the vicarage, being next to the church. This area was surrounded by a stone wall, similar to that which still surrounds the churchyard. Quite obvious signs of a main entrance driveway to the former Manor House, adjacent to the existing island, were visible until its demolition in 1964.

23. The present road island, was the probable site of an ancient cross or monument, referred to in village history (1642) when the Rev. Henry Bold plied the "parliamentarian" soldiers with ale to prevent them from felling this cross, which they felt represented "popery". The parliamentary soldiers were passing through the village on their way to the battle of Edge Hill on 23rd October, 1642. Further evidence of the soldiers' visit was where they sharpened their swords on the north entrance porch of the church.

24. Brooks Close leads to the village church of St. Nicholas (dealt with in detail — see chapter two) and beyond to Manor Farm, the only three storeyed residence in the village. The front lawn of Manor Farm played host to the local tennis club from 1942 to 1965.

25. To the right is a signposted public footpath to Pyle Court, one of the best known of all village areas, because of its historic connections with the local fairs and the "home" of the Court of Pie Power which metered out fines and punish-

merits for misdemeanours and acts of public disorder or nuisance.

26. Adjacent to Pye Court is the field known as "The Green", the home of the Willoughby Cricket Club. The field is owned by its members and open to all inhabitants for the purposes of playing cricket and other ancillary activities.

27. Turning eastward and leaving Pye Court behind, one traverses Brickhill Lane, recentl<sup>y</sup> (1988) widened to take the local bus and large farm traffic. Thus you reach the A45 trunk road. At the junction is a small farm known as Gate Farm, formerly a public house, the New Inn.

28. Crossing the A45 and proceeding eastward, at 400 yards one crosses the old railway bridge and immediately the new canal bridge (1974) constructed to replace the former hump-back bridge which was fractured and not safe to carry present da<sup>y</sup> loads. In front of you stands Navigation Cottage renovated and refurbished by its present owner (1988) Dr. Pygott, and Navigation House (formerly Navigation Inn 1790). The whole site is now in private ownership following its use as wharfage for lime and coal in the heyday of canal traffic (1800-1940). The road you stand on is called Longdown Lane and proceeds eastward a further one mile to the county boundary with Northamptonshire and the next parish of Barby.

29. By retracing your steps back to the old railway cutting you can walk back to the point of departure. To your right and adjacent to the road is one of three Draysons Trust fields the origins of which (1800) stem from the family of a Thomas Drayson of Toft. In this field (OS.209) the Willoughby Charit<sup>y</sup> organised and let allotments from 1858 until 1880, when because of petty squabbling, the Trustees withdrew the facility.

When one returns to within sight of the cafeteria a short deviation is required to avoid trespass. In all, this excursion can be comfortably achieved in two hours.

In the Gentleman's magazine, for November 1819. Amongst the accounts of the origins of signs is selected the following, on the Crosses at Willoughby:-

Tis said that Swift, St. Patrick's Dean,  
That old satiric sinner,  
When on his journey to the north,  
Here stopped and took his dinner.

It happened on a busy day,  
Mine host was in the cellar,  
When Swift began to rant and rave,  
And like a calf did bellow.

Why am I thus to sit alone,  
By host and hostess slighted?  
If this is all respect you show,  
I'll have your house indicted.

Dean Swift's my name,  
And, Madam, you,  
Should first wait on your betters;  
Before you serve the common folk,  
Tend well the man of letters.

And when a person of my rank,  
Graces the count<sup>y</sup> round,  
In courtesy and humble mien,  
You always should abound;  
Go where I may, my cloth commands,  
Respect the most profound.

But Swift soon found the angry dame  
was not to be so humble,  
For, in her rage, she told the Dean,  
To quit, or cease to grumble.

Odds bodikins, mine hostess adds,  
The Dean has lost his reason;  
To speak or look, but at his grace.  
He'd make you think 'twas treason.

The landlord from below had heard,  
A bustle and disorder,  
Quickly ascended to the bar,  
To put his dame in order;

Swift's ready wit soon subject found,  
And taught the dame a lesson;  
That from his lips not to expect,  
A prayer, or yet a blessing.

Says Swift, upon your casement there,  
A legacy I leave you;  
'Tis to your wife I thus allude,  
Let not the subject grieve you.

For there you'll find a ready plan,  
To reckon up your losses,  
Though, by my faith, in doing so,  
You'll sure increase your crosses.

#### THE LEGACY

Good master tipster, I observe.  
Three crosses at your door,  
Hang up your odd ill-tempered wife.  
And then you may count four.



## CHAPTER THREE

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### CHURCH

The church is dedicated to St. Nicholas and is situated to the west of the village, standing on its own grounds of 1.9 acres.

St. Nicholas was the son of a rich nobleman and was Bishop of Myra, Asia Minor, during the early part of the fourth century. There are many legends concerning his acts but little is known about his life and work as a Bishop.

St. Nicholas is the patron of seafarers. Many of the four hundred English churches dedicated to him are situated on the coast. St. Nicholas (Santa Claus) is also the patron of children. In some European countries presents are exchanged on his feast day, December 6th.

The church at Willoughby certainly existed in 1215 and in 1232 it was entrusted to the Hospital of St. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Magdalen College, Oxford. The east window (behind the altar) depicts the tower of the said college together with St. Nicholas in his Bishop's robes. The present church building dates mainly from the second half of the fifteenth century. The tower, north aisle and nave belong to this period. The south aisle was added later. The first chancel was built in 1662 and rebuilt for some reason in 1779. Church documents prior- to 1547 would most probably have been sent to the Vatican in Rome as "property of the Catholic Church". Parish registers were started in the reign of Henry VIII in 1538; church records at Willoughby only go back to 1625.



Church.

1988.

In 1552 (and probably earlier) there were three bells and a sanctus bell. These were recast in 1713 to provide a minor peal of five bells. A sixth bell was added in 1781. In 1920 the bells were condemned as unsafe but following a village appeal they were rehung and rang again on Boxing Day 1926.

The present church clock was installed in 1947 as a memorial to those who fell in the Second World War. The church tower also houses an early eighteenth century clock and carillon which were installed in 1724. This has been restored on two occasions, in 1820 and 1983, both at village expense. The carillon plays five tunes and requires hand winding. It is a quite fascinating example of its type. (see separate page and sketch). One of the oldest items in the church is without doubt the font thought to be early thirteenth century (1230). It was moved to its present position in a special baptistry, constructed in 1964 to commemorate the dedication of the new Coventry Cathedral in 1962.

The south porch vestry was constructed in 1980 and filled a long felt need of the clergy. One of the earlier vestries was where the organ is now situated, and in that area is an ancient tomb of a Thomas Clerks (1663). The connection of the village and Southam is quite strong.

Both the carillon (1724) and organ (1899) came from Southam; and in our researches there seems to be a number of references to this nearby town which over the centuries has known better times.

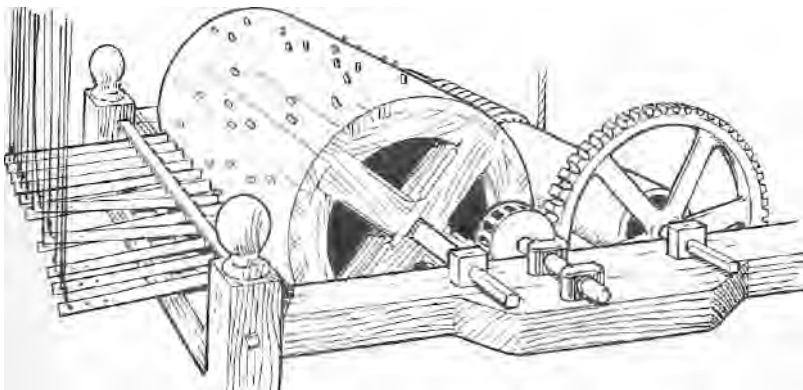
Of the very many vicars at Willoughby (listed elsewhere) the best known locally was Dr. Nathaniel Bridges incumbent (1791-1834).

Dr. Bridges was, at the time, Vicar of Willoughby, Rector of Hatton and lecturer of the largest parish in England, St. Mary Redcliffe, Bristol. During his enforced absences the clerical duties were performed by Rev'd James Chambers, Curate, who also lived at the residence of Dr. Bridges where "he received a limited number of gentlemen to educate".

We know the famous doctor lived "next the High Road" in a somewhat palatial residence known as Willoughby Lodge, erected about 1794 on the site of Hayward Lodge". Dr. Bridges' eloquence was so great that people flocked to hear him from the surrounding area. The seating in the church was not adequate and so, following an appeal, money was raised to build a gallery. Traces of this gallery can still be seen at either side of the bell ringing chamber. The timber screens now dividing the body of the church from the ringing chamber and screening the organ came from this gallery when it was removed in 1875 after a period of some 20 years of use by minstrels who played stringed instruments to accompany hymns.

The churchyard was enlarged in 1899.

There are a number of memorials in the church which take the form of stone tablets, but probably the two most notable are the stained glass window in the south aisle a "Thanksgiving for Victory", Great War 1914-18, which apparently cost £100 in 1919, and the Roll of Honour. Externally an electric clock was installed in 1947 as a memorial to those who fell in the 1939-45 war. This is a public clock and is maintained by the Parish Council. The memorial fund (1945-46) also provided four wayside seats dedicated in 1955 and an official Roll of honour, which is displayed in the Village Hall.



*7-he Carillon.*

In more recent times, mains water and electricity have been supplied to the church and the main entrance path tarmacadamed.

A number of major renovations have been carried out: Nave roof completely tiled (1963), old and rotten pews were removed and baptistry created (1964), the tower roof completely renewed (1987) "organ" window refurbished (1989). Monies raised during the Silver Jubilee celebrations (1977) were used to erect a church lychgate which was dedicated on 29th July 1979 by Rev. Gerald Knight (a previous incumbent).



*Vicarage.*

1780-1980.



*Vicarage.*

1980-

## VICARS

1311	Henry Trunket	1665	George Beale
1312	William Alspath	1682	John Randolph
1348	William Pondere	1685	Chas Hawks
1388	John de Gapsyndon	1689	Richard Clarke
1417	William Bartlot	1701	Thomas Yalder
1431	Michael James	1709	William Turton
1431	\William Pygete	1715	Robert Merchant
1436	John Mervyn	1736	Chas. Trimnel
1438	John Reedhull	1764	Henry l lomer
1443	William Thomcsone	1791	Nathaniel Bridges ( <i>Curate Chambers</i> )
1468	Ralph Cross	1834	Richard Tawney
1470	William Thomson	1849	Thomas H. Whorwood
1480	Thomas Farndon	1884	C. H. Deane
1505	Richard Stokesely	1906	Watson Failes
	<i>Bishop of London (1530). Sacrificed 300+ heretics (Protestants) in 1536.</i>	1913	H. Trethewv
1521	William Humphrey	1929	G. E. M. Tongc
1547	Thomas Gardiner	1937	E. D. Rennison
	<i>Catholic to Protestant</i>	1946	J. B. Sneddon
1562	Thomas Hancock	1953	Herbert Hill
1578	Gideon Hancock	19.57	Alan Barham
1602	Robert Wilton	1973	Gerald Knight
1621	Henry Clarke	1980	Douglas Pharaoh
1635	Henry Bold	1985	Jonathan Merrett
		1988	Tony Hobson

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## CHAPTER FOUR

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### FORMER INHABITANTS

We felt that no book would be complete without mention of people who lived here and made impact in various ways. The following are some of these people. Ma<sup>y</sup> be there are many more. If we have forgotten some it is not by design but a line has to be drawn somewhere.

**A. J. Lowke.** B<sup>y</sup> nature a farmer, he started off as farm manager. Later on he took on the Olde Farm off Woolcott Road. After a time he moved to Gate Farm, a place he had to leave due to financial difficulties. He then lived in a small place opposite the church in an idyllic setting. Then later he moved into the middle of the village. He eventually died in St. Luke's Hospital in 1957. He was a keen worker for the village, being a school manager, a trustee and a very keen churchman.

**C. J. Jarvis.** Charlie must have been one of the best known and liked in the village. A Dr. Barnardo's lad, C. of E. waif, he came to live at the Vicarage with the Rev. T'rethcwy. Living as and where he did he was a very regular attender at the church. He worked tremendou<sup>sly</sup> hard keeping the grounds and garden of the Vicarage in wonderful order. Despite his hard work at the Vicarage he could always find time to help others. If an<sup>y</sup> one was in need of help the phrase was "send for Charlie". I le was a keen cricketer and was groundsman for 39 years where his knowled<sup>ge</sup> was unsurpassed. I le was always called on to dig the graves, also to mow the churchyard. He was ver<sup>y</sup> high-spirited and jolly so that when he set up making things of fretwork at the Vicarage nearly all the boys turned up to be amused b<sup>y</sup> Charlie. They played games of pontoon for matches while eatin<sup>g</sup> roast potatoes from the lovely fire he alwa<sup>y</sup>s kept. After his marriage to Hilda Hancock he moved to a house opposite the Chapel. He then worked in Rugby for a stonemason, and later joined the Fire Service from which he was called to do dut<sup>y</sup> at Coventry in 1940-41. He also worked at Gilberts, making footballs. He led a colourful life and was sadly missed when he died in 1983 aged 79.

**Mr. W. G. Re<sup>y</sup>nolds.** Living in the house now called "Barrowfield", Mr. Re<sup>y</sup>nolds was the village carpenter and undertaker. He combined the business with running the Post Office which included taking in and delivering of telegrams to Willoughby and Grandborough. Mr. Reynolds was organist and choirmaster at the church for many years, having 10 or 11 boys under his control.

**J. H. Hall.** Jim worked on the farm for the Ivens at Ivy **House** for many years and at one time combined his farm work with the job of village milkman. He was a splendid shot with a gun. A keen cricketer, he was a good howler, taking many wickets and always able to keep excellent line and length. He kept goal at football where he was quite outstandin<sup>g</sup>. On leaving the farm he was for a time steward for the Dunchurch and Thurlaston Club. He then worked for the A.E.I. at Rugby until he retired.

**G. Palmer.** A native of Braunston. George came to Willoughby on his marriage to "Kit" Hall. A very likeable person, George was always good company, being ver<sup>y</sup> keen on football, both on and off the field. He worked for a car firm in Coventry for a while, having to c<sup>ycle</sup> there and back each day which made it a hard day. He then moved on to the Wagon Works in Rugby. "Phis job too was very trying. George then undertook to deliver the post from Willoughby to Grandborough and Sawbridge. Having to do this in all weathers, on a heavy cycle proved too much so that he suffered a heart attack which caused his death.

**John Davenport.** John was a marvellous carpenter, although chiefly remembered for making his own coffin. He was very good to all children and was their great favourite. He used to make wooden tops for them and would mend their penknives and other toys. He was greatly respected by his fellow villagers and he had a son Fred who served in the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War. He too was a carpenter and was adept at mending clocks and watches.

## LARGE FAMILIES

Situated at the lower end of Lower Street was a cob cottage, now improved and called Rosebud Cottage. There lived the *Brown family*, consisting of parents Fred and Malvena and children Florrie, Millie, Clarence, Harvey, Dolly, George, Edith, Jenny, Connie, Dennis, Bert and Kathleen. Fred worked as a farm labourer at Ellard's (Home Farm). Mrs. Brown had to work hard at laundry work to sustain such a large family.

**The Isom Family.** Lived in a semi-detached house in Lower Street. Tom and Mary Ann had a family of eight. The children were Cis, Tom, Bill, Jack, Lily, Val, Jenny, and Bertha. As the father, Tom, was a semi-invalid, Mary Ann took in laundry and was caretaker at the school. Tom, Bill and Jack were members of the football team. Jack was also a member of the cricket team. Tom and Bill served in the Army in the First World War. Bill later emigrated to Australia. Tom moved to Braunston where he was postman for many years. Bertha was a keen hockey player. She too moved to Braunston.

**The Quinnes.** John Quinney married Sarah Jane Packer in the year 1892. John and Sarah had a family of ten, seven sons and three daughters, namely John, Sarah, Thomas, William, Beatrice, James, Frank, Rachel, Alfred and Frederick. The three older sons, Herbert, Thomas and William served in the Army in the Great War of 1914-18. All the sons were very keen and played cricket and football for many local teams. John and Sara, when first married, lived in the old Navigation Cottage. Later they moved to a cottage at Pie Court. John was employed in the building of the Great Central Railway and station at Willoughby.

**The Halls.** Annie Mary Hall, daughter of the Ivens of Ivy House Farm, married Henry Hall who then farmed at Barby Lodge Farm, in Willoughby parish. The couple came to live in Willoughby after three sons and a daughter had been born at Barby Lodge Farm. Henry Hall then went to work as a casemaker at **the B.T.H.** Six more children were born at Rose Cottage in Willoughby, five girls and another son. The three eldest sons, Percy, Frank and Leonard went to France with the British Army in the First World War. Percy and Frank returned unscathed but Len lost his leg above the knee. During the Great War, the family were largely self-supporting with hens and ducks at the back door, a very good garden and a pig in the sty. Rabbits and other game also helped to fill the family larder. Annie Hall devoted herself to the upbringing of her large family but still involved herself with village life and with the life of the church. She had a helping hand for everybody who needed one and the family, when they grew up, took an active part in village affairs. Frank Hall was Clerk to the Parish Council for some years. The complete family of sons and daughters in order of ages was Frank, Percy, Leonard, Mabel, Ethel, Kate, Marjorie, James, Annie May and Alice Marian. Just twenty years separated the eldest from the youngest. All the daughters but one married and lived in Willoughby and so did their brother Jim. Many of their children and grandchildren live in the village today and contribute to its life.



Church View, Lower Street,

1920.

The Hancock **Family**. The family of Mr. and Mrs. James Hancock lived at Church View. It consisted of Cyril, Fred, George and Albert the sons, Hilda, Ivy and Alice the daughters. A very close-knit family, they all were extremely proud of their village. All of them were keen and regular churchgoers, being members of the choir as all had splendid voices. Jim Hancock and Fred, George and Albert his sons were church bell-ringers too, and members of the Peterborough Guild. To enable the bells to be rung they had to be restored, then reining in 1926. The Hancocks were very largely responsible for this being done. They were also talented handbell ringers and were often in demand to perform at concerts and socials. Keen to help others, Mr. and Mrs. Hancock ran a Sick and Dividend Club where people paid in a sum each week and if sick were able to draw from the club. If any money was left, it was divided between the members at Christmas. They also ran a Coal Club along with Cyril. Again members could pay in each week and coal was bought in bulk, delivered to the railway station and then distributed to members according to their credit. Fred and George were members of the Charity Trustees, also founder members of the Village Hall. All the daughters were active in the Women's Institute, Alice for a time being the Secretary. Fred, George and Albert were keen and able sportsmen, playing cricket, tennis and football with distinction. This family certainly made an impact on life in Willoughby.

The Biggs Family. Fred and Annie had a family of seven children, Enid, Len, Jack, Meryl, Ivor, Annie and Sadie. Fred was a plate-layer on the railway at Willoughby. He was also a bell-ringer and a very good darts player. For many years, he was a member of the Rose Inn darts team. He also distributed the Sunday newspapers. Leonard was a member of the armed forces in the First World War. Jack worked for Mr. Thompson, the local baker. Ivor belonged to the village cricket and football teams. Annie (Nan) married Cecil Brittain who was Clerk to the Parish Council, carrying out his duties in a most responsible way until his premature death. Meryl was wife to Bill Webber who was chauffeur at Willoughby House. Enid married Fred Bliss. He was responsible for the installation of the coloured window in the church tower. Sadie married Bob Davies who was also Clerk to the Parish Council and member of the forces in World War Two. Altogether, they were a most respected family.

## CHAPTER FIVE

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### THE FARMS

#### Manor Farm

For many years Manor Farm was held by the Johnson family. This was the largest in the parish. Mr. J. B. Johnson had two sons and two daughters. On the death of J. B. the farm passed on to the elder son William; second son Thomas left for another district. The farm was largely pasture but had two or three arable fields. William Johnson was the first in the parish to introduce the tractor. Prior to this the work was done by horses. Several men were employed; one, a Mr. Hollick, had charge of the horses. On William Johnson's retirement to live at Stroud, the farm was taken by Mr. Walter Heckford. Among other enterprises Mr. Heckford ran a dairy herd and many sheep. During the first war Mr. Heckford was riding instructor at Weedon Equestrian School. His love of horses prompted him to hunt with local packs. He was a fearless rider. Walter was always interested in village affairs, being a churchwarden and charity trustee. In 1952 Mr. Heckford bought the farm from Magdalen College, Oxford, who at that time sold all their property interests in Willoughby. On the death of Walter the farm passed on to his son John. He was a good farmer but through ill health had to limit his activities and pass the farm on to Richard, who holds it at the present time (1989).

#### Bath Farm

Bath Farm was so named because half of it was once owned by Willoughby House which was a Spa Bath (salt waters still remain there). Consisting of 105 acres it was rented by the Hall family from 1899 until 1952 when John Hall bought the farm from Magdalen College. At one time it was the only farm with arable land apart from the Manor. Albert Hall's family consisted of Clement, Ella and John. Clement left the farm to go elsewhere. On the death of Albert, John took over the farm until he died while still young. The farm was then bought by Henry Nicholls who then sold it away in smaller parts.

#### White House Farm

This farm was one of the farms in private ownership. Once owned by a Mr. Williams it then passed on to Mr. Joseph Green. Then Messrs. John and William Harding took it over.

On the Hardings' retirement it was bought by Mr. Stearn. On Mr. Stearn's death David, his son, carried it on and is farming it to this day (1989).

#### Gate Farm

This was once farmed by Mrs. Cowley. It then passed on to Mrs. S. Smith who had worked for her. Mr. Lowke then took on the tenancy, but after his financial failure in 1936 it was taken by Mr. G. Hobbs who then bought it from Magdalen College in 1952. The farm then passed on to son and daughter, Roland and Betty, who are still farming it (1989).

#### Willoughby Lodge Farm

Tom Dodd started as a farmer at a farm almost opposite the church and next door to Ivy House which, at that time, was occupied by the Ivens family. Previously he had worked for Mr. Johnson who farmed the Manor Farm. The farmhouse was very old with oak beams and cob walls. It became very dilapidated and was, unfortunately, condemned. The Dodd family then moved to Willoughby Lodge Farm, Barby. There were three sons, Cyril, Sid and Maurice and four daughters, Agnes, Teresa, Ada and Sybil. Cyril became the village baker, Maurice moved away and Sid, who took over Lodge Farm from his father, bought it from Magdalen College. When Sid retired the farm was bought by Mr. Nicholls.



## College Farm

Previously occupied by the Cowley family, College Farm was taken over by Mr. J. B. Collett in 1903. There were four sons, Murray, Cyril, Roland and Basil and one daughter, Marjorie. All the sons went into farming on their own account but Mr. Collett continued farming at College Farm until 1933, when he retired to Crick. It is a matter of interest that Basil's son, Gordon, became a council representative for this area on both the borough and county councils.

The Colletts were succeeded at College Farm by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas and their family. They had a son, Richard, and two daughters, Eileen and Dorothy. They were followed by Mr. Skyrme and his sister. The sister died after some Years at the farm and when Mr. Skyrme died the property was sold. The farmhouse is now a private house belongin<sup>g</sup> to Mr. Richardson and new houses were built on part of the farmyard and on the tennis court.



*Lower Street,*

1932.

## Ivy House Farm

Ivy House Farm was one of the Willoughby farms owned by Magdalen College, Oxford. It was farmed b<sup>y</sup> William and Frank Ivens whose father had been the tenant before them. William Ivens was for many <sup>y</sup>ears church warden, a charity trustee and correspondent for the School Managers. Both brothers played cricket along with many of the other farmers at that time. Although both were interested in village affairs, Frank's activities were curtailed when he became a semi-invalid. After William's death the farm was run for a time b<sup>y</sup> Frank and when he died, soon after William, the farm was taken over by their widows. It then passed on to Sidney George, William's son. In 1952 the college sold Ivy House Farm to William Johnson of Market Deeping, an uncle of Sidney Ivens. Sidney farmed as tenant until 1974 when, on William Johnson's death, the holding was split up and sold.

## CHAPTER SIX

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### THE CHARITY

The full account of the Willoughby Charity could span many pages of this booklet. This mini-account is but a summary of the official village archives held by the Willoughby Society.

The Charity was founded in 1437 by Margaret Hayward entrusting the proceeds of investment in lands (some £20) toward:

- (i) The repair of the Church of Willoughby
- ii) Payment of the Fifteenths (feudal system).
- iii) Relief of the poor of Willoughby
- iv) Buying of armour and setting forth soldiers.
- (v) Mending of causeways and highways in Willoughby.
- (vi) Repairing of Sawbridge bridge in Willoughby.

Since 1437 the Charity investments have been added to on a number of occasions but the subsequent proceeds have all been spent on one or more of the six original benefactions.

The principal founders, along with Margaret Hayward (1437), were William Flavell (1496), and John Brooke (1536), all of whom appointed trustees to administer their wishes. For 170 years the Charity was well organised but in 1611 a commission of charitable uses, the forerunner of the Charity Commission, found at a Court of Enquiry that there had been a breach of trust of the Trustees in the leasing of trust property. The outcome was that the Commission decreed that 7x named trustees renounce their office to be replaced by 10x trustees appointed by the Commission.

Further bequests were made by Geo. Watson (1674), and Bridget Freemantle (1773), but the 1611 constitution remained unaltered for 200 years and the Charity undoubtedly prospered. In 1760 the income being £117 but by 1812 it had risen to £515.

In 1816 a school and schoolhouse were built at a cost of £430 and a schoolmaster and mistress were housed rent-free at a salary of £40 per annum. In the same year over £350 was paid out to other beneficiaries. It was becoming a very wealthy charity.

All was well until 1831 when a most infamous piece of Willoughby history occurred. "There arose a difference of opinion among the trustees over the qualifications and character of William Wilkinson, the schoolmaster, as a result of which some of the trustees took the law into their own hands and turned the schoolmaster, his family, his furniture and belongings into the street".

The background to this was the serving of 3x separate "six months' notices to quit" all of which had been ignored. Obviously the trustees were dissatisfied with this man's performance but they did not know, or want to know, how to set about ridding themselves of William Wilkinson other than to take the law into their own hands. The result of this illegal act was High Court action where the costs and damages amounted to £2,700. The trustees were ordered to raise a mortgage to cover this sum and to take £108 per year out of Charity income to pay the interest and a further £50 p.a. to cover for investment to redeem the mortgage. This ultimately took 87 years to achieve by 19th April 1918.

Following this distressing and ruinous episode, William Wilkinson was reinstated and served until 1839 in the position of headmaster. In the High Court summing-up, the Judge pronounced that only two of the former trustees were fit and proper persons to remain in office, William Crupper and John Malin. A Thomas Hancock had died during the proceedings. The remaining six trustees were relieved of office and all were declared the latter-day equivalent of bankrupt!

The revised trust deed of 1832 then appointed six local clergymen and three landowners to form a board of trustees. They and their successors served until 1907 when the present system of nominated trustees came into being. The Charity has been a prodigious benefactor to the village and surrounding area for many years. There are references 400 years ago to maintenance of the Sawbridge bridge which gives access to the village from the south west over the river Learn.

In May 1857 there was a £10 grant toward the culverting and making of a new footpath to the church. Could this be the Brooks Close footpath to the church with access to Manor Farm?

In 1907 the Charity was responsible for the village lamplighter being employed for £9.10 shillings per annum. This practice went on until 1939. In October 1858 charity allotments were allocated with some quite bizarre rules:

- 1). Each tenant shall attend a place of worship at least once every Sunday and shall not work on his land at all that day.
- 2). That if any tenant shall be detected in an act of dishonesty or shall be a drunkard or a frequenter of public houses and persists in such habits after admonition he shall not be allowed to rent his allotment after the end of the year.
- 3). All allotments to be cultivated by spade and husbandry alone.

The maintenance of the school was taken over by Warwickshire County Council in 1948 but the upkeep of the schoolhouse building was a considerable drain on the charity funds to such a degree that in 1960 a sum of £2,800 was removed from the main charity fund to form an entirely separate charity — Willoughby Educational Foundation — the purpose of which, together with a rent from the property, was:

- (i) Upkeep of schoolhouse buildings.
- (ii) Assistance with or toward the education of young village persons under the age of 25 years.

This only worked moderately well because the outgoings on (i) did not allow for (ii) to work properly.

In 1977 the school was closed and over the course of some 12 months all avenues were explored as to how best to utilise the building but, with some reluctance and with Charity Commission approval, the school was sold in November 1978, the funds being reserved and invested into the Charities Official Investment Fund (C.O.I.F.).

After much negotiation by the trustees the Charity Commission refused permission for any Foundation Funds to be used on the essential modernisation of School House and again, reluctantly, the trustees decided to sell the house to the sitting tenant. Proceeds went to C.O.I.F., building a sizeable share portfolio.

In financial terms, the future of the Charity and the Foundation is assured. At some time a re-amalgamation (pre-1960) may be likely and provide even more funds per annum for local use.

To summarise — All cottages and buildings previously owned have been sold, leaving 2x fields of grass-keeping in Kytes Hardwick, providing income and the amenity land very appropriately in the centre of Willoughby. By comparison with other county charities, Willoughby is relatively wealthy. The beneficiaries must be residents of the parish, and can benefit as a body, i.e. the Church or Village Hall or as individuals, i.e. relief in need or educational pursuits.

The unfortunate stigma attached to the word "charity" over the years is fading and village inhabitants are using the facility for the purposes to which it was originally assigned so very long ago.

# APPENDIX

## WILLOUGHBY CHARITY

TOTAL EXPENSES FOR TWELVE YEARS

FROM 1815 to 1826

	L.	s.	d.
Church .....	463	.	91/2
Churchwardens .....	203	17	5
Road repairs	243	11	2
Repairs and buildings	507	18	81/2
Schoolmaster's salary .....	380	0	0
Poor's rent paid .....	695	8	3
Weekly pensions .....	789	13	6
Monies going to service .....	8	10	0
Casual gifts .....	867	0	01/2
Settling apprentices .....	80	0	0
Coal expenses	390	11	51/2
Law expenses .....	74	14	6
Paid for interest .....	201	11	71/2
Rent-clay expenses .....	107	10	rh
Apothecaries ditto .....	49	0	6
School-hooks ditto .....	30	0	0
School erecting .....	430	0	0
Attending poor women .....	5	15	6
	<u>£5.528</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>81/2</u>
Yearly average .	<u>£460</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>1 1/2</u>

An Account of the Expenditure of the Proceeds arising from the Willoughby Charity for Twelve Years.

Years.	Repairs of Church.			Church-wardens' acct.			Road acct.			Repairs of Houses.			School Master's Salary.			Paid for Rents.			Weekly Pensions			Gifts going to Service.		
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.
1815	24	10	6	16	4	9	10	0	0	9	10	5	Erected 1816	60	0	0								
1816	99	6	4	16	7	2	53	11	2	16	11	3	40	0	0	47	18	3						
1817	15	11	6	18	7	1 1/2				128	2	5	40	0	0	57	15	6	22	8	(1)	1	0	0
1818				18	15	11 1/2	20	0	0	40	4	10	40	0	0	64	9	6	71	16	6			
1819	105	4	7	30	8	7 1/2	20	0	0	28	18	10	40	0	0	63	18	6	44	16	0			
1820	100	13	4 1/2	13	13	2				2	18	3	40	0	0	61	14	6	107	4	0			
1821	3	7	0	19	14	1	20	0	0				40	0	0	63	19	6	95	11	0			
1822	20	16	0	18	12	6	20	(1)	(1)	0	18	10	40	11	0	60	16	6	87	12	0	1	0	0
1823	3	5	6	15	13	3 1/2	40	0	0	236	8	10 1/2	40	(1)	0	63	19	6	107	18	0	1	10	0
1824	82	8	0	19	19	11	20	0	(1)	7	3	(1)	40	0	0	57	8	0	104	15	0	2	10	0
1825				16	10	8	20	0	(1)	17	4	9	10	0	0	28	16	0	102	2	0	1	1(1)	(1)
1826							20	0	0	18	17	3	20	0	0	64	12	6	45	11	(1)	1	0	0
Average for year	463	2	9 1/2	203	17	5	243	11	2	507	18	8 1/2	380	0	0	695	8	3	789	13	6	8	10	0
	30	11	10 1/4	16	19	9 1/4	20	5	11 1/2	42	6	1 1/4	31	13	4	57	19	0 1/2	65	16	1 1/2	0	44	2

Account (continued).

Years.	Casual Gifts.			Expenses with Apprentices.			Expenses of Coals.			Law Expenses.			Interest Charges.			Rent-day Expenses.			Apothecary's Hill.			Attending Poor Women			
	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	£.	s.	d.	
1815	12h	19	9				40	19	0						6	16	4	12	0	0					
1816	108	3	8				25	(1)					19	11	0	3	(1)	6							
(817	54	11	3				27	19	8	2	13	6	10	0	0	14	11	7	22	4	0				
1818	176	12	3	10	0	(1)	50	5	0				15	0	0	9	16	6	6	9	6				
1819	66	16	2 1/2	10	0	0	34	17	6				15	0	0	10	6	10							
1820	47	11	0				35	8	0	1.	0		15	0	0	7	14	5	8	7	0				
1821	78	0					15	11	3				20	6	1	9	11	0							
1822	69	7	5	10	0	0	28	16	3				25	5	3	8	17	8							
1823	63	2	4				34	8	6 1/2				23	1	10 1/2	9	14	10							
1824	35	19	10				36	8	3	3	6	3	24	19	6	11	4	1							
1825	39	17	4	5)	(1)	0	42	(1)	0				23	8	11	10	14	0							
1826							18	18	(1)	46	11	11	10	0	(1)	5	2	6					5	15	6
Average for year	867	0	0 1/2	80	0	0	390	11	5 1/2	58	7	8	201	11	7 1/2	107	10	3	49	0	6	5	15	6	
	72	8	0	6	13	4	32	10	11 1/2	4	17	3 1/2	16	15	11 1/2	8	15	2 1/2	49	0	6	5	15	6	

## CHAPTER SEVEN

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### ENCLOSURE OF THE PARISH OF WILLOUGHBY

The greater part of the parish of Willoughby remained in an unenclosed state till the year 1758, when an act of parliament was procured for the purpose of enclosing the same. The parish was at that time reputed to consist of 36 yard lands, and to contain about 1500 acres; but, on being admeasured soon after, for the purpose of being divided, pursuant to the award of the Commissioners, it was found to contain 1704 acres, 2 rods and 2 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> perches. The expenses of the enclosure amounted to £8,891. 19s. 7d. The award bears date the 8th March, 1760, and was enrolled by the clerk of the peace for the county of Warwick, the 8th day of June, 1760.

The allotments made b<sup>y</sup> the Commissioners were as follow:

	A.	R.	P.
To the President and Scholars of Magdalen College, Oxford; and unto Sarah, Mary, and Honora Miers, lessees under the said College, in lieu of 6 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> yard lands, 3-4ths, and 1-6th, according to their respective estates .....	205	3	26
To the said President and Scholars, in lieu of the impropriate tithes yearly arising out of the 6 yard lands, 3-4ths, and 1-8th part of a yard land .....	37	0	9
To the said President and Scholars, in lieu of the impropriate tithes of corn and grain arising from all the other common fields .	173	1	16
To the Rev. Henry Homer, vicar, in lieu of 1/4 of a <sup>y</sup> ard glebeland, and of a piece of meadow ground, and of all vicarial and small tithes .....	90	0	36
To the Trustees of the Willoughby Charity land .....	83	2	4
To William Caldecott, in different allotments .....	356	2	16
To John Henry Thirsby, Esq. ....	27	1	28
To Thomas Goode .....	17	0	5

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	A.	R.	P.
To Moses Cowley .....	70	0	18
To Sarah Groves .....	18	3	39
To Marmaduke Fawkes .....	25	3	19
To Thomas Watson .....	30	3	7
<b>To</b> Robert Marriott .....	18	0	37
To Jonathan Atkins .....	9	3	25
To Richard Shaw .....	8	2	22
To Thomas Gilbert .....	7	0	16
To James Wigley, Esq .....	4	2	38
To John Enoch .....	2	2	23
To Brid <sup>g</sup> et Freemantle .....	3	3	24
To Timoth <sup>y</sup> Ward .....	2	1	17
To John Con <sup>g</sup> reve .....	4	3	26
To John Spencer .....	1	0	34
To Thomas Burgh .....	3	3	27
To John Clarke' the elder, Robert Brown, and John Clarke the younger, Esqs .....	1	2	5
To Trustees of the parish of Barby .....	1	0	27
To the President and Scholars of Magdalen College, and William			

Marriott, according to their respective estates and interests, being copyhold land held under the said President and Scholars . . . .	48	0	18
To the P. and S. and Mary Haynes, and Sir John Haynes (copyhold) .....	99	0	3
To the P. & S. & Thomas Smith (copyhold) .....	11	0	0
To the P. & S. & Jonathan Jephcott (copyhold) .....	31	2	29
To the P. & S. & Moses Cowle <sup>y</sup> (copyhold) .....	62	1	15
To the P. & S. & John Powell (copyhold) .....	22	1	36
To the P. & S. & Elizabeth Malin (copyhold) .....	16	3	37
To the P. & S. & John Malin (copyhold) .....	39	0	32
To the P. & S. & Edward Collins (copyhold) .....	14	0	22
To the P. & S. & John Oncly (copyhold) .....	17	3	22
To the P. & S. & Thomas Watson (copyhold) .....	42	3	38
To the P. & S. & Thos. Gee (copyhold) .....	19	2	8

It appears, from the foregoing account, that about one fourth of the lordship of Willoughby consists of copyhold land, held under the President and Scholars of Magdalen College, Oxford. This tenure is one of the few remnants we have now existing of the feudal system, which flourished without intermission from the reign of William I, to the middle of the seventeenth century; for in 1660, when all the oppressive services and military tenures arising out of this system were abolished by act of parliament, copyhold tenures, and the honorar<sup>y</sup> services of grand scireanty, were excepted from<sup>y</sup>the general extermination.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

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### SCHOOL AND SCHOOL HOUSE

As a direct result of the wealth contained in the Willoughby Charity in the 18th and 19th century, a school was erected in 1816 for the education of boys and girls of the poor and a master and mistress appointed with a salary of £40.00 per annum, with the use of the adjacent school house to reside in. The building cost £430.00. It would appear that the existing school house had very much the same frontal elevation in those days, with two classrooms which were originally much the same size. Standing facing the front door of the school house, the schoolroom for the boys was that on the left hand side and the schoolroom for the girls that on the right hand side. Unfortunately the older minute books of the Charity Trustees are not available but there is a dramatic entry in the beginning of the Charity Trustees' minutes of 1842 which indicates that "at a meeting of the Trustees of the Willoughby Charity held in the school on Monday, December 5th, 1842, Mr. William Cleaver and his wife, the school master and mistress — received notice to quit the school on 25th December". This was signed by five Trustees and it does strike one as a little uncharitable to ask people to quit the premises on Christmas Day.

The school seems to have carried on ver<sup>y</sup> much in this wa<sup>y</sup> until a meeting held on 23rd May, 1887, when "The vicar laid before the Trustees a plan for the addition of an infants' schoolroom to the old boys' schoolroom in the same width by fifteen foot long to be separated from the original schoolroom by folding doors with a porch at the back to cover the entrance doors to both rooms" and asked their consent to his carrying out this plan if he could manage to raise the requisite funds (£70) which was granted on the understanding that no help was to be expected from the Charity. He stated that the addition was much needed to enable the master to supervise the infants' school as required by Her Majesty's Inspectors and also to give better accommodation for the parish meetings.

In the following meeting which was held in August 1887, the following passage appears:

"The vicar informed the Trustees with much pleasure that he had succeeded in raising the £70 required to carry out the addition to the schoolroom and laid the subscription list on the table together with the plans and specification, prepared by Mr. J. Kelly of Dunchurch, and resolved that the Trustees of the Willoughby Charity desired to record their sincere thanks to the President and Fellows of Magdalen College, Oxford, for the liberal donation of £50 and to the other subscribers who had kindl<sup>y</sup> contributed the remaining £20 required to build the new schoolroom for the infants." The College order was then read which stated that their donation of £50 was conditional of the old girls' schoolroom — at present occupied by the infants — being appropriated for use of the parish reading room. It was then resolved that the old girls' school, which will no longer be needed for the infants when the new classroom has been built, be henceforth appropriated rent free for the parish reading room and a copy of this reservation signed by the Chairman be forwarded to the Bursar, Magdalen College, for thanks from the Trustees of the Willoughby Charit<sup>y</sup> for the College's handsome donation.

The tender of Mr. Kell<sup>y</sup> to build the new schoolroom, according to plan and specification prepared by him for £70, was accepted, the work to be carried out during the ensuing holidai<sup>y</sup>s, as agreed by him.

At the meeting of the Trustees on 2nd February, 1888, the vicar laid on the table a statement of receipts and payments for the enlargement of the Willoughby school by the addition of the new classroom, showing a balance of £1.1s.6d. Therefore, the cost of this classroom was £68.18.6. By way of comparison it is interesting to observe that the lavatory block constructed in 1953 cost £550,



while the cost of the new kitchen for the school meals was considerable more, in fact nearly £1000.

In the minutes of the Trustees' meeting held on July 25th, 1891, held at 2.30 in the afternoon, incidentally, the Trustees considered a report from H.M. Inspector which was most unfavourable as regards the teaching at the school and it was resolved that Mr. Anson be invited to leave, but there is an addition to the minutes which reads as follows:-

"Resolved that in consideration of Mr. Anson's appeal to the Trustees signed by almost all the householders in the parish, the Trustees agree to allow him to retain the Mastership of Willoughby Charity School until 30th June next, but no longer under any circumstances, and this has been done to give him an opportunity of leaving with a better report and of improving his affairs.

The school was closed for three weeks in 1891 due to an epidemic of Scarletina during which all village children were confined to their homes. In the same year the school fee was abolished, the school being financed from charity funds with the assistance latterly from the Local Education Authority.

In 1930 the school was also closed for a time due to an outbreak of Smallpox at which time a number of school children were placed in isolation at St. Mary's Hospital, Harborough Magna.

It is interesting to learn that in May 1893 — the Trustees found themselves in trouble with the authorities. In the minutes of that meeting the Secretary read a letter from H.M. Inspector of Schools with special reference to structural alterations to the schoolroom and it was resolved that the vicar, Rev. C. H. Deane, be requested to see that the following alterations be carried out by Mr. Kelly, the builder. Firstly, three windows to be enlarged, secondly, an outer door to the porch be provided and, thirdly, new exit to the offices for the girls be constructed in the fowl house in the master's garden with a paved footway from the new exit to these offices. Further, the interior walls of the schoolrooms were to be lined with boarding up to the window sills and a paved footway to be made from the entrance gate to the porch. A new hearth stone to be provided in the infants' schoolroom fireplace — and so on. It is interesting to record that during the 1960's the Trustees were still concerned with these paved pathways which reared their ugly heads as far back as 1893.

The half yearly meeting in May 1895 was held at the Vicarage and on this occasion the following passage appears:-

"It was proposed by the vicar that a Committee of Managers of the school be appointed to consist of the vicar, two churchwardens, two parishioners who must be church people and parents of children at the school, in order that the Trustees should pay over to them funds necessary for carrying on the school. This was carried unanimously". This really was the basis of the Foundation Managers and this carried on until 1960 when the Charity was reorganised and the school was handed over to the Educational Foundation Trustees.

In 1900 or thereabouts — the name of the Rev. Sitwell begins to appear — presumably this is the Sitwell family residing at Leamington Hastings — and which family continued to reside there until 1961.

A meeting was held at the Vicarage on Friday, August 28th, 1891, at which a letter was read from the Education Department in Whitehall asking to be informed as soon as possible whether the Fee Grant of 10/- a head on the average attendance for the past year would be accepted by the Willoughby Charity School. The Trustees at this time decided to accept this grant as from 1st September following. The vicar proposed, and it was agreed, that the school master would receive half of the fee grant in lieu of the school pence formally received by him. In August 1891, the vicar was requested to apply to training colleges to recommend a married master who must be a churchman able to play the harmonium in church — or to take such further steps as may be necessary to secure a sufficiently good school master and mistress at the same salaries as now given.

In January 1903. the Board of Education proposed the appointment of Foundation managers under the Education Act and it was resolved that Trustees consisting of the vicar and two churchwardens and one other trustee — being a member of the Church of England, be appointed Foundation Managers as required by the Act in place of the former committee of five named in resolution 7 of the Charity Trustees' meeting on January 26th, 1895. Those appointed were the Rev. C. H. Deane — the vicar, Mr. F. R. Times — vicar's churchwarden, Mr. M. J. Johnson — parish churchwarden and Mr. Ellard — one of the Trustees of the Charity, and all being members of the Church of England — They were to act as the Foundation Managers, and this was carried unanimously.

In 1903 a meeting was held on May 26th when a new roof for the schoolroom was discussed, at the same time a new porch was to be erected for the girlsroom and this work would be entrusted Mr. T. B. Hooper of Rugby and Kilsby — who was asked to draw plans and specifications for these modifications and to make a tender.

It seems that at this meeting, for the first time, a paid secretary for the Trustees and the school was appointed at £5 a year and this appointment was made nominating Mr. Holt, the new school master, for the post.

It was also reported at this meeting that the annual contribution from charity for the school was agreed with the County Council Board of Education at £62 a year. This was subsequently amended to £62.10.0, and in Ma<sup>y</sup> 1907 the Chairman informed the meeting that he had paid to the County Treasurer, the education endowment for two years to December 31st, 1909, amounting to £125, which he hoped would be applied towards the payment of the education rate for the parish of Willou<sup>gh</sup>by. No further reference to the school whatsoever is included in the minutes of the charities until 1928, when a report from the School Mana<sup>g</sup>ers to the effect that the<sup>y</sup> had been considering at their meeting in the evening the low rental paid by the County Education Authority for the school house. They had decided with the approval of the Trustees to apply for the rent to be raised as the rent paid at £6 per annum was, in their opinion, quite inadequate, to meet the cost of repairs, rates, taxes and so forth and a request was made that this rent should be increased to £10.

The Trustees in 1919 regarded seriously the running of the Willoughby school as a business proposition and there is rather an interesting mention in the minutes of the meeting on November 26th, 1889, wherein the vicar reported that some of the school children were very irregular in their attendance and it was resolved that children absent from school for more than a fortnight — except for illness — shall be struck off the register and only be re-admitted on payment of a fine of 6d. From 1906 until 1977 the management of the school was invested in the School Managers — but unfortunately the previous minute book of the Managers has not been located and the onl<sup>y</sup> minutes which we have commence in 1954.

Under the provision of the Education Act 1944, it is required that the school day begins with collective worship on the part of all the pupils in attendance at the school and all the pupils must be assembled for this, unless in the opinion of the Managers the school premises are such that makes this impracticable. If the parent of any pupil in attendance at the school requests that the pupil be excused from attendance at worship in the school, then until the practice is withdrawn, the pupil should be excused from such attendance.

At school Managers' meetings the report from the head teacher was essential, and in case of emergency a meeting of the Managers may be convened by any two or three of their number — but normall<sup>y</sup> the convening of the meetin<sup>g</sup>s is in the hands of the correspondent, in consultation, of course, with the Chairman.

The minutes of the proceedings of the Managers should be kept in a book provided for this purpose and this is open to inspection by the Education Authority.

In the case of the Willou<sup>gh</sup>by school there were two Foundation Managers, two from the Local Education Authority, and two from the Minor Authority — which in this instance is the church. The Foundation Managers alone were

responsible for all matters relating to the giving of denominational instructions in accordance with the trust deed.

The Education Act of 1944 laid down that every voluntary school shall be conducted in accordance with the rules of management made by the order of the Local Education Authority. If there is a vacancy for a head teacher, the vacant post must be advertised by the Local Education Authority and a short list draw up from the applications, in consultation with the Managers. The candidate will be interviewed by the appropriate sub-committee of the Local Education Authority<sup>y</sup> which recommend one person for appointment. The Managers are entitled to be present at the interview but not to vote.

At Willoughby school there was of course a head teacher and one full-time teacher and one person who was responsible for looking after the very young. There was non-teaching staff consisting of caretaker and kitchen staff.

As numbers of children dwindled during<sup>g</sup> the early<sup>y</sup> 1970's it became inevitable that the Willoughby school would ultimately close so, despite strong denials from the County Education Authorities during 1976, the closure was finally announced to take place at the completion of the summer term, July 1977.

After 161 years of its existence therefore the school closed its doors. All school buildings were transferred back to the Willoughby Educational Foundation and were subsequently sold for conversion into two private dwellings.

## WILLOUGHBY SCHOOL

### Headmasters and Headmistresses

1827-1839	William Wilkinson and Wife
1840-1842	William Cleaver and Wife
1843-1844	John Steane and Wife
1884-1886	Mrs Talbot
1886-1892	Edward Anson and Wife
1892-1897	C.J. Ballaster and Sister
1897-1900	S. W. Crump
1900-1902	Mrs. D. Burnham
1902-1910	Herbert Holt and Wife
1910-1928	Miss C. Brown
1928-1943	Mrs. M. Jackson
1943-1950	Miss F. Jackson
1950-1955	Mrs. P. B <sup>y</sup> water
1956-1957	Miss Buckle
1957-1977	Mrs. B. Green

### Termination

Left voluntarily
Dismissed
Retired
Left, ill health
Dismissed
Left voluntarily
Dismissed
Left, ill health
Retired
Deceased
Left voluntarily
Left voluntarily
Left voluntarily
Retired

Rules of Willoughby School drawn **up** by the Charity Trustees.  
8th December, 1843.

1. That no child be admitted having any infectious disease.
2. That no child be admitted under the age of five years, nor remain after sixteen.
3. That the children attend punctually, washed, combed, and clean with their hair cut short and without ornament.
4. That parents having one child at the school send a penny to the master every Monday morning, and having two or more children, an additional penny; and that no children be admitted into the school until that payment be made.
5. That no occasional absence of such a child or children exempt any parents from the payment of the weekly penny excepting on a plea sanctioned by the Trustees.
6. That children absenting themselves from the school without application to the master or mistress be not allowed to return without a re-admission according to rule 10.
7. That the hours of attendance in school be from nine to twelve in the morning and from two to five in the afternoon (except in the winter months when the school closes at four).
8. That every Saturday be a holiday and that there be four vacations in the year: a week each at Christmas, Easter, and Whitsuntide and three weeks during the harvest.
9. That every Sunda<sup>y</sup> the children be required to attend school at nine in the morning and two in the afternoon and to proceed from the school with the master and mistress to the morning and evening service at church.
10. That no child be admitted into the school without a ticket from the minister of the parish.
11. That all books and slates necessary for the school with the exception of copy books for writing, be fu'nished by the Trustees.
12. That children not observing the above rules be expelled from the school. Parents are particularly requested to hear their children, daily, repeat their morning and evening prayers.

## CHAPTER NINE

### COMMUNICATIONS

The very presence of Willoughby almost certainly owes its existence to the A45 trunk road as we know it today; previously known as the High Road, Coach Road, Turnpike Road, London Road or Great Chester Road. The surface of the road must have given a somewhat uncomfortable ride in the poorly sprung coaches of 17th and 18th centuries. Indeed the road was not surfaced with tarmac until 1911.

The two principal streets of the village are simply named Main and Lower and the country lanes leading from Lower Street are Moor Lane (the derivation of which seems only conjecture as over the moor between Willoughby and Sawbridge) and Woolscott Lane because it leads through the hamlet of Pye Court to the hamlet of Woolscott. Three areas of the village recently constructed have been named (i) College Road (1956) and (ii) Magdalen Road (1963), both names showing the obvious connection of the village with Magdalen College, Oxford; and (iii) Brooks Close (1964), houses being built on a field called Brooks Close, the site of a former manor house demolished in 1780. This was in all probability the original vicarage. There are a number of public footpaths in the parish crossing various fields. Only one of these paths has been metalled and asphalted, Brickhill Lane, which until 1939 was a gated road through to Woolscott Lane. The name Brickhill is derived from the adjacent field.

It is said that there actually was a brick works in the corner adjacent to Gate Farm. Later these workings became a large pond which was not filled in until 1974.

*Note:* From the time of the Enclosures Act 1758, all enclosed fields in our area were given "names", many being used for identification purposes today.

A footpath known locally as the "Shrubbery" has been asphalted in recent times but as it is not in any way enclosed it does receive the attentions of the local farm livestock.

Through the eastern boundary of the parish runs the Oxford Canal which was completed and officially opened in 1790, some 21 years after the Act of Parliament approving its construction.

The Navigation Wharf, as it became known, was a busy area housing kilns for producing lime, a coal wharf which promoted a flourishing coal delivery business and, in more recent times, moorage for boats. The Oxford Canal reaches Oxford and the Thames in the south and Hawkesbury Junction near Coventry in the north.

Only a matter of some 30 yards west of the canal, in the "navigation" area, ran the Great Central Railway which was opened in 1898 and closed in 1956. The "permanent way" or track was finally removed along with all buildings in 1966. In the space of seventy years it came and went! The London North Eastern or Great Central Line ran from Sheffield to Marblebone, London, and many notable passenger services travelled its length, probably the best known being the "Master Cutler". The last nostalgic steam train ran through Willoughby on 26th May, 1965, and was pulled by the historic steam locomotive 4472 Flying Scotsman, which was by then privately owned by a William Pegler.

The last two memorable remnants of the railway at Willoughby were:- (i) the arched viaduct (some 700 yards south of the site of the former station) which carried the line over the Leam Valley. In 1981 the viaduct was demolished. This in itself proved quite a feat as the entire structure was made of blue engineering bricks. (ii) the station master's house, which still stands today and is privately owned, forms part of the smallholding which utilises much of the remaining railway embankment.

## CHAPTER TEN

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### RAILWAY

The story of the railway at Willoughby is really quite sad. The line was brought into use on 25th July, 1898, with commercial coal traffic, and closed by the now famous "Beeching Axe" in 1956.

The Great Central, as it was called, was formally opened to passenger traffic on 9th March, 1899, when special guests from Manchester, Sheffield, and Nottingham were conveyed to Marylebone. London, for a special luncheon to mark the occasion.

Marylebone Station resembled a banquetting hall as the tracks between platforms had been boarded over to accommodate the 700x guests assembled. The Annesley to London section of the Great Central (which passed through Willoughby) was 98 miles long and the Act of Parliament authorising its construction was passed in March 1893.

The original plans for the railway involved cutting a swathe through the Nursery End of the Lords Cricket Ground, but the opposition to both this and a number of other classic features en-route caused the plans to be redrawn.

The 98 mile section was destined to cost ten million pounds and within its length there were some considerable feats of engineering!

In our area was the 600 foot girder bridge over the London and Western line at Rugby, the Willoughby viaduct over the River Learn and the 2997 yard long Catesby Tunnel.

The local station and goods yard provided employment for a number of Willoughby people in various capacities: signalman, station master, foreman, etc.

One of the best known local trains was the "Master Cutler", Sheffield to London direct, with limited stops, every weekday evening.

Local people used the service to Rugby and Leicester in particular as it was more convenient and cheaper than the Midland Red Bus service.

The line was far from profitable, however, and in 1956 passenger services ceased. Freight trains still used the line into the 1960's. The last train to run the track was No. 4472 "Flying Scotsman". The station buildings were demolished and removed together with "permanent way" in 1966.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### OXFORD CANAL AND NAVIGATION HOUSE

The Oxford canal is one of the earliest long route canals built in England. The other three are the Coventry canal, the Trent and Mersey and the Staffs and Worcester canals. The Act of Parliament approving its construction was obtained in 1769, only a year after that for the Coventry canal with which it now joins at Hawkesbury Junction some six miles out of Coventry. By 1778 the Oxford canal had only been constructed from Coventry to Banbury, some sixty-four miles. James Brindley was the engineer at first for all four canals but he was dismissed very early on by the Oxford canal directors, and he actually died in 1772.

All kinds of trouble delayed the completion of both the Oxford and Coventry canals but both were eventually completed in 1790 when the Oxford reached the town and the Thames and the Coventry reached Fradley, south of Lichfield and joined the Trent and Mersey canal there.

The buildings that we know as "The Navigation", the house and cottage, were in common ownership until they were sold separately in 1968. It was only at this date that the deeds of "The Cottage" were drawn separately but the deeds for "the House" existed in 1812, roughly twenty years after the canal was completed.

Prior to 1953 Navigation House was a canal-side public house and its sign with doggerel verse hangs in the British Waterways Museum at Stoke Bruerne (Northants). In the first half of this century it was one of a large number of houses owned by a Brackley and Northants firm of brewers who were later incorporated with the Chesham and Brackley<sup>y</sup> Breweries; these finally sold the whole property as late as 1959 to the proprietor of a Kenilworth Hotel for £1,700. This sale included over two acres of land. "Navigation Inn, the wharf, kilns, benevolence, stables, yards, gardens, orchards, outbuildings and cottages thereunto belonging". Looking through the deeds of the Cottage it is pretty clear that it was constructed, either at the time the house was built, or soon afterwards. It appears pretty certain that both were built where they are to serve the canal. The house was the inn for the boatmen and canal workers. The Cottage was mainly stabling for canal horses and horses concerned with carriage from the wharf. The kilns produced lime for the farmers round about and for building. The canal-side frontage provided mooring for boats and also a canal-side wharf.

The road in front of the properties gave immediate access from the canal to the local road system in any direction, an important consideration with slow-moving horse traffic.

We can be certain that the two properties were built by 1812 but it is likely that they may have been constructed twenty or even thirty years before this, while the canal itself was under construction or soon after it had been completed. The bricks used are far from being of uniform hardness. The roof pitch of the cottage has been raised and the roof was no doubt thatched.

The bricks used on the wharfage edge probably date from about 1850, at which time there was a tax on bricks. They are peculiarly large in size, perhaps to defeat the tax collector.

The site of lime kilns is marked on early Ordnance Survey maps.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

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### VILLAGE HALL

The Village Hall was built in 1933 and opened its doors to the public on Saturday, 21st October of that year.

Mr H. Smith was the original Secretary of the Hall Management Committee, and it would appear that the originator of a scheme for a new Village Hall was Mrs. Ella Tanser (nee Hall) who stated at a meeting held on 10th March, 1928, "that ways and means should be discussed for getting a Village Hall".

The architects were Willard, Son and Ellingham, Rugby, and the builder was J. B. Johnson.

The hall is a substantially built structure containing a main hall (40 feet by 25 feet) plus a stage and 2x changing rooms. In 1967 a major improvement was the addition of a committee room (21 by 14 feet) and improved toilet facilities for gentlemen, accessible from inside the hall. In 1984 a two phase development was commenced by the addition of a ladies' toilet block and a greatly enlarged kitchen with catering facilities. The second phase, completed in 1989, involved the extension of the main hall by the addition of a lounge area (40 feet by 17 feet) complete with a serving bar for refreshments.

The original hall (circa 1933) complete with internal furnishings cost £978, and at the time the hall was opened some £272 was still to be raised, but the raising of £706 during a particularly bad time (1928-33) nationally was a remarkable feat. The fund-raising in the village of Willoughby is legendary in the surrounding area. This has been proved again on behalf of the Village Hall, firstly in 1967, and again during the period 1982-1989 although on these latter occasions further financial grant assistance has been forthcoming from County and Borough Council funds.

Due principally to the Magdalen College, Oxford, ownership of most of the village, the ground on which the hall is situated was leasehold at the time of building. However, the freehold was purchased through the auspices of the College some fifteen years later in 1948.

The maintenance of the hall is vested in a Management Committee of sixteen persons (eight retire annually) who meet regularly — per the original trust deed, and administer all matters pertaining thereto. The position of main responsibility for the hall is of Hon. Secretary of which there have only been four, Bert Smith (1 year), Geo. Hancock (39 years), Fred Mitchell (5 years) and John Midwood (16 years) — 1989.

This continuity in office together with a policy of deliberately low hiring rates contributes greatly to the success of the hall.

It is the venue for all social functions of the village, and is used by all the local organisations including some from outside the parish.

The latest addition to the hall of a lounge area will, it is hoped, add to its attraction as a social venue, with the provision of a serving bar for all forms of refreshment thus avoiding the necessity for special table erection and dismantling.

With this new area came upholstered seating and a carpeted floor with direct access to the hall grounds for special outdoor events such as barbecues and summer fetes.

The hall committee are well satisfied with the improvements to the hall during the past twenty-one years and have made it into a true village centre which, with good housekeeping, will serve Willoughby into the foreseeable future.

The committee will, however, have to continue with fund-raising on an annual basis to provide those additional funds always required to maintain the property and keep in a good state of repair.



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

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### HOSTELRIES

#### The Four Crosses Inn

The Four Crosses public house closed in the mid 1960's as a cut back in financial terms by the owners, Phipps Brewery, upon the retirement of the landlady, Mrs. Griffiths.

The building was subsequentl<sup>y</sup> sold and used more recently as transport accommodation, together with two self-contained flats.

The present building is still decorated with "four crosses" externally and was built in 1900 as a replacement for the original Three Crosses which stood on the present site of the Four Crosses cottage built in 1971.

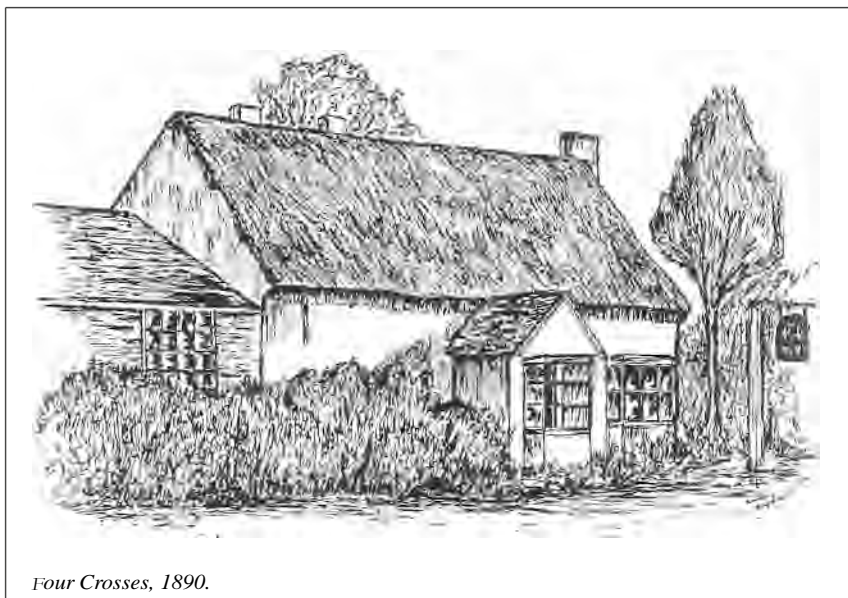
The "Three Crosses" was the very building in which Jonathan Swift, the English satirist lodged in 1725 and following an altercation with the landlady, scratched upon a window pane, using a diamond ring, this verse:-

"There are three crosses at <sup>y</sup>our door,  
hang up your wife and you'll count four."

The original pane of glass upon which the rhyme was etched was a soft yellow glass, and was removed from the window and became something of a museum piece in the 19th century, but its present whereabouts is unknown.

One of the more famous owners/landlords was William Crupper, the owner of the Willoughby saline baths (1824-1841) which stood on the opposite side of the present A45 road in the situation of "Tattle Bank" cottages.

There is now only one well head on this site and it is thought that the saline bath well was infilled as recentl<sup>y</sup> as 1987 — there were two brick-lined well shafts within six feet of each other and the entire site was surrounded by an iron railing fence. Within this area was a mud walled and brick building which was obviously the site of the original bath (1824) but upon the demise of the Willoughby baths, thought to have been around 1840, fell into disuse and was ultimatel<sup>y</sup> demolished.



*Four Crosses, 1890.*

### The Navigation Inn

The original "Navigation Inn" was built around 1790 to serve the needs of the men of the inland waterways', for accommodation and the inevitable jug of ale!

The area around the inn contained wharfage for lime and coal together with other agricultural supplies and was a positive hive of industry. The inn was owned by Chesham and Brackley Brewery who made a reasonable living from the proceeds as the "Navy" (its local name) was very popular during the 1940's when motor cars enabled town and city dwellers to explore the countryside.

The inn finally closed for business at Easter 1953 and after much planning as to future uses, etc., the property was sold into private ownership in 1959.

Successive owners have extended and enhanced the building into the present-day Navigation House. Its boundary, together with that of the adjacent Navigation Cottage, runs alongside the canal for a distance of some 200 yards.

### The New inn

Until around 1910 the present Gate Farm on the A45 junction with Brickhill Field Lane was a public house known as the New Inn. Its very positioning at the cross roads made it quite popular in coach<sup>g</sup> days as a secondary hostelry to the Four Crosses some 600<sup>y</sup> ards to the south.

It is thought that the New Inn was first leased before being purchased in the 1950's by the Hobley family whose son and daughter now operate a small farm.

### The Rose Inn

*Extract (in part) from an article featured in the British Timken 1965 magazine*

"Situated on the fringe of the Shakespeare countr<sup>y</sup> about three miles from the village of Dunchurch to the N.W., the Rose Inn stands, as it has stood for four hundred years or more, back from the main road, facing out on the pleasant English countryside.

A relic of the ancient "cob" method of building of mud and straw, the Inn has acquired a brownstone facing over the centuries; but the interior is in much the same structural condition as it was originally. The downstairs tap room, reputed locall<sup>y</sup> to have at one time been used as the local magistrates' courtroom, contains low boarded ceilings and black beams which menace the heads of the unwary. Incorporated in the inglenook chimney piece is a deep baking oven, still usable and with a capacity large enough for the whole village. Behind the "tap" is the focal point and *raison d'être* of the pub. There stand the ale barrels, ranged on a raised brick shelf. The beer, as it has been for man<sup>y</sup> years, is drawn straight from the wood, and as most beer drinkers will testify, all the better for it.



The Rose Inn

1905

## **The Rose Inn**

The existence of a building on this site goes back at least six hundred years, as one of the earlier names by which it was known was "the Red Rose", the colour being dropped officially on the advice of the then authorities in 1460 at the time of the Wars of the Roses, when to show favour one way or the other was deemed unwise.

It is upstairs, however, that the true antiquity of the building is apparent. The existing deeds of the pub go back as far as the year 1763, when one Charles Cowley and his trustees inherited the title "to a messuage cottage or tenement with the appurtenances thereof in Willoughby, in the county of Warwick". Prior to 1763, the cottage as it then was, was in the holding of the Lords of the Manor. It is more than probable that it has been in existence for at least two hundred years before this.

The landing and bedroom contains a wealth of blackened and age old oak beams set in white plaster. Embodied in the dividing wall of the two bedrooms is the complete trunk of an oak tree. Upon its surface can be seen the adze marks of the long dead carpenter who helped to build the cottage.

The grounds of the Rose Inn were extended in 1932 by the purchase of one quarter acre of ground to the east, up to the Village Hall boundary, for £85 by the owners, Messrs. Phipps Brewery.

The area purchased together with the present playing field was known as Town Close.

Major restoration work was carried out during the latter part of 1987 when the roof was re-thatched, new windows fitted, new roof timbers and various other improvements. The beer barrels have now been replaced by metal casks and electrically operated pumps.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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### ORGANISATIONS

#### **Charit<sup>y</sup> Trustees**

The two Willoughby Charities originally founded in 1437 are administered by two Boards of Trustees.

Candidates for trusteeship are nominated by the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council, these Trustees in turn nominate other suitable "Trustees usually qualified by their respective careers or pursuits. In the case of the Willoughby Educational Foundation the vicar or priest-in-charge, together with the current churchwardens are *ex-officio* trustees and in the case of the Willoughby Charity the vicar or priest-in-charge is *ex-officio*.

By trust deed of statute both Boards of Trustees shall meet twice per annum. A Chairman is elected from their number and a Clerk is employed by them who is not a Trustee.

#### **Cricket Club**

The present club was founded in 1901 when, on 2nd April, a number of young men gathered in the parish reading room to form a club.

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## **The Rose Inn**

The existence of a building on this site goes back at least six hundred years, as one of the earlier names by which it was known was "the Red Rose", the colour being dropped officially on the advice of the then authorities in 1460 at the time of the Wars of the Roses, when to show favour one way or the other was deemed unwise.

It is upstairs, however, that the true antiquity of the building is apparent. The existing deeds of the pub go back as far as the year 1763, when one Charles Cowley and his trustees inherited the title "to a messuage cottage or tenement with the appurtenances thereof in Willoughby, in the county of Warwick". Prior to 1763, the cottage as it then was, was in the holding of the Lords of the Manor. It is more than probable that it has been in existence for at least two hundred years before this.

The landing and bedroom contains a wealth of blackened and age old oak beams set in white plaster. Embodied in the dividing wall of the two bedrooms is the complete trunk of an oak tree. Upon its surface can be seen the adze marks of the long dead carpenter who helped to build the cottage.

The grounds of the Rose Inn were extended in 1932 by the purchase of one quarter acre of ground to the east, up to the Village Hall boundary, for £85 by the owners, Messrs. Phipps Brewery.

The area purchased together with the present playing field was known as Town Close.

Major restoration work was carried out during the latter part of 1987 when the roof was re-thatched, new windows fitted, new roof timbers and various other improvements. The beer barrels have now been replaced by metal casks and electrically operated pumps.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

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### **ORGANISATIONS**

#### **Charit<sup>y</sup> Trustees**

The two Willoughby Charities original<sup>y</sup> founded in 1437 are administered by two Boards of Trustees.

Candidates for trusteeship are nominated by the Parish Council and the Parochial Church Council, these Trustees in turn nominate other suitable Trustees usually qualified by their respective careers or pursuits. In the case of the Willoughby Educational Foundation the vicar or priest-in-charge, together with the current churchwardens are *ex-officio* trustees and in the case of the Willoughby Charity the vicar or priest-in-charge is *ex-officio*.

By trust deed of statute both Boards of Trustees shall meet twice per annum. A Chairman is elected from their number and a Clerk is employed by them who is not a Trustee.

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The original wooden pavilion was purchased at cost from Mr. Bates for £90, club members laying the base and providing services. Over the next 25 years this structure was added to and refurbished on many occasions. Following the ground purchase in 1973 it was decided to make plans for a new more easily maintained pavilion.

After a considerable feat of fund raising, some £10,000 was raised by members and supporters to launch the project and in October, 1981, work commenced. On the 10th October, 1982, following a commemorative match, the new pavilion was officially opened by Geo. Sharp, the Northants County Cricketer and his wife Audrey.

In all the new pavilion cost £32,000, fully furnished and equipped, and by October, 1985, all debts were paid and the members were owners of one of the finest village grounds and amenities in the country.

### **Parochial Church Council**

The P.C.C. is a management committee for the operation and maintenance of St. Nicholas' Church, Willoughby.

Its principal officials are the Vicar or Priest-in-Charge, together with the Churchwardens and a council of church members.

The P.C.C. meets regularly to discuss all matters relevant to church services, spiritual learning and worship, maintenance of the fabric of the building and its decoration.

A constant problem is that the church is very old and is unusual in that its internal floor is some twenty-four inches lower than the outer ground level. This leads to considerable ingress of moisture which proves expensive to keep at bay.

Generally the building is in reasonable repair. Almost all (save the Chancel) has been reroofed during the past twenty-five years but repairs and general maintenance always have to be the main priority with the financial assistance of the Willoughby Charity.

### **St. Nicholas' Bell-ringers**

For some sixty years until quite recently there was an enthusiastic "band" of ringers, originally formed by the Hancock family and an integral part of the Peterborough Diocesan Guild of Church Bell-ringers.

Apart from the regular weekly evening practices, there were numerous outings organised to other dioceses as well as ringing for all church services at Willoughby.

It is hoped that another local "band" can be organised and use the facility at Willoughby which is said by experts in campanology to be a "good ring" and in good striking condition.

### **Willoughby Society**

During the village celebrations to commemorate the consecration of Coventry Cathedral in 1962, the organising committee under the chairmanship of the late Jim Reynolds decided to continue the concept of "beautification of the village together with the planting of trees" and the Willoughby Society was born with those being its main aims.

Monthly meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month, during which the society's business is discussed, followed by guest speakers who lecture on a wide variety of subjects.

The membership of 60+ pay an annual subscription which finances the administration.

The society is the keeper of the village archives which are a fascinating historic record of the ancient village of Willoughby. The authors of this work would have been extremely hard pressed to have achieved its conclusion without the help and assistance of recent archivists Roy Whitfield and Stan Troman.

The archives are not open to the general public but can be made available by arrangement.

## Mothers' Union

The Willoughby branch of the Mothers' Union was formed around 1920, but as there are no old written records it is not possible to be more precise.

It consists of ladies of mainly church background who meet on a monthly basis at one of their homes when there is a guest speaker who gives a talk usually of a religious nature with sometimes the support of a film or slides.

The meetings usually conclude with a cup of tea and the opportunity for a chat!

As a group, the ladies attend other functions in the diocese and work constantly fund-raising for the parish church of St. Nicholas.

## "The Willoughby 60 Club"

The Willoughby 60 Club was the "brain child" of Mrs. Margaret Hubbard of the White House, Willoughby.

Interest was canvassed and the first meeting was held in Willoughby Village Hall on 9th January, 1986. A committee was formed and originally there were some fifty members. This has now grown to seventy-five (1988).

The Club now meets in the Village Hall on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Sometimes the meetings are supplemented by outings to various places of interest in the surrounding areas.

So far one or two holidays each year have been arranged by the Club to various seaside venues and these have been very well supported.

At some of the monthly meetings, speakers on various topics entertain members, whilst on other occasions, bingo, quizzes, card games, etc., are played.

Members of the Club pay an annual subscription of £1 and in the main are residents of Willoughby. In addition, some relatives and friends of members are welcome to join the Club.

Each year in early January the Club holds a "birthday party". This consists of a "sit down" meal followed by various forms of entertainment.

## Willoughby Youth Club

There had been several attempts to start a Youth Club in Willoughby by various parents in the village, all of which were unsuccessful. In September 1986, a poster was put up announcing a meeting for parents and children interested in forming a Willoughby Youth Club to meet in the Village Hall.

Frank Redfern, the area youth officer, had found a young man, Andrew Mullin, who was willing to give up his time for the teenagers of Willoughby. About fifteen children, and at least one of each of their parents attended the meeting. It was decided that the group would meet on a Tuesday evening between 7 and 9 p.m. There would be a small subscription of 20p per person when attending.

The Willoughby Parochial Church Council were instrumental in financing this project and they oversee the club for the purpose of booking the Village Hall, etc.

Now (Dec. 1988) the Youth Club is still going strong, but the time has been extended from 7 to 9.30 p.m. There are fifteen youngsters who attend regularly of which the majority are in the fifteen/sixteen age group. Activities vary from games such as uni-hock, tennis, rounders, etc., to board games, provided from the main office in Rugby (Youth Headquarters, Fareham Avenue). The Youth Club has a stereo-radio tape deck and turntable which was generously donated by the village pub, "The Rose".

Approximately once a month a video is shown. From time to time the Youth Club goes on special outings to the cinema, swimming at Daventry or Rugby, or ice-skating at Solihull. Every summer there is a week's holiday at Marle hall, an outdoor centre in Llandudno, North Wales. At Christmas a weekend is spent at Honiley Hall near Kenilworth, decorating for other visitors. Whilst there, a disco is held and there is time to use the video equipment. These are all regular occurrences within the youth Club.

At various times in the year the club is invited to go youth hostelling, e.g. down to Cheddar Gorge and Minehead, or up to North Yorkshire for a winter weekend.

Since the Youth Club started, it has given the youngsters in the village more scope and opportunity, as there are few amenities for young persons within the village.

### **The Willoughby Women's Institute**

The Willoughby branch of the Women's Institute was founded in February 1920, the first president being the vicar's wife, Mrs. Indiana M. Trethew<sup>y</sup>. Until the opening of the Village Hall in 1933, the meetings were held in the school room.

Amongst its many activities in the early 1920's was the raising of money for purchase of a motor cycle for the district nurse and assisting a bell committee in raising funds for the restoration of the church bells. Several members joined the Women's Volunteer Service during World War II, and one of their duties was the distribution of meat pies in the village under what was known as "the Pie Scheme".

In the 1950's a drama group and ladies' choir competed man<sup>y</sup> times at the Leamington Festival and were successful in winning many awards. To commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the National Federation of Women's Institutes in 1965, a bed of golden coloured roses was planted in the Village Hall grounds and to mark their own Golden Jubilee in 1970, they presented a bench, vice and tools to the Occupational Therapy Department of the Hospital of St. Cross, Rugby. Other gifts to the Village Hall included window curtains and a photographic projection screen.

The Institute meets regularly to discuss the various facets of its aims and objectives and members are frequently entertained and lectured on a wide variety of subjects. On special occasions they open their doors to the public and the meeting in April is an open meeting involving other local village institute groups.



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## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

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### IMPROVEMENTS

The extension and provision of main services to the village enabled a changed way of life for the country dweller. Electricity was the first utility to be provided, being by overhead and somewhat unsightly wires from the Grandborough Parish in 1936. Street lighting by electricity, however, did not occur until 1939 when the old oil lamps were replaced.

The first building in which lights were switched on was the parish church.

The first 14x council houses were built in Main Street above the bridge in 1919 to be followed in 1948 by 4x more in main Street and 14x more were built in the College Road cul-de-sac in 1956. Luring the 1920's severe flooding was a major hazard on the A45 road by the Willoughby station bridge and the county authorities finally alleviated this problem in 1937 by the construction of a major outfall drain.

This involved tunnelling under the station ramp passing at a depth behind College Road and Main Street "out-falling" into the brook by the Village Hall bridge.

Mains water was piped into the village in 1940 although until this time the village had been served by a large number of wells and pumps. Evidence can still be seen to this day of a number of well-heads in the village. Willoughby, being one of the lowest points in Warwickshire, has a high water table. Mains sewage reached the village in 1961 with our very own pumping station on the Woolscott Road. This caused considerable development. Most modern housing converted from septic tank to flush toilets and provided plumbed bathing facilities. A number of new houses were built. Two dormer bungalows in Lower Street in 1962/3 to be followed by the creation of the Magdalen Road development in 1963 which was extended in 1983. In 1964 a most controversial building development occurred when fourteen bungalows were erected around Brooks Close very much against the local councils wishes. They in turn had suggested a cul-de-sac with the parish church as its focal point.

Brooks Close was the site of the former Manor House/Vicarage which was in being during the 15th century and large enough to support a bowling green upon which stood a huge apple tree, referred to as a bowling apple. The house was demolished in 1780, although the main entrance was in evidence as late as 1963.

Of more recent times the Sawbridge bridge was completely restructured in 1984. This was a very old bridge known to have been in existence in 1450. The county authorities decided that before a major catastrophe occurred something should be done to improve this important river crossing. Also in 1984 the village brook bank was substantially reinforced using galvanised wire mesh cages and stone ballast.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### VILLAGE ENTERPRISES

Of recent times many people residing in the village travel to local industrial centres where they are employed in a wide variety of capacities. It is evident from early parish registers that the village population in the 18th and 19th centuries contained a wide variety of trades but few professions. Willoughby boasted worsted weavers, farmers, baker, wheelwright, undertaker, postmen, blacksmith, shopkeepers, cafe owners, a whole host of garage mechanics and trades ancillar<sup>y</sup> to the motor trade.

The earl<sup>y</sup> Whitsun fairs obviously attracted many outside people to the village but the first real enterprise as such was without doubt the Willoughby Saline Baths which were "discovered" around 1824 and a small bath house was erected on or near the Tattle Bank row of houses upon the A45 road from which the waters were drawn from a pair of brick-lined wells. The bath house was demolished in 1960. At around the same time Willoughby House (as it is known toda<sup>y</sup>) was extended to incorporate the use of the saline waters for bathing, etc. In the 19th century the house was known as the Willoughby Lodge Spa. Charges for bathing; 1827:

Hot bath	2s. 6d. or 10 baths for £1
Cold bath	2s. Od.    " " "
Shower bath (hot)	2s. 6d.    " " "
Shower bath (cold)	2s. Od.    " " "

No charge to bathers for drinkin<sup>g</sup> the waters at the pump but a charge of 4d. per gallon was made for the water when sent from the pump.

If this trade had continued then it is quite possible that Willoughby would have become quite a sizeable town as did Leamington, Cheltenham and Harrogate, whose waters were frequently compared with those drawn at Willoughby.

The reason for the eventual demise of the Willoughby waters around 1840 is speculative, the proximity of Leamin<sup>g</sup>ton, the commercial expertise of the owner, William Crupper, or maybe the advent of proprietary medicines which treated the true cause of illness from within, rather than the spa water treatment which was largely external.

The Navigation Wharf supported businesses in lime for the land and industry together with coal hauliers from barge to local homes.

Of more recent times a number of small one-man businesses have been set tip; painter and decorator, cleaning, haulage, landscape gardeners, builders to name but a few!

Smith and Sons. On taking over the Navigation Inn, Mr. and Mrs. Smith along with Sam and Dick kept this pub for many years. On the demise of the canal trade, business was rather quiet. They then decided to open up as coal merchants, the coal being delivered to a wharf of the canal close by. Soon after they started up as cattle transporters using their lorries for both duties. The cattle business thrived so much that they had to relinquish the coal business. Sadly both Sam and Dick died at very early ages and so ended a successful business.

#### The Bakery

For many years Willoughby was privileged in having its own bakery. Run by the Thompsons for many years it was then taken over by Cyril Dodd. Cyril learned his trade from them and his bread reached a very high standard. Along with his wife Dina they ran a confectionery too. The Dodds were very well liked and respected. Cyril being particular<sup>y</sup> fond of children often made small loaves with remnants of dough for them. At one time it was common practice for

residents to take their Sunday joints to the bakehouse to be cooked, calling for them at 12.30. When ill-health forced their retirement the bakery passed on to Michael Childs who ran it for some time, giving it up in 1984.

### **The Cafe**

In the mid-twenties the volume of long-distance travel began to increase, mainly London to Blackpool. Jimmy Malin opened up a wayside van, serving teas and snacks. Business was very good, but after a while the health authorities made it uncomfortable for him. He decided to erect a permanent building. The construction of this took a long time as it was a DIY job. Consequently a lot of his trade left him as other places opened up. On completion Jimmy sold to a Mr. and Mrs. Austin who were able to attract customers back. After a year or two the cafe was sold to Mr. Tubby Sheaf. By this time the business was thriving as Tubby, having been a lorry driver, knew what was required. Tubby had a generous nature. This was very apparent during the war when he was able to help organisations in supplying some things which were rationed and in short supply. Tubby was leader of the Home Guard and took this very seriously. He organised a pig club for H.G. members which was much appreciated because of rationing. Eventually the cafe became the Sleepy Sausage bought by a firm who had other cafes suffixed Sausage. The cafe has continued to thrive and has now changed hands to become Gwen's Pantry.

### **Village Blacksmith**

There was a village blacksmith in existence for well over one hundred years until the closure of the smithy in 1977 due to the death of Fred Wooldridge. One of the earlier blacksmiths was a Harry Buckby whose housekeeper (Miss Powell) lived in the small cottage next to the smithy.

Miss Powell was something of an eccentric and feared locally because it was thought that she was a witch.

Harry Buckby died in 1926 and the business passed to Fred Wooldridge, who was very well known, being one of the few remaining blacksmiths in the area for over fifty years until his demise in 1977.

Fred's immediate family still live in the family home called "The Smithy" but the business is now closed down, a victim of modern society.

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## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### SPORTS AT WILLOUGHBY

#### Football at Willoughby

Football has always been a popular sport in the village but currently (1989) there is no official organisation in being. Many players following their chosen sport in other villages or Rugby.

There was a very thriving club during the 1960's and 1970's when, under the leadership of Bill Shilton and Sid Chamberlain. the club ran very successfully. Grounds have been almost as various as "clubs" but the most popular have been "Big Ground" and the north end of the field known as "The Green" divided when the field was sold in 1973 to the cricket club.

#### Hockey at Willoughby

Hockey too, was a very popular sport in the 1920's and 1930's when the Willoughby Ladies' team were ver<sup>y</sup> successful.

With its close attachment to cricket, being the winter equivalent, and with the present upturn in the sport, perhaps we shall see the return of this delightful sport to the village.

#### Tennis at Willoughby

Tennis began at Willoughby on a court to the rear of White House Farm operated by the Hardings in the 1920's Also there was a good court at the rear of the old vicarage which was used for tournaments. The village club transferred to Manor Farm in the late 1930's and continued until 1965. This was a nice grass court with a small pavilion. The shade of the huge cedar tree at the front of the house made for an idyllic setting, but with the ever-increasing popularity of cricket in the village the interest in tennis wained.

#### Cricket at Willoughby

Although there were cricket matches played at Willoughby in the 1880's and 1890's the first documentar<sup>y</sup> evidence was the forming of the present club on April 2nd, 1901. The original minute book is kept in the club's archives along with playing records dating back to 1924. The club has played on a number of grounds in the village usually being moved on as a result of outbreaks of foot and mouth disease. The present home of the club is "The Green", purchased in 1973. Ironically, "The Green" was the original venue 1901-1910.



*Cricket Pavilion.*

1982.

The quality of cricket is good village standard, played on a grass surface laid in 1953 and extended gradually since then until now (1989), the playing area covers some 2000 square yards, out of the total four acres.

The club has a good local reputation built over the past forty<sup>y</sup> ears; in particular for quality of cricket and club spirit. This manifested itself during the five years 1980-1985 when the club planned, built and paid for — a new brick and tile pavilion, opened on 10th October, 1982.

Members and supporters have, over the years contributed to many projects; none more than the complete planting of "The Green" with trees and shrubs, also the many seats placed around the ground for public viewing. The club also organises many social events, dances, folk nights, race nights, auctions, outings, etc.

The local highlight is the annual six-a-side held on the first Sunday in July. This is an invitation tournament and is an eagerly awaited event. The club is (1989) on a sound financial basis and providing the will is present, the future of the Willoughby Cricket Club is assured.

### **Netball at Willoughby**

Netball is a comparatively new phenomenon being very popular among the ladies during the past ten years. There are two local leagues — Daventry and Rugby. Willou<sup>g</sup>hby are currently in Division 1 of the latter, having been in the former for some 5x seasons.

### **Among other sports in the village**

- (i) Rifle shooting at the "Rose Inn".
- (ii) Darts.
- (iii) Skittles.

### **The village playing field (about 1.9 acres)**

The village playing field, situated to the rear of the Village Hall and the Rose Inn, was originally owned b<sup>y</sup> the Willoughby Charity. During the 1930's efforts were made to develop the land for senior citizen's bungalows but after some four years of planning it was established that to provide an access road to the site was going to cost £500 and the Charity could not afford this outlay and the entire plan was dropped in 1936.

In 1948 a scheme was drawn up to convert the field into a playing field for the children of the village aged sixteen<sup>y</sup> ears and under.

A committee was formed in 1949 and fund-raising began in earnest. First the field was purchased from the Charit<sup>y</sup> for £115, this was followed by many village events which raised a grand total of £406.

There were grants of:-

£114.00	Local Education Authority
£75.00	National Playing Field Association
£25.00	Local Playing Field Association

and other donations amounting to a total of £696.

The playing field was formally opened in 1955 by the Local Education Officer Mr. L. Bishop at a ceremony attended by many local people. The playing field committee handed over the area to the village to be cared for and maintained by the Parish Council as an amenity under the guise of the village "open spaces".

The Parish Council takes its playing field responsibility very seriously, the equipment being maintained by the councillors, and from time to time new equipment has been added.

The local young people are indeed most fortunate to have this excellent facility centrally positioned in Willoughby.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

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### WILLOUGHBY HOUSE AND MINERAL SPRINGS

*(Formerly known as Bath Hotel or Willoughby Bath Spa).*

The ancient deeds of Willoughby House have been kindly loaned to the researcher and have made fascinating reading.

The present buildings of the house are considerably larger than the original Bath I Intel erected in 1827, but evidence of the Hotel is still visible. The Hotel was built, it is thought, near the source of the spa water "discovered" originally in 1796, hut not brought to a well-head until 1824.

The hotel enjoyed good trade until well into the 1830's after which it reverted to a private residence around 1840. It appears that, on a number of occasions in the 19th century, the house and adjoining fields were jointly owned or held in partnership with a number of different persons "investing" together in the property. Many of these owners extended or added to the original building until today (1989) the house is of quite grand proportions.

Owners in the 20th century have been, to the best of our knowledge:-

Mr. Loney  
Mr. Fairs  
Captain Pearce  
Captain Peel  
Mr. Houghton  
Mr. Bates  
Mr. Harr<sup>y</sup> Aston  
Captain Jefferies  
Mr. Hayward

We can only apologise if any have been missed.

The main entrance door faces due south and the whole aspect is very pleasant. There is much wood panelling in evidence in the interior and the present owners (1989) are engaged in a refurbishment project which will enhance the whole structure even further.

There is certainly a well-head within the house which was probably the source of the spa waters dispensed during the 1820's and 1830s. It is also very possible that there existed a bath or small pool where visitors could immerse part if not the whole of their bodies whilst taking the waters.

The waters were said to be very therapeutic and became quite famous as a cure for the many ills of the day, notably scurvy and scofula. Upon medical analysis in June 1827, by the Royal Institution the following comment was made:-

"The water's distinguishing feature is the quantity of sulphurated hydrogen gas dissolved in it, but also present is a large proportion of saline matter, containing, amongst other substances, a small quantity of carbonate of iron. The gases, contained in the water, are sulphurated hydrogen and carbonic acid, with a trace of nitro<sup>s</sup>en. The salts are first, muriate of soda, then sulphate of soda; these forming the largest part of the saline matter present. Sulphate of lime is next in abundance. The water appears to be nearly saturated with it — but is not an abundantly soluble salt. Its resemblance to Harrogate water is remarkable and may be to do with the basic ingredient of both waters — sulphurated hydrogen."

It was considered in 1827 that the two spa waters (Willoughby and Harrogate) were unlike any others in the Kingdom!

The effects upon the constitution of the waters of the spring at Willoughby Bath Spa have, in most cases, been found agreeably and perceptibly efficacious and patients who have suffered from chronic obstructions have, by the use of a hot bath. (96 degrees F), completely eradicated the complaint. In violent pains of the back and loins, usually termed lumbago, and in cases of rheumatism,

When one considers the quite "normal" diseases of the 19th century being remedied by these effervescent waters, it seems hardly surprising that the small village of Willoughby did not flourish for any length of time with the advent of proprietary medicines.

Harrogate and of course local<sup>y</sup>, Leamington, became famous following the discovery of saline springs beneath their foundations but the authors consider that perhaps Willoughby as we know it, is all the better without such fame.

One interesting extract from "Whites Warwickshire" 1815: "The air and soil of Willoughby are conducive to health — and inhabitants live to extreme old age".



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### MEMORABLE HAPPENINGS IN WILLOUGHBY'S HISTORY

Although, at the time of writing (April 1989) one can call upon the memories of some inhabitants who were born at the turn of the century, there do seem to have been a few events which specially stand out from the historical records which we have endeavoured to set down. One such event is a tragedy which took place in 1899 at Stanford Hall. It involved Mr. James Tanser who, at a later date, married and farmed at Willoughby.

It is known that a flying pioneer named Percy Pilcher was experimenting with a type of glider in the grounds of Stanford Hall. This contraption had no engines, and to get it off the ground it had to be towed by a horse or horses. Mr. Tanser was in charge of this operation and the machine did become air-borne. Unfortunately the success was short lived because the glider soon crashed to the ground, killing Mr. Pilcher.

Also before the First World War there were Army manoeuvres of some considerable importance which took place at Willoughby. Mrs. Tanser (Ella Hall) who then lived at Rath Farm, recalls how they took place in "Big Ground" and she remembers how the soldiers drew water from their well and emptied it. She told me that the men were divided into two opposing companies, the Khakis and the Whites. After some days they departed in the direction of Shuckburgh.

The years before the First World War were very different times from today. Mrs. Jarvis (Hilda Hancock) was born in 1900. She recalls how, when she was six or seven years old she saw the first aeroplane that flew over Willoughby. In fact, the thing she remembers best is that a neighbour (Maud Cowley) ran out of her house, still carrying a hot tea-pot, in her excitement and haste to point out this marvel. Hilda also told me that she remembers the village carrier. This was a lad (Mrs. Jim Biggs) who undertook to shop for those who did not want to go to town. She made the journey with her horse and covered cart and she charge 2d per article. On one occasion, a customer only required a single hank of darning wool but was angry at having to pay the full twopence for such a small article — in fact quite a fracas ensued. Willoughby has had its share of tragedies. Unfortunately such sad events usually make the bigger headlines. There was the famous and tragic suicide of Fred Davenport, son of John Davenport, the carpenter, who is mentioned elsewhere in this booklet. This unhappy man who had served in the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War, went to Rugby purposely to buy the gun with which he killed himself. He then made quite an ingenious arrangement in a wheelbarrow so that when he seated himself in it he could pull a string and shoot himself at close range.

In 1916, there was a quite natural phenomenon of a blizzard which was of such ferocity that the countryside around Willoughby came to a complete standstill. As photography was comparatively new in 1916 this blizzard became well known in later years because of the large number of photographs taken of telephone lines down, and the subsequent flooding which so often followed such an event.

In 1936, the whole village was appalled by an even sadder event. Two little boys, Robert and Kenneth Woodridge, were drowned while attempting to slide on a frozen pond. Their brother, Frank, who was the last to be rescued, survived. This was probably because he was the older and bigger boy, but also due to the unflagging efforts of the local doctor, Dr. Hugh Morgan-Grey of Braunston. The pond was rather remote from the road in a field belonging to Ivy House Farm and farmed by the Ivens family. The boys were pulled out of the freezing water which was about twelve feet deep by Sidney Ivens, then aged twenty-two. He crawled over the ice on a ladder but the ice was breaking all the time. Two boys were pulled to the bank on the ladder. He brought the third, who survived,

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to safety by crawling with him over the crumbling ice. Sidney was a non-swimmer and it must have taken great courage to carry out this rescue. In 1947 there were severe floods in Willoughby following the dreadful winter of that year. Some families in Lower Street had to be temporarily rehoused in the Village hall whilst their belongings were dried out! Over the years there have been many other happenings too.

An accidental incident with a blowlamp engulfed the thatched roof of Church View to such an extent that the house had to be reroofed. A railway crash in 1962 near the Leicester Lane resulted in the death of a railwayman when the engine and coaches were derailed due to the buckling of the track. In the same year a glider made an emergency landing on the cricket field to the consternation of the groundsman who was mowing the wicket at the time, and did not hear the approaching problem.

In 1965, at the Barby/Gate Farm crossroads, a motor car got out of control whilst negotiating a bus, which was discharging its passengers and broadsided into Hobleys farm building, demolishing the end wall and coming to rest with the farm horse inside.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

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### **HAYWARD LODGE — 1987-1988.** Conservation Area

The Hayward Lodge conservation area was created in 1987-1988 at the behest of the Parish Council.

The enclosed site of some two acres was formerly the immediate grounds of Willoughby Lodge, a quite palatial residence of its day, standing in some seven acres of ground.

Built originally in 1793 for the vicar — Dr. Nathaniel Bridges, who was a man of considerable substance, the house in 1918 consisted of nine bedrooms, four lavatories, four loose boxes and a motor home. The house, during its existence, until the quite disastrous fire of 1951, had very many owners following the retirement in 1834 of Dr. Bridges, but was of quite magnificent proportions.

The final local owner of the area Mr. Raymond Sheaf (Tubby) applied in 1964 for planning permission to develop the site for a transport cafe and accommodation, but following appeal, this was not granted in the interests of road safety. The former Rugby Rural District Council were obliged to purchase the site in 1966 and subsequently it was acquired by the County Council for the storage of 4000 tonnes of rock salt. The site fell into disuse around 1982 and became something of an eyesore. After prompting by the Willoughby Parish Council, a scheme was put forward by the county for transforming the site into a picnic area. The Parish Council were somewhat horrified at this, and in turn suggested a conservation area. Following the submission of plans, outline approval was given for landscaping and planting the site on condition that the Parish Council undertook responsibility for it. The site was duly purchased in February 1987, at a cost of £170, and in December 1987, the complete area was landscaped, a pond excavated and bunds formed by South Warwickshire contractors. The task was underwritten by the Willoughby Educational Foundation although subsequently the area was entered in and won a number of cash prizes in national competitions for conservation projects. In March 1988, the area was planted with some four hundred trees and shrubs, together with a large quantity of bulbs. Most of these items were donated by various organisations interested in natural conservation.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY · ONE

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### SILVER JUBILEE 1977

Willoughb<sup>y</sup> Parish Council called a General Meeting on Thursday, 27th January, 1977, in the Village Hall.

The Agenda was "Our Queen's Silver Jubilee Year, 1977 and what our village was going to do by way of special celebrations".

It was agreed that the inaugural meeting of the new committee be on Monday, 14th February, 1977, at 8 p.m. in the Village Hall.

It was agreed that the Programme of Events would commence on Saturday, 28th May, 1977, and proceed to Jubilee Day — Tuesday, 7th June, 1977.

#### Friday, 29th April, 1977. A Country Dance

Village Hall                      8.30 p.m. 1 a.m.                      Tickets £1.00  
Fund raising — Numbers limited to 80                      Harvest Supper served at 8.30 p.m.  
to commence the evening.

Catering by the committee ladies and helpers, Mrs. Jackie Gibbard was in charge of arrangements.

#### Saturday, 28th May, 1977. Jubilee Dance

The Doug Draper Trio were new to the village social scene, but in the usual role of pianist/ vocalist, Doug Draper provided a programme of music for dancing which was both varied and entertaining.

A number of his specialist singing spots had a Jubilee or Royalist theme and got our programme of events off to a flying start.

#### Monday, 30th May, 1977. Ladies' and Gent's Combined Teams **Cricket Match Teams:**

S. G. Ivens (Capt.)		Mrs. J. Gibbard (Capt.)	
Mrs. J. Howkins	R. Martin	S. Pollard	
W. Hall	Mrs. V. Cuthbert	Mrs. E. Pettifer	J. Warwick
Mrs. R. Bussey	A. Hatwell	H. Chadwick	G. Stewart
A. Payne	Mrs. B. Walton	Mrs. V. Hall	J. Hall
Mrs. L. Stewart	R. Adams	J. Midwood	Mrs. R. Chadwick
R. Harrison	R. Whitfield	Mrs. I. Gealy	I. Howkins
Mrs. J. Palmer	C. Jarvis	J. Bussey	K. Priest

The sight of Charlie Jarvis, Arthur Hatwell and Bill Hall playing their favourite game of <sup>y</sup>esteryear stirred man<sup>y</sup> memories for the spectators. The ladies who entered into the spirit of the evening made the whole event worthwhile. The cricket was very entertaining, so much so that some fielders (notabl<sup>y</sup> Mrs. Vera Hall) and certainly the umpires, Mrs. Betty Skelton and Jiml Howkins Jnr. spent most of the time laughing at the antics of the other participants.

An excellent innings of 15 by Bill Hall and a praiseworthy 10 by Arthur Hatwell ensured a reasonable total of 69-12 for the Sidne<sup>y</sup> Ivens team.

In reply the Jackie Gibbard team recorded 71-8, with John Midwood being 36 not out completely dominating the innings.

The ladies had prepared refreshments of bread, cheese, pickled onions and black pudding. The entire social event in the pavilion after the match was attended by some 80-90 people and was an outstanding social success.

## Tuesday, 31st May, 1977. Five-A-Side Football

### Teams:

(1) K. Priest (Capt.)	(2) H. Ogle (Capt.)	(3) E. Palmer (Capt.)	(4) A. Richardson (Capt.)
D. Rowe	P. Sheaf	B. Hall	A. Baugh
R. Bostrom	T. Truslove	K. Billingham	R. Cox
K. Barden	W. Merchant	J. Walton	A. Jones
W. Shilton	F. Mitchell	S. Berta	F. Hallam

All the players who were conned into making an appearance had long since "retired" from the game. The dress for the occasion was shorts and pumps which added to the attraction for the 100 spectators who turned up to witness the events of the night.

Jim Walton and Jim Howkins had marked out half-a-full-size soccer pitch and erected the appropriate size goal posts.

After the spectators had finished laughing at the sights which met their eyes, the tournament finally got under way.

From the kick-off it was evident that stamina was going to be supreme on the night, <sup>s</sup>rown men "rushing" all of fifteen <sup>y</sup>ards after the ball only to be upended within kicking distance of it!

Dennis Neville, Tournament Referee, kept a close control over the match, without bias, even if some of the over-zealous tackling was technically a bookable offence. During the match Mr. Neville had occasion to show the "yellow" card with a further threat of the "red" card following an off-the-ball incident concerning Bill Shilton and Frank Hallam. This had been brought to his attention by the self-styled senior linesman Neal Hallam.

Other incidents were too numerous to mention in this report, but many of the injuries received were very evident some 10 days afterwards.

### Wednesday, 1st June, 1977. Ryton Ladies' Concert Party

The hall entrance had been decorated overall with flags and bunting in traditional colours and made a very impressive sight for our visitors.

A varied programme of acts had been prepared by the Ryton ladies who did not charge for their services.

The programme included selections from "Mr Fair Lady", monologues, a solo tap-dancing performance and Spanish dancing. The evenings entertainment was brought to a close with the Ryton ladies tribute to Jubilee Year, consisting of famous folk songs of the four home countries.

### Thursday, 2nd June, 1977. Senior Citizen's Mystery Coach Tour

All senior citizens had been circularised and invited to attend, and twenty-seven people joined the outing to <sup>s</sup>ether with the Chairman, Secretary and Mrs. B. Jones from the committee and Mrs. R. Howkins in an advisory capacity.

The tour took in a large number of Northamptonshire villages noted for their picturesque quality.

Ashby St. Ledgers — Watford — West Haddon — Guilsborough — Hollowell — Creaton — Brixworth — Boughton — Litchborough — Maidford — Adstone — Canons Ashb<sup>y</sup> — Moreton Pinkney — Sulgrave (waterin <sup>s</sup> stop) — Thorpe Manderville — Wardington — Chipping Warden — Byfield<sup>y</sup> — Charwelton — Daventry — Willoughby.

A tea was prepared by the committee ladies and helpers in the hall. Each table was decorated with a pos<sup>y</sup> of flowers and red, white and blue plates.

The Chairman welcomed everyone with special thanks to the coach driver Mr. Bill Hall, thanked the Jubilee Committee on behalf of kill the senior citizens who attended.

The persons on the outing were as follows:

Mrs. Holt	Mr. and Mrs. A. Hatwell
Mr. and Mrs. W. Hall	Mr. Frank Wooldridge
Mrs. Stearn and friend	Mr. F. Hubbard
Miss Kingston	Mrs. g
Mrs. Clarke	Mr. and Mrs. Black
Mr. Fred Wooldridge	Mrs. V. Hall
Mr. & Mrs. C. Jarvis	Mrs. Tanner
Mr. J. Howkins	Mr. and Mrs. J. Hall
Mr. and Mrs. Bamford	Mrs. K. Palmer
Mrs. I. Roach	

#### Thursday, 2nd June, 1977. Games Evening

A games evening organised by the Jubilee Committee with a table tennis tournament, subbuteo championship and darts competition. Prizes were awarded and a cup presented to the winner of the subbuteo, donated by Mrs. V. Cuthbert.

Some thirty-five children attended the earlier part of the evening when some twenty-six different indoor games were organised.

The winner of the Table Tennis was Lisa Sheaf

„ „ „ Darts was Emil<sup>y</sup> Marlow

„ „ „ „subbuteo was Tim Howkins

The only casualty was a member of the West Bromwich subbuteo team who broke both legs!

Later twenty adults arrived and tried their hand at the game of table tennis. This provided quite a few surprises, the ladies performing particularly well.

In summarising the evening's efforts the committee record their special thanks to the youth of the village for their participation, without which the night would not have been the success it undoubtedly was.

#### Friday, 3rd June, 1977

Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Halliday, Navigation House, who had generously donated to committee funds during the initial appeal, decided to open their grounds and aviaries to the school children and teachers of Willoughby school as an educational treat during Jubilee week.

All the children were entertained to refreshments and presented with a Jubilee Mug and chocolate orange.

#### Friday, 3rd June, 1977. Grand Prize Whist Drive

Tickets were on general sale and prizes were donated by all the village organisations;

Parish Council : Willoughby Society

Church Council : Cricket Club

Women's institute : Football Club

The Village Hall authorities waived charges for the evening as their contribution.

The Whist Drive started at 7.40 p.m. and the M.C. was committee member, John Midwood.

There were 17 tables +2 which had surprised the committee's wildest expectations.

A raffle prize of half a bottle of Whisky was donated by Mr. and Mrs. J. Walton.

At the half-way stage refreshments were served by the committee ladies Mesdames Mitchell, Gibbard and Jones.

At the conclusion of the whist drive, the prizes consisting of sherry, biscuits, coffee and Jubilee Mugs, were distributed to the following prize winners:

Mrs. Q. Hancock — Mrs. P. Hall — Mrs. E. Pettifer  
Mr. J. Howkins — Mr. D. Prudhoe — Mrs. P. Thomas

## **Saturday, 4th June, 1977. Barbecue & Sugar & Spice Disco**

Barbecue served at 9.30 p.m. to 110 people  
Menu: Lamb Chop — Sausages — Onions  
Salad with Roll & Butter — Coffee.

A large canvas awning was erected by Alan Jones with assistance from Joe Bussey on the east side of the hall and within this, the cooking facility was "set-up". The lamb chops were precooked during the day and conveyed to the hall where they were placed in dishes surrounded by boiling water.

The sausages were grilled on open trays over a charcoal fire which provided the right atmosphere for "open-air" serving. The head cook was Alan Jones with assistance from his staff of Joe Bussey, John Midwood and Jim Walton. One mishap! A sausage literally fell out of the frying pan into the fire much to the amusement of the onlookers and consternation of the head cook.

At the appointed hour of 9.30 p.m., the customers filed from the hall (kitchen exit) and on production of half the entrance ticket were equipped with plate, knife, and fork and filed past the serving counter to collect roll and butter, salad, lamb chop and finally sausage direct from the cooking tray.

The Sugar and Spice Disco provided the music for dancing and by a careful blending operation Paul Midwood (joint partner) managed to satisfy most people's musical tastes.

A most enjoyable evening eagerly awaited by all and was undoubtedly one of the successes of the week.

The evening was rounded off by the ceremonial playing (conducted by Paul Midwood) of the National Anthem, which again brought to everyone's notice the purpose for which we were all celebrating.

## **Sunday 5th June, 1977. Church Service**

6.30 p.m.

A special form of prayer and of thanksgiving service was conducted by Mrs. Howes.

The church bells were rung to mark the occasion and the singing of Land of Hope and Glory was included in the special form of service. Following the blessing, there were "three cheers for the Queen".

## **Monday, 6th June, 1977. All-day Cricket Match**

Willoughby vs. Presidents XI

11.30 a.m. Start                      1.30 p.m.                      4.30 p.m. Tea

Due to heavy rain at 11 a.m. the start was delayed until 1 p.m. The President had invited his usual galaxy of stars from other clubs to play in this invitation event, and on paper at least his side was very representative.

The sides were:

### **PRESIDENTS XI**

P. H. Sheaf (Capt.)  
G. Burton  
K. Wits  
D. Billingham  
T. Adkins  
B. Shaw  
D. Emery  
C. Emery  
N. Cotton  
P. Bell  
J. La

### **WILLOUGHBY**

N. Hallam (Capt.)  
L. Kemp  
F. Mitchell  
R. Adams  
P. Stone  
P. Allibone  
R. Anderson  
B. J. Hall  
J. Sheaf  
J. Howkins  
G. Ivens

Umpires : R. Wins and A.D. Baugh  
Scorer : Mrs. Karen Stone

The Presidents XI batting first made an excellent start, Graham Burton (Courtaulds, Nuneaton) and Kevin Witts (Flecknoe) putting on 75 for the first wicket and building on this steady start batted on for 52 overs making 198 for 7 wickets. Kevin Witts 92, Tony Adkins 43 not out, Graham Burton 35.

Willoughby openers Les Kemp and Phil Allibone were both out at 22, and it was left to Gil Ivens and Peter Stone to salvage a difficult position and at 96 for 5 the game was swinging the President's way, but some determined batting by the middle order saw Willoughby to a creditable draw 142 for 9 from 47 overs.

### **Tuesday, 7th June, 1977. Jubilee Day**

Preparations for the big day had been under way for many weeks, but unfortunately as the 7th of June dawned, overcast skies prevailed and eventually heavy showers precluded the committees preparations for the afternoons events. Not to be deterred, the committee and their many helpers began the task of preparation, with particular attention to the layout in the schoolroom.

The playing field being the main stage of events, was duly marked out for the sports events — 50 yards by 8 lanes (olympic style) by Jim Howkins and the Chairman. Decorations and bunting were erected by Alan Jones.

The Arts and Crafts Exhibition was prepared by Mrs. Hilda Martin and her helpers using the display stands and covers, etc., loaned by the Women's Insitute. Many people displayed their talents for the remainder of the village to view, and the resultant display was magnificent. To we of lesser ability, this part of our Jubilee Day only served to prove the point that one needs to *try* to succeed. The exhibition was obviously "Jubilee", but the over-riding effect, when one entered the schoolroom was of beauty — from the model engines to art in all its forms — paintings, jewellery, needlework, upholstery, etc. Surprise was expressed by many visitors who could not believe the wide range of hobbies shown and the quality of all the exhibits.

In conjunction with the exhibition a Prize Draw was held for two paintings very kindly donated by Mrs. Clarke of Ma<sup>s</sup> dalen Road, which raised £14.50 to the Jubilee Fund. The pictures were won by Mr. R. Yates (a visitor during Jubilee week) and redonated and won by Mrs. B. Nurser of Braunston.

The afternoons events commenced with the ceremony of crowning the Jubilee Queen — Debbie Sutherland — who had been chosen from among the school children along with her attendant — Simon Grbbard — and from among the "hand-maidens" Donna Truslove read out the crowning speech whilst officially crowning the Queen after which the entourage processed around the village school play-ground.

The maypole dancing, which has been an annual feature at our school for many years, then took place — given by the local children of the village who had been previously rehearsed by Mrs. B. Green, Headmistress. Music and final supervision was carried out by Mrs. F. Ivens and Mrs. G. Rowe.

After a hasty change of dress for many of the children some thirty-three entrants then took part in the Fancy Dress Parade which was judged by Dr. and Mrs. Pygott and Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Michell.

The variety of costumes showed that a lot of time and effort had gone into the preparation for this event and the successful entrants were Leyton Truslove as Robin Hood and Joanne Cox as an Hawiian Girl. Runners-up were Neil Jones as a Lifeguard. Tracy Ogle as a Jubilee Dancer, Alison Tanser as "Trouble in China" and Alison Skinner as "Mary, Mary Quite Contrary".

Following the Fancy Dress Parade, everyone was invited to the playing field for the childrens sports.

Children were split into age groups for the various races;

- 1). 25 yard dash
- 2). 50 yard dash
- 3). Sack Race
- 4). Three-legged Race
- 5). Wheelbarrow Race
- 6). Egg and Spoon Race



At the conclusion of the heats and prior to the respective finals, His Worship the Mayor of Rugby, Councillor Gordon Collett and Mrs. Collett, arrived to pay an official visit to Willoughby.

After a welcoming speech by the Chairman, Fred Mitchell, the Mayor and Mayoress were asked to start the finals and present the respective prizes — writing pads, donated by Mr. T. Fletcher, sweets and lollipops.

Following the sports, the children lined up, youngest in front, to be led by the Chairman to the Village Hall for the Jubilee Tea, splendidly prepared by members of the Women's Institute, the tables all being decorated for the Jubilee. Some eighty children under the age of sixteen sat down to tea supervised by the ladies.

Meanwhile, adult sports were under way at the playing field, led off by a Wellie-Wanging competition. Among the contestants was the Mayor of Rugby, complete with chain of office. The best throws, apart from one notable effort which almost demolished the kitchen window of the Rose Inn, were:-

Mrs. Joce Hallam — Ladies

Mr. Eric Palmer — Gents

One notable event was the Ladies' Sack Race, during which Mrs. Sabine and Mrs. Thomas collided with hilarious results.

The culmination of the day's events was a Tug-of-War, teams being some fifteen-a-side. Despite the queries of some participants, we were all assured that the rope provided was capable of the job in hand. Under the coaching of Cyril Pcttifer and Bill Hall the respective teams commenced the task and at full strain on the first pull the rope broke depositing all participants soundly on the ground in a galaxy of arms and legs much to the amusement of all! A replacement rope was quickly provided and the winning pulls were completed by the Jim Howkins team.

Following a survey of the village by the committee, it was agreed that all children aged sixteen years and under would receive from the Jubilee Committee a Silver Jubilee Crown and Commemorative Note Pad. These were distributed by committee members.

### **Willoughby Silver Jubilee Project**

At the completion of the village celebration in June 1977, the inhabitants were circularised as to their preference for a "Jubilee Project".

The W.S.J. Committee declared an overwhelming majority for a lychgate at the church. The W.S.J.C. then approached Mr. Terry Richardson, College Farm Willoughby, with a view to his drawing-up plans for approval of the local Church Council and the diocesan authorities.

The plans were duly completed and approved by the Church Council, Mr. Richardson then presented the plans to the diocesan authorities who, after considerable deliberation, rejected the plans until the Willoughby church architect Mr. Kellett had approved.

Mr. Richardson and Mr. Kellett then met and discussed the proposed lychgate and after agreeing to some modifications the plans were amended and resubmitted.

Finally, on 3rd July 1978, the necessary faculty was signed and arrangements were put in hand to commence the project some twelve months from its inception.

By March 1987 the stone walls were well on the way to completion with no unforeseen problems arising. Rag bolts were let into the top of the walls to anchor the wooden structure into position.

The structure made by George Stewart, was finally ready for assembly and transported to the site by Peter Green, (Braunston) on June 16th. By the evening of the 16th the lychgate, which was manufactured using the old method of wooden pegs and dowels, had been bolted in position. There then followed a few applications of creosote, darkened with bitumastic, which blended the new members into their new surroundings.

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On Sunday, 15th July, the felting and lathing was completed and slating commenced and by Monday, 23rd July, the building work was completed. The entrance gate and posts had been refurbished by Jim Walton to give a very smart appearance. The official dedication service was held on Sunday, 29th July, 1979. The Rev. Gerald Knight officiated. There were some sixty persons in the congregation.

The service commenced with hymn 365 "Praise My Soul The King Of Heaven" followed by prayers and two lessons read by Mrs. Vanessa Cuthbert and Mr. F. L. Mitchell.

The choir sang the anthem "O How Amiable Are Thy Dwellings".

There was then a procession to the lychgate where a brief dedication service was held. The congregation then processed back into the church to sing hymn 166 "All People That On Earth Do Dwell", followed by Prayers and hymn 260 "Ye That Know The Lord Is Gracious".

In his address Rev. Knight spoke of the enthusiasm which was generated by the Jubilee Committee, and all the many helpers whose efforts would now stand forever as a memorial to our Queen's Silver Jubilee.

As a finale, the National Anthem was sung by the congregation to end a most memorable service.

One job remained, the laying of the lychgate floor, using old and indistinct headstones, reversed. These were moved and laid in place on Thursday, 9th August, 1979, completing the job.

The total cost of the project was £210.56, and the amount in fund was £228.86, leaving a balance of £18 to be applied towards providing a light in the new lychgate.

F.L.M.

August, 1979

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

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### SAWBRIDGE

About one and a half miles to the south west of Willoughby lies the hamlet of Sawbridge. Sawbridge is one of several hamlets which together form one of the largest civil parishes in Warwickshire, known as Wolfhamcote.

Three hundred years ago it was recorded that some twenty-nine houses were at Sawbridge — today there are only fourteen. The remains of some of the old houses can still be found and in certain of the fields the mounds indicating house platforms are evident.

Sawbridge today remains a scattered community — many of the houses are interesting architecturally — especially to note is one dwelling which has been identified as a 14th century "Hall House". restoration is in hand and it is hoped that eventually, access to the public will be possible.

At one time Sawbridge boasted both a watermill and a windmill. The former was near the bridge over the river Leam — the access to Willoughby from the south west. This bridge was maintained in the 15th - 16th centuries using funds from the Willou<sup>g</sup>hb<sup>y</sup> Charity.

Today, Sawbridge remains a mysterious place, peaceful, picturesque, and largely unspoiled by progress.

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## CHAPTER TWENTY - THREE

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### A FUND RAISING EFFORT

Originally published in the 1983 handbook of the Midlands Club Cricket Conference.

Our small village of Willoughby (inhab. 410) has supported a Cricket Club since the latter part of the nineteenth century, but the first documentary evidence is contained in a minute book dated 2nd April, 1901 — still in our possession. I make this point at the beginning of a quite remarkable two year period in our Club's history.

During its eighty year history, the Club has used a number of "homes" within the village, but in 1953 had secured the use of "The Green" on a more or less permanent basis. The tenancy of Ivy House Farm being under Sid Ivens, at that time a Committee member and player of some note! This feeling of security then rubbed off on the membership and a wooden pavilion was erected at a cost of £90, essentially for changing and having match teas (a facility Willoughby had always been noted for). This pavilion was developed with loving care and attention during the next twenty-five years with numerous additions; toilet block, storage facilities, etc., all clad in wood with an asbestos roof, thereby hangs-the-tail. Asbestos is reasonably durable, but does get brittle with age and leaks began to develop in varying proportions until they became something of a hazard. Modifications and alterations were required.

The story really started in 1973, when our Club Chairman, Sid Ivens, retired from farming local<sup>y</sup> land which included the cricket field known as "The Green". The club were then able to purchase our four acre ground, which was then set up in trust for perpetuity. The Club Committee realised at this juncture that there<sup>er</sup> Part<sup>e</sup> was a very real possibility of sufficient support from our membership and particularly the village to raise the necessary funds to extend our present wooden pavilion.

An examination in 1976 of probable costs of such an extension revealed, not surprisingly, a somewhat prohibitive £12,000, and this was before planning permission had been sought. The planning authorities were sympathetic but unenthusiastic about extending a wooden building!

Very tentatively discussions then took place in private, concerning starting from scratch and building (on what served as a car park) a brick and tile pavilion with main sewer connections. The main thought at this time was, let's find out the worst; establish planning permission, without commitment, before going to the membership and "frightening them to death". After very many late-night meetings concerning design and requisite facilities, planning permission was sought by Dick Anderson — our architect — and on 5th March, 1980, the Borough Council Planning Committee approved of the idea by sanctioning the quite unique design of building, to be built specifically for use ancillary to the game of cricket.

There was considerable elation among the committee on whose shoulders this project had so far rested until we all realised that we, maybe, had two big hurdles still to scale.

Firstly, our members, who, until this time may have had an idea that moves "were afoot" to either rebuild or build-a-new, but were not aware of progress, principally because no expense whatever, had up to this point been incurred. Secondly, the question of fund raising, particularly as at the date of planning permission being granted the Club had just £2,000 on deposit. The expected target figure was £25,000 and no guarantees of any cash from any source whatever, except the goodwill of our members and the population of the village of Willoughby.

A daunting task, but an extraordinary general meeting was held in the Willoughby Village Hall on 11th May, 195() and our members were *for* the scheme — a handful. however, were apprehensive, but prepared to support the idea! A fund raising committee was set up under the secretaryship of Brian Hall. This appointment was decided upon due to the already heavy load entrusted to the Club Secretary, Fred Mitchell in the day-to-day running of a very thriving cricket club. The terms of reference were quite simple:

To prove that this project could be achieved within a reasonable time scale;

(i) To raise £10,000 by March 31st. 1981

(ii) To continue to raise money until the project was completely paid.

Following a number of meetings a plan of campaign was evolved which ultimately should carry the club through to its target!

**Centurion Club** — £25 per annum lottery, 100 members pledged themselves for a three year term. Raised £4,000.

**Sponsored Walks** — Three annual walks involving some 250 persons. Raised £3,000

**Covenants** — Raised £1,250

**Auctions** — Two village 50/50 Auctions which in themselves were most entertaining. Raised £1,500.

**Dance and Barbeques** — Raised a total of £1,500

Folk Evenings — Raised £500

**Buy-a-Brick Appeal** A selected feature wall within the new building, so far raised £1,000

**Ladies' Section** — The Club's ladies' section (some 20 strong) have organised many smaller events at different venues; fashion shows, jumble sales, jewellery parties, seconds sales, coffee evenings, sponsored slimming, raffles, gala day (to coincide with the Club's annual six-a-side). In total raising £4,000.

**Olde Tyme Dance** — Raised £72.

By 31st March, 1981, the committee had raised £9,900 and following another

Extraordinary General Meeting, the members agreed to the scheme going ahead and put out to tender.

By this time the Club was positively buzzing with anticipation — £9,900 in eight and a half months; can the momentum be maintained?

The fund grew:

£9,900	March, 1981
£12,000	June, 1981
£14,000	September, 1981

Applications had been made to all the leading sports organisations, but total rejection always resulted, presumably because we were a single sport village organisation. Breweries were approached but despite many protracted meetings nothing was forthcoming. One bright light at this time was the Rugby Borough Council, who had granted on completion, a sum of £2,500 to the project and had recommended to the West Midlands Sports Council their support (this was to no avail).

The grant ultimately turned out to be the only outside assistance the Club received, and the committee will be eternally grateful to the Borough Council for their support and confidence. The lack of a substantial grant was something of a set back, but undeterred the fund raising committee kept going. The architect had by this time established three firm tenders, and a final figure for building and the necessary ancillary services of anything varying from £30,000 to £70,000, so this was it, could we raise the funds?

A quote for £31,000 was finally settled — our Builder, Neal Hallam, was appointed and being a life long Club player we all knew that a great deal of affection would be built into the new pavilion.

Fund raising continued:

£15,500	November, 1981
£17,500	January, 1982

After such a great start, £15,000 in fifteen months, we were fired with enthusiasm and decided unreservedly to continue, furthermore, a commencing date for the project was stated as October, 1981.

The first sod was cut on Saturday, 24th October, 1981, and by Friday, 20th November the difficult task of sewer connections, manholes and a 150 metre run of pipework was completed, footings were almost completed when the appalling weather of December, 1981, halted work for almost ten weeks, but the spring of 1982 was good and great strides were made, by June 1982, we were ready for the roof trusses.

The fitting of the roof made all our members realise what a wonderful structure we were soon to possess attractive and functional, labour saving and a building to be proud of!

Fund raising continued:

£24,000	August 1982
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As September approached and the completion of the building works, the final fittings were made, services connected, pathways laid all in preparation for a big opening! Sunday, 10 October was fixed as the date of the official Opening and the ten days prior to that were taken up with decorating. A small army of members turned the bare plaster walls into a pavilion just-like-home. Doors were varnished, windows had venetian blinds fitted, lights were shaded, floors carpeted.

The opening day dawned a fine day, more than we dared hope for. A commemorative match Willoughby XII vs. Invitation XII — guest umpires and scorer — started at 1.30 p.m., following official photographs. An after match meal was served in the old pavilion and players took nostalgic last showers in the old surroundings. The opening ceremony commenced at 7.45 p.m. when all the invited members were welcomed by the Club Chairman and following a résumé of the entire project by the Club Secretary, the builder Neal Hallam

and architect Dick Anderson exchanged ceremonial keys. The local vicar, Rev. D. W. Pharaoh formally "blessed the building", before Brian Hall, the Fund Raising Secretary introduced George Sharp Northants C.C.C. wicketkeeper — who then performed the official opening.

Bouquets were presented to Mrs. Sharp and Mrs. Collett, wife of the Chairman, Rugby Borough Council Amenities Committee, as a token of the Club's appreciation of services rendered!

This was it — In just 883 da<sup>y</sup>s since the fund was started some £25,000 had been raised, a pavilion built, and to finish our commitment, our bank has covered us

Fund raising will continue for twelve months yet, but within five years of planning permission being granted, all will be paid for!

F. L. M November, 1982

## CHAPTER TWENTY- FOUR

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### RECOLLECTIONS OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

At this time, that is in 1989, we have just passed the 50th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. Inevitably, recollections of this significant date spring to mind. Willoughby is only a small place but it took its responsibilities seriously. Very quickly, air-raid wardens were appointed although the writer can only remember one by name Mr. Richard (Dick) Martin, who was then landlord of the Rose Inn. One of the first duties which was enjoined upon us was the blacking out of all windows. The task proved to be something of a challenge when it came to blocking in the tiny panes with fantastic shapes bordering the larger windows in the church.

This was the time of the first great evacuation. The Village Hall became the reception centre and, on the appointed day, the village elders were all there but no one arrived. This went on for a day or two and some of the reception committee became extremely put-out. In fact, their patience was exhausted! However, at last, a lady teacher from Coventry arrived with a small class of children. There was no room for them in the village school, but the parish reading room was commandeered for them. This is now part of the former school house although, in the 1950's, it became the infants' classroom and so part of the school. Incidentally the teacher from Coventry was a Miss Joyce Plant, a relative of Mr. Alfred Lowke, who is mentioned elsewhere in this book, as a village character.

This was the "phoney" war period and things were fairly quiet. In 1940, of course, everything changed. After the fall of France, the fear was that the enemy would land parachutists in England. We were told to keep a keen look-out for these and a rota was organised to watch during the long summer evenings from the church tower! Most of the watchers thought it was quite fun. There was a thrill in climbing the tower steps and emerging through a kind of trap-door at the top, and the view from the tower was wonderful. But when enemy planes began attacking Britain, the vicar at that time, Mr. E. D. Rennison, declared that the church tower was no safe place, so we gave that up and soon reorganised ourselves as fire-watchers. The fire-watchers were based in the parish reading room. It had ceased to be a schoolroom when all the children went back to Coventry during the "phoney" war period. We took blankets to make ourselves as comfortable as possible and to keep ourselves warm, winter now having arrived, and we were supposed to patrol the village at intervals throughout the night. In fact, some patrolling was done but there was a good deal of card-playing

and also a fair amount of sleeping. It was not a very comfortable way to spend the night, but we would set off for work the next morning feeling very proud and virtuous and looking forward to a good night's sleep at the end of the day. We did riot have centrally heated homes and work-places in those days and we found that the worst result of lack of sleep was feeling terribly cold.

It was during 1940-41 that the village Home Guard was formed and, a little later, the Fire Service. The Home Guard was real "Dad's Army" stuff. Mr. Raymond Sheaf (Tubby) was the leader and he was the only one that had a gun. But they persevered with their parades and exercises, and much later they did actually get a gun each.

The village firemen trained like athletes, rolling out their hoses in record time and making good use of the village pond beside Ivy House, for practice purposes. A very keen member of the team was the Rev. E. D. Rennison. He was an athlete himself, playing cricket and tennis with equal zest until both clubs folded up because of the stringent demands of the war period. Other keen members were Frederick Hancock and Sidney Ivens, but almost every man who was not eligible for the armed forces was involved in one or other of the home defence services. The village firemen were called out just twice, once to a rick fire and once to a burning mangel clamp, but the will was there. Mr. Charles Jarvis became a member of the National Fire Service and he fought fires in Coventry during the blitz. Willoughby, itself, was spared the devastation of heavy bombing although we could hear what was happening over Coventry all too clearly.

Apart from a shower of incendiaries, which did no harm one evening, nothing actually landed on the village. This was our good luck because there was a bomb at Woolscott which killed a horse and two or three near the Barby Lane in Sid Dodd's fields which left liege craters. There was also one in the canal near Braunston which breached the canal and caused flooding.

At this time, the village gave shelter to another type of evacuee. These were families from Coventry who slept in Willoughby but continued to work in Coventry, travelling by car each day. They must have been in essential work or they would not have had a petrol allowance. Petrol rationing was a thing which played a very important part in everyday life. The two Miss Jacksons travelled to Leamington each day during 1939-42 to teach at Bath Place School, and a fine old trail it was getting there. When war broke out the train from Dunchurch station ceased to run. The only alternative was Stockton station which was seven miles or so away. They cycled to Stockton each day after setting out in the dark because we had "summer" time all the year round. Their father had a car and would willingly have taken them but, of course, there was petrol rationing. In their case the ration was nil and the car, a new one, stood in the garage until it was sold to the district nurse.

Travel by car had other problems, not least being the blackout. Like the windows, car lamps had to be blacked out. Drivers were only allowed a slit of light in their headlights, about one quarter inch wide. Despite this, lorry drivers on the A45 as elsewhere continued to travel at night, transporting all kinds of loads. Their work, of course, was essential to the war effort but it was very hazardous.

The Village Hall, at this time, came into its own. It had been built only six years earlier and there was no committee room then and a very tiny kitchen. But scarcely a week passed without a dance of some kind, usually for a war charity. There was a weekly "hop" on Wednesdays which cost 6 old pence (21p), and a weekly whist drive. On Tuesday evenings there were film shows with very good full-length films. The Wednesday "hops" and the film shows were purely to keep up the morale because travel to outside entertainments was very difficult. The Women's Institute continued with its meetings and made various contributions to the national effort including knitting for the forces; <sup>BA</sup> laclava helmets, sea-boot stockings and woollens for the Russian front. They also operated a "pie scheme" which helped out with food rationing. The Will-

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oughby Dramatic Society persevered with its productions of "Carpet Slippers" in 1940 "Forced Landing" in 1941 and "Fresh Fields" in 1943. But after the death of its organiser, Mrs Jackson, in August 1943, and the previous departure of Dr. Gray, its producer, to join H.M. Forces, it was forced to close down.

The war was a grim time but, looking back, one remembers the sense of purpose and of community, and all the village entertainments; and it seems to have been, despite everything, a cheerful time. High spots were the "War Weapons" weeks initiated by the national savings movement. There was a "Wings for Victory" week, a "Salute the Soldiers" week, and another one for the navy. Each time Willoughby's target was £1,000 and each time we passed it. For the first two we trebled the target. It seemed incredible, but people were all working like beavers at their essential jobs and the money came pouring in. There was the usual replica of a giant thermometer outside the Village Hall, which was watched eagerly.

When the buzz bombs (flying bombs or V1's) and the rockets (V2's) started coming there was a new wave of evacuees; from London this time. They were probably not very comfortable in the empty vicarage and they did not take to village life — no fish and chips and no shops, they said. They soon went back again. By now there was a feeling that the end was in sight. When it came it was almost a surprise. The school opened on that May morning which became known as V.F. Day, but only a few children arrived. Then came one who had heard on the radio that the war in Europe was over and what seemed more important, all schools were to close for the day. It did not seem to be long until V.J. Day when we danced on the Four Crosses car park to music from loud speakers.

There only remained the victory celebrations which came in 1946. Food was still in short supply but, with good organisation and invaluable help from Mr. Sheaf who owned Tubby's cafe, a goodly spread was provided in three sittings at the Village Hall and a good time was had by all.

M. F. Ivens  
nee Jackson  
Head Mistress 1943-50