

PREFACE

This contribution to the Millennium celebrations has been in a simmering state from the time, some twenty years ago, when as a newcomer to Willoughby, I became fascinated by the range of history to be found here.

I realised that Heather Hamilton's unpublished dissertation of 1970 had circulated to a few but had preceded the publication of the Broughton Lodge definitive report on the Roman and Anglo-Saxon excavations. That publication heralded a surge of interest in the village. A Willoughby Heritage Group was formed resulting in some meetings and the formation of a substantive archive. This is regularly accessed by other newcomers to the community and has been the source of assistance with correspondence from enquirers world-wide.

This modest booklet is offered as an indication of the existence of the archive and a willingness to be involved in its use, either by direct visit or through correspondence.

Henry Rowlinson June 1999

<Contact details removed>

Acknowledgement: Very sincere thanks must be extended to my son Christopher Rowlinson for taking on the task of converting the product of an old battered typewriter to the elegance of computerised type-face. He also designed the cover.

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TWO MILLENNIA OF HISTORY IN WILLOUGHBY

Willoughby on the Wolds is an historic place but to the casual observer the present village offers very little to confirm that statement - apart from the twelfth century parish church. As yet there is no archaeological evidence of prehistoric occupation of the area immediately surrounding the village but Neolithic sites still exist in the area, notably at Stanton-on-the-Wolds and probably at Widmerpool.^{1 & 2}

The earliest reference to the district is to be found in the Antonine Itinerary (early 3rd century A.D.) naming the Roman camp sited at the Broughton cross roads as 'Vernometum'. One accepted interpretation of that name is "great sacred grove" suggesting that the site had religious, possibly pagan, significance.

The Roman Army occupied Vernometum between 200 and 400 A.D.; a coin analysis from the limited excavations undertaken records a peak of occupation from around 330 to 348AD. During the construction of the modern flyover road across the Fosseway (the A46) in 1964 the site revealed a part of a Romano-British settlement and an Anglo-Saxon cemetery. A definitive report was published in 1993 providing full details of the finds and the contents of over one hundred burials.³

The Romano-British settlement apparently extended from the fields adjacent to the flyover across the valley overlooking the brook. A corn drier was excavated and an analysis made of the various crop seeds found in the vicinity. Any future excavations over this site will require official approval and currently there are restrictive covenants placed upon the owners.

There is as yet no evidence of a Roman occupation within the village but it might be reasonable to assume that the local community, sited only half a mile away from the Fosseway military site would have provided means for sustenance and socialising.

Dr. William Stukeley, one of the most respected antiquarians of the early 18th century, visited the village in 1722. In his published records of that visit⁴ he quotes the villagers' folklore that "they tell of a place where the soil is perfectly black though all adjacent land be red and they (the villagers) have a notion of great riches being underground".

This reference to the colour of the soil may be linked to the mid-9th century Danish raids when the settlement was destroyed by fire. Dr. Stukeley also referred to the finding of mosaic paving but the precise location was not defined, He had made this special visit to Willoughby on the strength of these reports and as a result of his obsession with Roman remains. ⁵ He also drew a sketch of the view of Vernometum as seen from the Fosseway.

The Anglo-Saxon cemetery upon the same site as Vernometum has only been partially excavated but has provided a considerable insight into the history of the area in the 6th and 7th centuries. The road from Back Lane over the A46 covers over part of the cemetery excavated in 1964 to 1966. The published report ³ provides details of over one hundred burials many of them exhibiting the traditional Saxon use of stones to cover the bodies and in this area using the plentiful supply of stones from the Roman road.

The original route of the Roman road at this point as marked on the O.S. maps, was some one hundred yards to the west and indicates a much straighter line through the existing fields on either side. The gradual growth of the cemetery over a period of some two hundred years to the east resulted in the much later trackway avoiding the cemetery and in doing so producing a much wider curve to the route. Thus it is today a notable feature of the A46, being a Roman road with a marked divergence from the expected straight line.

One of the results of the Danish and Scandinavian invasions during the mid 9th century was the naming of settlements; thus 'wilgebi' reflected an acknowledged source of willow trees, a valuable social commodity, and this is the name recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086. The distinctive suffix appears as 'super le Wolde' in a document in 1251 and in its present form the name occurs from the mid 17th century. Many similar ancient villages introduced daughter communities - also bearing Scandinavian name suffixes - as at Willoughby, the settlement of West Thorpe. ⁶

The later growth of the village prior to the Norman Conquest is a matter of obscurity ('The Dark Ages') but it is most likely that the cultivated area had reached the northern limit of the present parish since the frequent short right-angled turns in the field structure suggest that when the parish boundary was agreed, probably in the tenth century, the fields along it were under strip cultivation. The other two boundaries (the parish is roughly triangular in shape) follow the Fosseyway to the east and the line of the brook to the west.

The 1605 Willoughby estate map was prepared to provide for the eventual sale of the Willoughby family land. It provides a very clear representation of the village layout, depicting the extent of the inhabited area with its farmhouses and lanes.⁷ The boundary of the community was very much the same as it is now after four hundred years and to some extent reflects the "infill" policy decisions concerning modern building planning proposals.⁸

For nearly four hundred years, from 1255 to 1618, the village community was dominated by the Willoughby family and their manor estate. This originated from the piecemeal acquisition of land, beginning in 1233 by the sale of the mill, and the two adjacent acres to a wealthy Nottingham merchant, Ralph Bugge, who became the founder of the Willoughby family dynasty. He came to live in Willoughby and continued to acquire land⁹ eventually handing on to his son, Richard, extensive property sufficient to warrant in 1250 an application to Worksop Priory for the right to 'have free chantry in the chapel situated in his court at Wylgeby'.¹⁰

Richard's son and successor (also Richard) was regarded by his tenants as the lord of the manor. By this time the family had changed its name to Willoughby and by 1327 the Manor had virtually embraced the whole village in which it and the church owned the majority of the land.

The legal control of the community would have been similar to other manorial open-field villages with the Manor Court being responsible for agricultural and social controls. The Court Rolls from 1376 to 1615 in the Middleton Manuscripts collection held by Nottingham University await further research on them to provide a clearer and much needed picture of the mediaeval village community.

By 1550 the Willoughby family had ceased to reside in the village and were living in Wollaton, having sold the Willoughby village parsonage to 'two London gentlemen' to assist with the cost of building Wollaton Hall in 1588. The Estate map of 1605, previously referred to, depicts the existence of a Manor House in the field alongside Widmerpool Lane. The date of this house is unknown but a later Manor House was built in 1686 on the site of the "Parsonage" shown on the 1605 map. The house survived until 1979 when it was demolished and the three 'Manor Cottages' built upon the same site.

Although the Domesday Survey of 1086 did not record that 'Wilgebi' had a priest or a church, nevertheless the dedication of the present church is held to date from about 100 years later and was probably part of the recorded endowments to maintain Worksop Priory.

Of the existing building the north and south arcades of the nave are the oldest portions dating to the early part of the 15th Century, contemporary with the signing of the Magna Charta. The architectural details of the arcade pillars are dissimilar and suggest they were built at different times, by different masons under the direction of two benefactors. The tower with its broached spire and the original chancel date from the early 14th century. Very poor attention given to repairs during the 18th and 19th centuries resulted in extensive restoration to the chancel in 1890.

An upstairs gallery was erected at the tower end of the church in 1829 and displayed the royal arms of King William IV. This gallery was demolished probably during the restoration of 1890 but the royal arms were recently reinstated on the wall of the tower. In 1908 the nave and aisles were partially renovated and the south porch completely replaced. The chancel and roof were again repaired in 1980.

The clock in the tower was placed there by the villagers to commemorate the end of the First World War. It is maintained by the Parish Council which has recently financed the automation of the winding mechanism.

There are six bells in the tower, five dating from 1856 with the newest being dedicated in May 1966. All were cast by Taylors of Loughborough.

Two small portions of mediaeval decorated plaster have been preserved on the walls of the arcades.

The Chantry Chapel, containing effigies and tomb-chests of the early Willoughby family is of special importance as a reminder of mediaeval religious thought embracing the doctrine of purgatory. Such chantries were endowed to enable the parish priest to say masses, often three times a day, for the souls of the benefactors, their families and the monarchy.¹¹

The eight effigies date from the early part of the 14th century to around 1450; a descriptive plaque has been attached to the north wall of the chapel following considerable restoration work in 1984.

In 1616 the Willoughby family finally disposed of the manor property enabling some 19 tenant farmers and cottagers to buy land. The remainder of the manor was sold in 1618 to Sir Thomas Hutchinson of Owthorpe Hall, the father of the famous Colonel Hutchinson. At this time the lands of all the farmers lay in arable strips intermingled in the three great open fields with common pasture still open to all with rights of grazing.

The manor court no longer functioned, the village community itself being entirely responsible for its government and the administration of the open field system. This would be carried out by elected officers consisting of church wardens, a constable and later, an overseer of the poor.

The picture of Willoughby during the first quarter of the 17th century appears to indicate that the majority of villagers enjoyed a relatively high standard of living for that time as the sale of the manor had strengthened rather than weakened the economy.

For the next 150 years, despite the Civil War, life in Willoughby would have changed but little from the general feeling of security within a stable community, reflecting the increased prosperity under William 3rd, Queen Anne and the first two Georges.

By 1799 however the pattern of life in Willoughby was completely changed by the effects of the Parliamentary Enclosure Act when the traditional methods of the old open-field farming were transformed almost overnight into that of independent enclosed farms.

The first responsibility of the Enclosure Commissioners was to provide for public and private roads and footpaths. The public roads were to be sixty feet wide - which might seem to have been excessive for country byways. This decision stemmed from the resultant effects of wet weather upon muddy clay conditions of the lanes now being used increasingly by more travellers and drove-herders negotiating the worst patches by using the wide verges. These verges are still a familiar sight on the approaches to Willoughby. Many became used as allotment gardens and are recorded on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1884 and 1921. Some of the original 19th century allotment plots on Back Lane are still rented from the Parish Council.

The 'Parish Field' on Occupation Lane is shown on the 1799 Enclosure Map as being in the possession of the Parish Highways Surveyor who handed on its ownership to the newly formed Parish Council in 1894. The field is currently let by annual auction on a nine-months grazing agreement through the Parish Council.

1. Thoronton Society Transcripts
2. The Widmerpool manuscript 1977
3. Broughton Lodge excavations, Nottingham University 1993
4. Piggott, S William Stukeley 2nd edition 1985
5. Itinerarium Curiosum 2nd edition 1776
6. English Place-name Society, Nottinghamshire
7. Rushcliffe Borough Council. Local Plan Deposit Draft 1993
8. Middleton Collection Nottingham University
9. J.C.Holt Willoughby deeds Pipe Rolls pubn 1962
10. Middleton manuscripts 1911
11. G.H.Cook. Mediaeval chantries 1963

The Civil War and The Village Cross

During the early part of the 17th century, Willoughby villagers would have been involved in the break-up and sale of the manor lands with the resulting establishment of a community newly based upon a number of smaller landowners. Developing national events would probably have been of lesser interest than the year by year struggle to live by subsistence farming but the villagers could not have been entirely unaware of the rumblings of clashes between Parliament and King Charles 1st.

In 1628, Charles - ruler for only three years - was petitioned by Parliament not to raise taxes without their consent and reluctantly he agreed. Frustrated, the King dismissed Parliament in 1629 and began raising revenue by controversial taxation. During the next decade the issue of Divine Right became another source of conflict with Parliament. In January 1642, the King made an attempt to arrest five troublesome members of Parliament, but failed. Disputes continued, Parliament demanding control of the army and a reform of the Church - very much influenced by the Catholicism of the House of Stuart.

On the 12th August 1642, Charles called upon 'all subjects who could bear arms northward of the Trent and southward 20 miles' to join a march to London where he expected to exert his authority. Ten days later the King declared war on Parliament and raised his standard in the grounds of Nottingham castle.

The effect upon the village community for the following four years is not recorded although events at Shelford, Newark, Langar and Wiverton have passed into the history books.

Charles formerly surrendered in 1646 but during the next two years the Royalist cause was still very much alive. Thus it happened that in July 1648, a resurgent Royalist force of some five to six hundred came from Yorkshire via Lincoln en route to London. The Parliamentary army headquarters at Belvoir was alerted and the two forces came into contact at Widmerpool. Running skirmishes began which extended towards Willoughby - thus history and the Ordnance Survey records the village as having a 'battlefield'. This was not one of the 'great' battles of the Civil War but is notable insofar as it was the last unsuccessful attempt by the Royalists to regain influence.

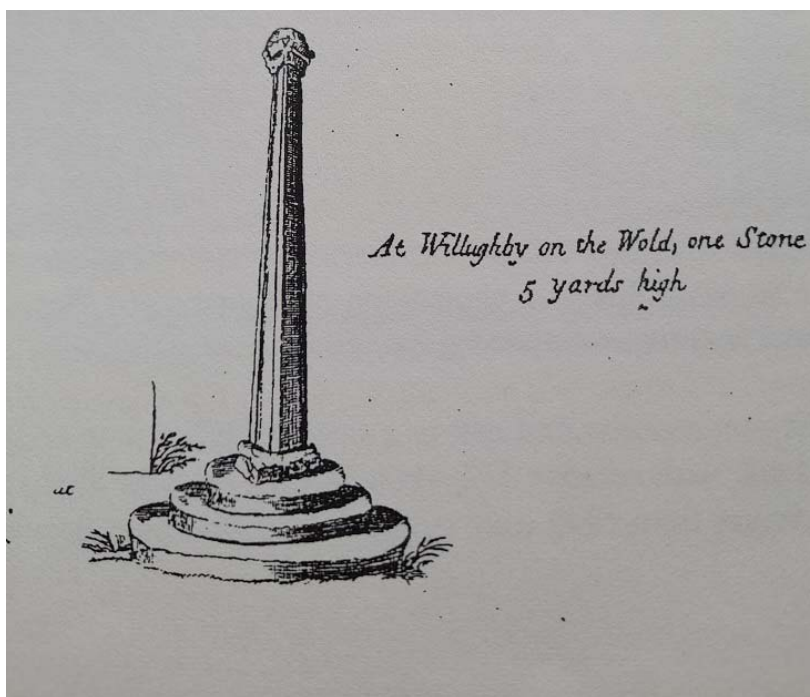
They lost over a hundred men including Colonel Michael Stanhope whose remains lie inside the parish church - with a memorial plate in the gravestone. No other record exists of the casualties from both sides except for a brief entry in the burial records at Widmerpool church of two Parliamentary soldiers.

The events of the day were printed in a contemporary pamphlet ¹². The battle was reputed to have taken place in a beanfield to the north of the Church and seen by villagers from the church tower. Modern research suggests that there could well have been another site to the north-east of the village, but as yet there is no archaeological evidence.

The ancient village cross comes into the picture at this time. Some fifteen feet high, it was sited at the cross roads in the centre of the village. There is a legend, perpetuated by William Stukeley who visited in 1722, that Cromwellian troops were about to destroy the cross when the vicar intervened with ale and a sermon. Stukeley's book contains a drawing of the cross which was again noted by later historians in 1797 and 1813. It is probable that it was destroyed by about 1830 and all that remains is one of the plinth stones which is to be incorporated into the wall of the new 'Crosshill' estate ¹³.

12. An impartial and true relation of the Great Victory on July 5th 1648.

13. Stapleton, A. Notes on the Crosses of Nottinghamshire 1903



Schools and Chapels

Some insight into the education of village children in 18th century Willoughby is provided in terms of the 1752 will of Samuel Wells in which he left £50 for the education of six poor children. His wishes and those of other benefactors are listed on the village charities wall-board inside the church bell-ringers' chamber. Some scholars were taught in a screened off part of the western end of the church. By 1860 the national policy of providing formal education resulted in the building of the present school. Land for the purpose was donated by the Rev. John Noble in 1861 and the building was completed by 1863.

During the 1970's and 80's the County Council declared proposals to close the school because of falling roll numbers, but the villagers initiated petitions, successful on each occasion. The school now has a thriving record of excellent examination results being declared in the 1998 'league tables' with some 48 children in attendance.

Nonconformity appears to have received strong support in the Willoughby community. As early as 1689 there was a meeting house registered ¹⁴ in the names of George Cam and William Bosworth and in 1718 Richard Walker's house was certified as a building for religious worship as was 'Widow Smith's house', called Stableford House in 1720 ¹⁵.

The Methodist movement became a dominant feature of 19th century religious life. The earliest chapel to be built, reputedly at the end of the 18th century, was Wesleyan - on a plot in Chapel Lane now occupied by 'The Firs'. Although it was restored in 1865 a new Methodist chapel was built in 1890 on a site in Main Street where number 129 now stands. This chapel was demolished in 1987 and the congregation now uses the Parish Church.

A Primitive Methodist Chapel was erected in 1871 on ground adjacent to number 86 Main Street; a photograph of around 1910 shows it to be a substantial building with seating for 150.

A Baptist congregation first met in a small cobbler's shop on the corner of Church Lane with number 112 Main Street (The Old Post Office). The initial meetings from 1845 were sponsored by the Upper Broughton Baptist Church.

A record of meetings and membership exists from that time and continue from 1878 when a new chapel was constructed on the corner of Widmerpool lane - now 96 Main Street. It had seating for 200¹⁶. The chapel became disused by the mid 1970's and in April 1980 an application to the Home Secretary was made to remove the buried remains from the adjoining cemetery.

14. Copnall H. Nottinghamshire County records, 17th century, 1915

15 Meaby K.T. Nottinghamshire County Records... 18th century, 1947

16. Baptist Chapel records. In the possession of Mr. & Mrs. J.Ward and may be seen



Main Street circa 1910 showing the Primitive Methodist Chapel (second building on the left) and The Three Horse Shoes middle distance on the right).

The Village Charities

The Charities Board on the wall of the bell-ringers' chamber in the parish church records the origins of the ancient village charities. The text is almost illegible and sited high on the wall. However, on the first page of the 1894 Parish Council Minutes book there is a transcript which might indicate that the charities were considered to be an important responsibility of the newly elected secular council, taking over some of the duties of the church vestry.

The charities derive from the wills of five benefactors, the earliest dating from 1688 with four others from 1722 to 1752. Together these were known as 'The Poores Money', the revenue to be distributed to the poor and from one will a proportion for the teaching of poor children. In 1913 a sixth - the Garton Bequest - made available the interest on £50 for distribution to the poor at Christmas time.

The Parish Council gave grants from these bequests every year from 1894. In 1996 the Council decided to amortise the charity account but it was already agreed that the Council would 'continue to give the residents already receiving a grant the same amount until it is no longer required. The amount will not alter and no new names will be added' ¹⁷.

The 'Parish Field' (off Occupation Lane) is a relic of 18th century village administration when the highways were required to be maintained by village labour and finance. On the 1799 Enclosure Map the field is noted as being in the possession of the Highways Surveyor. He was responsible for letting it with the proceeds going towards the upkeep of the lanes. It is still let, on a 9-monthly basis, by public auction conducted by the Parish Council in March each year.

Further reflecting an age when the community was self-sufficient, especially when ill-health or hard times fell upon families, is the existence of the Willoughby (Fallow Lodge) branch of the Nottingham Ancient Imperial United Order of Oddfellows, formed in 1846. It met in the Clubroom (now 99A Main Street) and had an enrolled membership of 89 in 1894. A large framed photograph of 47 named members, celebrating the Jubilee of the Branch, is on display in the Village Hall. The Lodge ceased to exist around 1951 when all other Lodges of the Nottingham Oddfellows were closed.

There was also a 'Willoughby Golden Star Friendly Society' - established around 1850 meeting at the Three Horse Shoes. Its membership of 16 decided to join the Oddfellows in 1910. ¹⁸

17. Parish Council Meeting Minute 96/30/6

18. Research correspondence 1992 with Mrs J.O.Neill, Burton Joyce



Village crossroads showing the Baptist Church (left) and Widmerpool Lane c.1930

Village Inns

The licence of the present Three Horse Shoes public house was granted in 1966 replacing the inn of the same name which stood on a site adjoining the present building. The older inn had been built as a private house but was later used as a cheese factory and then as a dairy. Its drinking licence had extended for over a hundred years prior to 1966.

The village also had three other inns - The Plough, the Bulls Head and the Durham Ox. The Plough (now 70 Main Street) might well have been a coaching inn for 18th century travellers along the Fosseyway. It had cheese making facilities, a thriving village industry a hundred years ago when William White's Directory records seventeen Stilton cheese makers resident in the village. The Bull's Head (now 113 Main Street) is probably one of the oldest properties and was certainly an inn in 1722 when Dr. William Stukeley records his visit there with "my landlord Gee". The Durham Ox Inn at Six Hills is mentioned here as it was within the parish boundary until just prior to 1970 when it became part of Leicestershire. The census of 1851 notes a Sarah Biddles as the owner.



The Three Horse Shoes - demolished 1966

Personalities

Village 'characters', worthies and local heroes abound in the folklore and history of rural communities and Willoughby is not without a few notable names. Probably the most well-known name connection is that of Jesse Boot, the founder of the world-wide Boots Company with members of the Boot family having lived in the village for over 150 years. Jesse's grandparents were living in Willoughby in 1815 and expecting their first child. They accepted an offer of a job with a cottage in Radcliffe on Trent and their son John was born there on 15th October 1815.

John's mother soon became very well known in the Radcliffe community for three reasons. Firstly she brought with her an inherent gift of healing and was well versed in the use of herbs - probably acquired from her mother's knowledge of the ready products of Willoughby's fields and hedgerows. Secondly, she was able to read and write and do simple arithmetic thus qualifying her to start a 'Dame School' in her cottage parlour. (Willoughby children would have had some limited form of education from the school in the Parish Church, assisted by charity monies). Thirdly, her interest in revivalist religion - the Boots were great supporters of the Radcliffe Methodists. John's mother died in 1832 when he was just 17. He worked alongside his father as an agricultural labourer and in 1838 married Elizabeth Mills of Radcliffe. Four years later they had a child who died in infancy. Both John and his wife suffered from poor health and in 1848 Elizabeth died.

John turned towards his parent's deep interest in religion and herbalism, but within a year he married again - to Mary Wills the 23 year old daughter of a man of means in the lace trade. John and Mary returned to Willoughby in the same year - 1849 - and John started to travel around the villages selling his herbal remedies. Meanwhile Mary's father had been able to find them a small house to rent at 71 Woolpack Lane in Nottingham and a very small lock-up shop in Goosegate. By this time Mary was pregnant and on 2nd June 1850 their son Jesse was born. So the story of the Boots Company has at least some of its roots in Willoughby.¹⁹

Of all the many notable village names that of Screaton may be said to be the most ancient. A family tree of recent origin records the name in 1458 together with over 100 members. A Mr Samuel Screaton was noted to have a claim to be the oldest church chorister, for in 1914, at the age of 87, he was still to be seen in the church choir every Sunday.

The name of Dalby, connected with blacksmiths in several villages in the area has been traced back to 1611.

Frank C. Matthews (1892 - 1961) played for Notts. between 1920 and 1927. His main claim to fame is for knocking a bail for 41 yards during a match against Northants in 1923 and in the same match taking eight wickets for 39 and nine for 50. In 1928 he is noted in the local Directory as being the landlord of the Three Horse Shoes.

Opposite the new Willoughby Hotel on the A46 is a derelict site upon which, until the Hotel was built, was a thriving transport cafe known as Broughton Lodge. As a tea-room in the 1930's it was visited by cyclists and ramblers and was equally well-known for its owner - G.H.Wait. In 1932, Wait relinquished his Leicester car business to run the cafe with a garage and a driving school in a nearby field. Wait also built 'Clyde' cars, named after his former Clyde Street workshop in Leicester. He also constructed a miniature passenger carrying railway in the grounds of the cafe.

The Parish Council

One reflection of village social history over the past hundred years is to be found in the minutes of the Parish Council - now preserved in the County Records Office. Parish Councils were inaugurated by the Local Government Act 1894 and continued to further the principles of the 1888 County Councils Act, extending local democracy over the whole field of public administration - with one exception. Women did not have the right to vote until 1918 - and even then there were restrictions.

Willoughby's first Parish Council met on January 1st 1895 with seven councillors (as in 1999). The early meetings concentrated upon some of the secular responsibilities of the vestry meetings including the letting of the Town Field, the roadside verges, the provision of allotment gardens and the disbursement of the charity monies. The responsibility for the maintenance of the village lanes had also been taken over from the 'Highway Surveyor'; in 1897 for instance 40 tons of ash were purchased from the Stanton Iron Foundry to surface the lanes.

Straying cattle were dealt with by the appointment of a 'pinder' (previously a vestry function) using the pinfold sited on the southern verge of Main Street marked on the 1884 O.S. map and again on the 1921 map. There is no record of the date of demolition.

The roadside verges and the Town Field were let on an annual basis, the verges providing an additional source of fodder. The practice of lettings is still maintained together with that of the few allotment gardens being cultivated.

A formal consultation procedure concerning modern residential planning proposals was finally established in 1979 following the reorganisation of local government in 1974. Until then the Minutes record discussions concerning problem sites such as those relating to the old Baptist Church, the (then) derelict New Row Cottages and the old Manor House.

The provision and maintenance of wells, mains water supply, sewerage disposal and public lighting feature in the Council's attempts to improve public facilities and the minutes patently record the very slow progress achieved. In 1938 for instance a request was made to the then Rural District Council to implement action for a mains water supply.

21 years later a similar request was made to the Leicester Water Supply Engineer, but it took another two years before a supply was installed in 1961. A report to the Council on the proposals for a sewerage system was made in 1963 but it was not until 1971 that the mains were installed taking over the practice of emptying cesspits.

A village lighting scheme was first considered by the Council in 1901 and the idea was still being discussed in 1938. By 1945 an approach was made to the Notts. & Derby Electric Power Company resulting in ten lights being installed each costing £10 to maintain per annum, and paid for by the Parish Council. Later the Rural District Council took over the responsibility and in 1964 new lighting was approved and finally installed in 1966. The present concrete standards date from 1976.

Facilities for the present playing field at Church Lane have been generously made available by the landowner on a temporary arrangement. The Friends of Willoughby School installed activity equipment for younger children with the Parish Council agreeing to fund the initial costs and on behalf of the School, the County Council ensures the maintenance of the games pitch. At the far end of the field the School has adopted a conservation area. A truly cooperative village amenity.

In 1980 the Council introduced a tree planting scheme, supported by Rushcliffe Borough Council which resulted in local families planting over 100 trees mainly in hedgerows and verges bordering the village approach roads. A plantation, dedicated to the Queen Mother's 80th birthday in 1981, is sited on Back Lane near to the junction with London Lane.

The ultimate responsibility for the provision and maintenance of the ancient network of the 15 footpaths and bridleways is that of the County Council. The Parish Council ensures that this amenity is retained by means of reporting official complaints to the County authorities.

It is interesting to observe that from 1895 to 1978 the Parish Council consisted entirely of men; in the election of 1976, the first two women were elected.

Thus from 1895 the Parish Council's minutes reflect the varied concerns of a typical agricultural community. The local government reorganisations of 1974 resulted in much closer links between the Parishes, the Borough and County Councils.

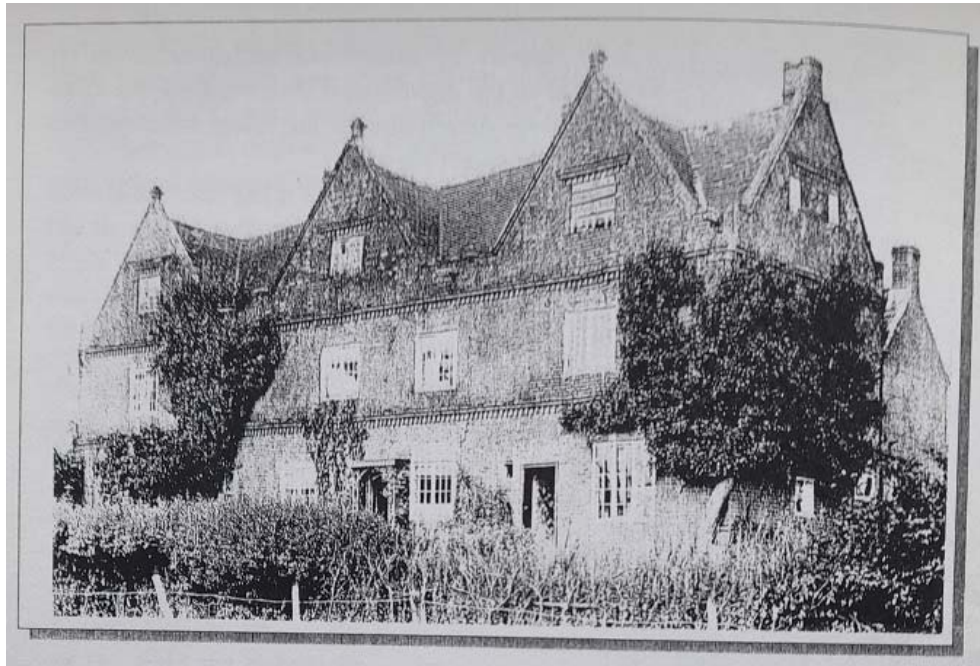
This attempt to capture a flavour of almost two millennia of life in Willoughby owes a great deal to the unpublished (but available for loan) essay by Heather Hamilton, whose dissertation on the village was compiled in 1970 when a student at Nottingham University.

I have read it so many times that inevitably some of it has transferred to the content of this shorter compilation. Heather Hamilton's study should be read by everyone in the village who has a feeling for history and I commend her masterly analysis of the enclosures, especially now in the two hundredth year anniversary of the Parliamentary Act which transformed the look of the countryside and our agricultural history.

Henry Rawlinson June 1999

WILLOUGHBY HERITAGE GROUP - ARCHIVE COLLECTION

Antiquaries - Thoroton 1677, Throsby 1790, Stukeley 1722, Green 1964
Battle of Willoughby 1648
Census Returns 1841 - 1891
Chapels
Charities
Church: Monuments; Cantry Chapel
County Record (Archives) collection
Directies extracts 1832 - 1941
Electoral Registers 1976 to date
Family histories
Footpaths, fields, place-names
Friendly societies
Hearth Tax returns 1674
Heather Hamilton's dissertation 1970
Manor House
Maps 1605, 1799, 1884, 1921
Marriages 1682 - 1812
Monumental inscriptions in church and churchyard
Oral history tapes
Parish Council Minutes - selected extracts from 1895 - 1995
Photographs, 25mm slides and aerial surveys
School
Thorpe in the Glebe
Vernometum (Roman) & Anglo-Saxon cemetery
Village Cross
Widmerpool 'mss'
Willoughby family



The Manor House - built 1686 and reconstructed as Manor Cottages in 1979



Main Street c.1920 showing the entrance to Chapel Lane and The Bull's Head Inn