200 Years of Willoughby Press Cuttings & Miscellany

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Thanks to all those who have helped with this project. Some of the topics are marked (HR), which is a reference to Henry Rowlinson's 1999 booklet 'Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, Two Millennia of History' click here.

Version 3 (May 2025) – Colin Aldworth, Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, feedback.cpa@gmail.com

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BAKEHOUSE

There was a Bakehouse in the village (next to the Bull's Head) from before 1889 to early 2000s. In 2004 planning permission was given to convert it into a house.

1889	'For sale by auction, the property next to the Bull's Head Inn, which includes a bakehouse. It was rented annually to Mr Green.'
1999	The 1999 survey complied by Christine Everard, lists the bakery as open, mainly for trade customers.

One resident has lived in the village since 1958 and recalls the Bake House amongst others.

"We were self sufficient, with a thriving village shop, a bake house, Wilkinsons pork butchers (making lovely sausages and pork pies) and three mobile butchers Baileys (UB), Collingtons (Wymeswold) and Sid Needham (Wysall).

The bakery was run by the Watson family - they delivered bread to all the surrounding farms and villages, as there were no supermarkets then.

Two mobile green grocers came through twice a week, and during the 1970s, a Coop van called so the villagers could shop and collect their Dividends."

BOWLING CLUB

2025 will be the centenary of the Bowling Club, and I believe that one of the original 1925 wooden sheds is still there.

1951	'Mr Ben Moorhouse of Plumtree Park has died. He was head teacher at Willoughby School from 1896 to 1923. He also founded Willougby Bowls club, and conducted the Willoughby District Choral Society many years ago.'
1967	The Nottingham Guardian had a photograph of 3 members of the bowls club winning the Triples title at Skegness.

Photograph of Bowls Club

Top Row (left to right): Albert Goodacre, Mr Moorhouse, Sam Screaton, Frank Butler, Lawrence Goodacre, Ebe Foster and Jim Draycott
Bottom Row (left to right): John Dalby, Joe Marriott, Guy Nixon, John Henson, John Baldock, Arthur Goodacre and Enoch Adams

The exact date is unknown, but as one of those pictured died in 1931, it is reasonable to assume the date is somewhere between 1925 and 1931.

BOXING MATCH

In November 1837, Willoughby was host to a boxing match, although the exact location was not stated. Bill Atkinson (Nottingham) beat Sam Merryman (Nottingham) in a £50 a side, 34 rounds boxing match at which lasted 2hrs 10 mins!

BRITISH LEGION

The Willoughby & Widmerpool branch of the British Legion were active for at least 30 years (before 1954 to at least 1985). As well as the annual Poppy Appeal, activities included a dance at the Village Hall in 1979.

BULL'S HEAD & PORK BUTCHERS Main Street
A Pub from at least 1722 to 1928, and a Pork Butchers until at least 1989.

1886	Stukeley's visit in 1722 (HR p14) refers to 'my landlord Gee', and it is likely that the Gee family continued to own the inn as it was run by Joseph & Mary Gee from 1834 to 1886 when she died. Under her deceased husband's will the inn and 10 other buildings and land, were sold by auction, the inn being purchased by Mr Sidney Wells of Keyworth for £650.
1903	Walter Corner, landlord of the Bull's Head Inn, Willoughby 'was fined for being drunk & disorderly in Willoughby, also for selling beer the day after Widmerpool Feast for which he had an occasional licence.' As a result Nottingham Bench transferred the licence to Eliza Tatham of Nottingham, but in 1905 she was told that as there had been 'a conviction against her, and others', she should take greater care in the future. She remained there until at least 1911.
1927	The Chief Constable opposed the licence renewal on the grounds that the licence was unnecessary. 'The pub 310 yards away (also owned by Messrs Worthington of Burton-on-Trent) and one 3 miles away were doing good trade & had good facilities for catering which the Bull's Head didn't'. A witness PC Dodds had 'visited several times in 12 months, never seen more than 4 customers, it was not needed'. Landlord John Wilkinson said 'the pub was breaking even, but he made his living as a pork butcher'. The Superintendent suggested the house be pulled down, and as result the License was referred for "compensation."
1929	A note confirms The Bull's Head at Willoughby was closed "under compensation" on 31st March 1928.

The premise was still operating with Mr Wilkinson as a butcher's shop in the 1939 Register and the 1942 memory sketch by Muriel Stanley.

In 1989, a visit by a group of ladies noted there was a butchers shop which I assume is the same building, but it had closed by 1999.

Landlords (approx dates)

1832	1844	Joshua or Joseph Gee
1861	1886	Mary Gee
1888		Henry Edmonds
1891	1901	Jonathan Goodacre
1903		William Corner
1904	1911	Eliza Tatham
1921	1928	John Wilkinson

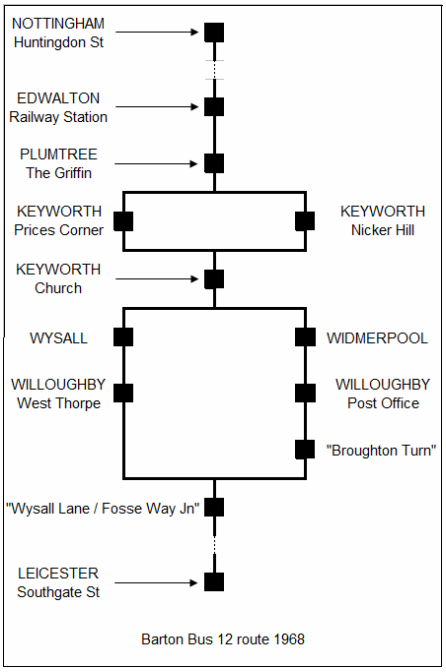
BUS SERVICES

Keyworth had a regular bus service to Nottingham from as early as 1924, but officially they were not allowed to pick up or drop off in West Bridgford. The multiple companies became involved in a ‘bus war’ which is beyond the scope of this piece.

Willoughby was served by the Nottingham to Leicester bus service, which ran via Keyworth and either Wysall or Widmerpool. It started in 1928, and continued into the 21st century.

1908	The first daily Barton service started in 1908 with a 28 seat charabanc running from Leicester to Nottingham, although whether it went through Willoughby is unknown.
1927	Advert for Barton Brothers “Glider Tours” from Nottingham to Melton Mowbray via Plumtree, Normanton, Widmerpool, Willoughby, Upper Broughton, Nether Broughton, Long Clawson & Holwell
1928	The Barton Nottingham to Leicester route commenced taking the same route as the Nottingham to Melton service as far as Plumtree, then via Keyworth, Stanton-on-the-Wolds, Widmerpool, Willoughby-on-the-Wolds and Six Hills to Leicester. Shortly afterwards Midland Red introduced a similar service (number 600) meaning there were two buses every three hours. [Alan Oxley’s History]
1929	The Barton service was withdrawn, leaving the route to Midland Red. Advertised as “The Leicester & Nottingham Express Service No. X.60 (via Willoughby, Widmerpool and Plumtree. single fare 2s, return fare 3s6d. departs Jubilee Road Leicester 4 times daily (Sun to Fri), 5 times on Saturdays”
1939	By 1939 Barton are operating the route again, introducing an emergency service in September 1939
1948	Barton want to provide a more frequent bus service between Nottingham & Leicester, stating villages including Willoughby are calling out for a better service. Current service was 15 daily journeys, i.e. every 90 minutes, Barton want to increase it to hourly
1951	Barton Service 12 is now hourly

The closure of Widmerpool Station to passengers and the growth in residents working outside of the village were factors in the bus service improving. This is illustrated by looking at the Number 12 service in 1968:



South in 1968	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
First bus (at WOW)	07:07	07:07	08:07
Last bus (at WOW)	23:08	23:05	23:06
Nottingham > WOW	23 buses	32 buses	27 buses
Nottingham > Leicester	19 buses	32 buses	27 buses
North in 1968	Mon-Fri	Sat	Sun
First bus (at WOW)	06:52	06:52	06:52
Last bus (at WOW)	23:41	23:42	23:42
WOW > Nottingham	23 buses	32 buses	27 buses
Leicester > Nottingham	19 buses	32 buses	27 buses

Roughly half the buses went by Wysall, the others via Widmerpool, with a bus generally half-hourly in the daytime. Buses were quoted as one of the reasons why the 350 yards of Widmerpool Lane from its junction with Main Street should be widened and a footpath added, but it wasn't a priority 'there are similar issues across the county.' It is the same today.

As more residents started to own and use their cars, the demand for buses in Willoughby drifted away, so that ultimately the Leicester bus took a different route.

Keyworth was a different case, as its population and traffic congestion increased. The Barton service12 from Nottingham became the Keyworth Connection (KC), with a few of these extended for a while to the 3Ws. When the KC stopped serving the 3Ws, County Council funded buses ran from Keyworth to the 3Ws, so passengers could change onto a Nottingham bus, but the lack of passengers meant those too were stopped.

From 2013 to 2024, Willoughby was served by the 863 service, running 3 times daily Mon to Sat, from Ruddington to Keyworth via Bradmore, Bunny, East Leake, Costock, Wysall, WOW and Widmerpool. In 2024 this was replaced by an on-demand service which is booked in advance. It appears to be more popular than the 863, but time will tell.

1986	Pensioners half-price annual bus passes were available for an hour at Willoughby Village Hall for £2.
1996	The presence of a bus service would sometimes appear in House For Sale adverts, and even as a feature in a 1996 job advert for a pub management trainee at The Three Horse Shoes 'although the trainee will be provided with accommodation to cover shifts.'
1999	The County Council toured 36 villages with a mobile exhibition explaining 'the new bus travel opportunities afforded by the Pathfinder buses.'
2003	Willoughby was served by two bus routes (1) Notts & Derby Traction route 12 from Nottingham Broadmarsh to Leicester (2) Barton Keyworth Connection (via Asda, West Bridgford) However most of the Keyworth Connection buses only ran from Nottingham to Keyworth (not via Asda).
2013	The County Council are funding the 3.1 service from the villages to Keyworth & back.
2015	The County Council announce the end of funding the peak time service 831 from the villages to Keyworth. The average number of passengers is 0.2 persons, stopping the service will save £40k. Off peak services are operated under a separate contract and are not affected.
2024	Rushcliffe Borough Council announced that the 863 (and 850, 852, 863) would be replaced by Nottsbus from 22 July 2024, an on-demand service from 7am to 7pm Mon to Sat. The zone (zone 7) extends as far as Morrisons supermarket at Gamston [BBC]

The regular bus services were complemented by works and school buses.

	A lot of villagers worked at the Brush Electronics, Loughborough. A special bus left London Lane at 6:40am.
	A few villagers worked at Old Dalby Army Depot, the bus from Nottingham picking workers up on the way through Keyworth and dropping off on the way back (Monday to Friday).
1968	Barton 37 School Bus for “Rushcliffe Schools” would start at Willoughby Post Office 08:17, picking up in Widmerpool and Keyworth on the way. The return service was due 16:40 at Willoughby Post Office.

CHAPELS (HR p10)

By 1890 (or maybe 1887), there were three Chapels on Main Street in the village, Baptist, Primitive Methodists, and Wesleyan Methodists. In press cuttings, the suffix Chapel wasn't always used, sometimes it was Church or Hall. Other Chapels pre-date these (HR p10).

Baptist	Built 1878	Demolished May 1977
Primitive Methodist	Built 1871, opened 1872	Not clear, at least 1910
Wesleyan Methodist	Built 1887 or 1890	Demolished 1987

1803	A Wesleyan Chapel was erected in Chapel Lane, previously the Wesleyan Society had met in "Mr Clarke's House". It had 176 seats. (Mywesleyanmethodists.org)
1871	'The foundations services of a new Primitive Methodist Chapel were held at Willoughby, led by Rev T Baron of Loughborough. £52 was pledged on the day towards the building costs of about £220.'
1872	'The Primitive Methodists of Willoughby held the first services of their new chapel on Sun Mar 3rd & Mon Mar 4th. On Monday a tea meeting was held with 200 people sat down, later the Chapel was crowded to excess.'
1887	The 1803 Wesleyan Chapel was replaced in 1887, with the original site used as a graveyard. There were no "seats" by the Millennium, and the building was sold in 2006. (Mywesleyanmethodists.org) NOTE - 1887 IS 3 YEARS EARLIER THAN THE DATE STATED IN KELLYS TRADE DIRECTORIES
1888	'The Wesleyan Temperance Society held a meeting at Willoughby Chapel, where the evils of drink were discussed.'
1891	'On Saturday a concert was given at the Wesleyan Chapel. Most of the villagers were present. The proceeds of the concert were in aid of the Primitive Methodist Chapel, which has a debt upon it.'
1896	'The grouping of village chapels under one pastorate is an experiment which is being watched with considerable interest in Nonconformist circles. The Baptist places of worship at Wymeswold, Willoughby and Upper Broughton have been grouped in this way, with Mr A Coombs M.A. being recently appointed to the triple pastorate.'
1897	Charitable Trust Deed - the conveyance of a piece of land adjoining Town Street and Widmerpool Lane to trustees for the General Baptists, as a site for a chapel etc. The charitable purpose was religious (Protestant nonconformist). 1897 is the year of enrolment, the deed may predate this. (National Archives)
1920	A list of Sunday School contributions refers to 'The United Baptist & Primitive Methodist Church in Willoughby.'
1926	'The members of the four places of worship at Willoughby, held a united service last night at the Baptist Chapel, conducted by the vicar of Willoughby (the Rev A.H.Millard), in connection with the League of Nations Union.'

CHURCH (HR p5)

The history of St Mary and All Saints Church has been well researched & documented, and a short history pamphlet (written by J.H. Outram, revised by Tony Cox) is available to take away from the Church (there is a coin box for contributions).

Although the village (and obviously the Church) was regularly featured in local newspapers, I haven't found much new material on the Church, other than these points:

1840	The church at Willoughby became linked with Wysall
1857	A long account of a public meeting held in 'Mrs Clarke's barn' to pay off the debt on the bells
1871	A call to remove the wooden boarding separating the tombs from the main church
1908	A pageant held at Widmerpool Hall to raise money for Willoughby's 'sadly dilapidated' church
1979	Lord Middleton & others planted a tree at the Church to mark its 800th anniversary
1996	A bell-ringing record was set at the church, 16,560 changes in 7 hours 50 mins

Vicars (incompete list)

1811	1831	Rev George Davys, who went on to become tutor to the future Queen Victoria
1831	1839	Rev John Clifton
1839	1866	Rev Thomas Parkyns Dodson
1867	1876	Rev John Parker
1878	1880	Rev B.Milnes
1880	1885	Rev W.J.Fertel
1885	1906	Rev Richardson
1906	1942	Rev A.H.Millard (later Canon Millard)
1943	1947	Rev Beaton
1947	1951	Rev Andrews
1952	1960	Rev Dixon
1960	1965	Rev Hayward
1965	1975	Rev Lucas

CLUB ROOM or CLUBROOM Main Street (HR p12)
Circa 1846 to circa 1951

1860	The Grantham Journal reported that ‘About six years ago, the members of the "Odd Fellows" society in "this improving place" (Willoughby) broke through their old-fashioned system of holding their meetings at public houses, by purchasing a piece of land & erecting a building (the club room) in which to transact their business.’
1906	Meetings of the Parish Council briefly moved from the Schoolroom to the Club Room as the School Board wanted to charge 10s per annum for the council to meet at the Schoolroom. However there was a consensus this charge was illegal, and they returned to the Schoolroom after just two meetings.

CRICKET CLUB

There are many local press references to cricket matches played by Willoughby, home and away, but they form an incomplete picture.

Upcoming cricket fixtures was and still is a popular topic for newspapers, and from these listings it would appear that for many years, cricket matches between Willoughby and other villages & factory sides, were occasional and not part of any league. A post match drink or two at a local public house was the norm.

One regular occasion for a cricket match was the annual Flower Show held by Willoughby & Widmerpool Horticultural Society from around 1880 to 1952.

The cricket club at Upper Broughton was far more active, joining The Melton and District Cricket League in 1898, so it is possible some villagers played there.

1828	Willoughby (home) lost by a single run to Keyworth 112-113. The paper records that 'the conduct of the Willoughby umpire is much to be complained of, but the Keyworth players are nevertheless willing to play another friendly match with Willoughby next year provided a new umpire is chosen.'
1950	First mention I have found of Willoughby having a second eleven
1976	Willoughby Cricket club were one of the eleven sides playing in the South Notts Cricket Union (formed 1972) which included Plumtree, but were missing from subsequent years
1978	The club reached the semi-finals of The National Village Championship
1985	They returned to Division 3 of the league, now known as the South Notts Village League. The league attracted a string of sponsors, Save & Prosper (1986), Home Brewery (1990), Youngers (1994), Midland Bank (1995), HSBC (1999) and later Gunn and Moore
2006	Willoughby had a first & second XI playing in the league
2012	The trail goes blank

CRICKET FIELD

1852	'The cricketers of Willoughby have re-opened their club, which is held at Mr Isaac Tuckwood's, and have commenced games for the ensuing season. Mr H Hallam has lent them a piece of ground to practice on.'
1950	There was a Cricket Pavilion, as the Flower Show committee met there.
1972	'Villagers at Willoughby are so concerned at the lack of a public open space in the village, that they have called a public meeting to consider buying a field. The problem came to a head when a field, used by children & cricketers since before the turn of the century, came up for sale recently. Currently ball games have to be played in the street.'
1978	The club was playing at 'The Green', Willoughby, but by 2007 were based at Platt Lane Sports Centre, Keyworth. I assume 'The Green' is the field immediately south of the Bowls Club

If you can fill in any of these gaps please get in touch.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY (HR p18)

In 1926, an official notice was published in newspapers stating 'that the Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire Electric Power are authorised to supply & distribute electricity for all public & private purposes, to areas including the Rural District of Leake'. There was a long list of roads & bridges affected including Fosse Way at Willougby but not Willougby itself.

By the time the Church was converted to electric lighting in 1934, it is clear that electricity was available at or very close to the Church.

The first Willoughby house for sale advert I noticed where electricity is mentioned was in 1949. At first the power cables were strung overhead, and villagers had to wait decades for these to decay before the cables were moved underground.

Newspaper adverts in 1950 and 1951 warned of possible power cuts, Wednesdays being Willoughby's day, with consumers being asked to conserve power at peak times.

To the north of the village are substantial high voltage cables (132KV) and a substation serving Willoughby.

FLORAL (or FLOWER) SHOW (c.1880 - 1952)

For many years, the village had an annual show, usually but not always in August, organised by the Willoughby, Widmerpool and District Horticultural Society. The second show was held in 1883, and continued apart from the war years until the last show in 1952.

From what I have read, it was in some respects similar to the current Keyworth Show.

Naturally there was the horticultural competition, e.g. in 1945 there was 76 classes of flowers, vegetables, fruits & eggs, each with prizes.

The day would start with a cricket match, later the side shows would open, with a band in the evening for dancing. The winner of the skittle competition would get a real live pig!

The 1949 accounts show the pig cost £4-5-0. Of the side show receipts, Skittles took the most £16-9-6, then bean bag £2-17-0, spinning wheel £5-5-6 less £3-18-6 in prizes, treasure hunt £1-4-6, balls in bucket £1-2-0, rolling pennies £1-1-10, pay rides 18s6d, covering the 6d coin £1, and soft drinks 8s6d (Notts Archives).

In later years it was held in 'the Baxter Field' loaned by Mr Nixon, which must have been adjacent to the cricket pitch because the loudspeaker van was positioned to be heard in both areas.

The 1952 show made a loss, mainly because the cost of hiring a live band in post war Britain was at least £20. The Society was wound up, the funds being split between the two parishes, and the skittles going to Willoughby Village Hall.

FOOTBALL TEAM
mentioned in 1969 & 1970

GAS SUPPLY

The gas network does not extend as far as Willoughby. After years of discussion, the issue came to a head in 1991, when a special meeting of villagers was held to gauge residents views, as it was likely that British Gas would require a financial contribution from each house connecting to the network.

The following February, British Gas formally announced they would be bringing gas to nine villages on the Notts/Leics border, providing enough homes signed up. Burton-on-the-Wolds was quick to sign up, as were the residents of Wymeswold.

Unfortunately connecting Willoughby would not be as easy. Apparently the supply into Wymeswold was of insufficient pressure for it to be extended to Willoughby, Wysall & Widmerpool. It would need 21 kilometres of new pipe, and to fund that, the connection cost per house would be £1700 (equivalent to about £4270 in 2024), nearly a £1000 more than the connection charge per house in Wymeswold. British Gas claimed the payback on running costs for households was about 4 years.

Needless to say it did not proceed.

GO - KART TRACK (A46)

1977	Planning application submitted to build a 1.6 acre go-kart track at the rear of Broughton Lodge café.

I think this came into use quite quickly, as I remember a trip here with student friends in our final year 1977-78 at University, so no later than June 1978.

HEALTH SERVICE

Press cuttings from 1864 to 1888, indicate the nearest doctor was Dr Brown(e) of Wymeswold.

Since the formation of the National Health Service, the village was served by Costock Surgery until the doctor's retirement, and thereafter from East Leake Surgery.

1871	'Dr Brown of Wymeswold saved the lives of 4 children in WOW who had eaten corn, which had been poisoned to destroy sparrows.'
1957	A cutting implies there was a Child Welfare centre in Willoughby, as work was transferred here from Upper Broughton.
1960s	There was a weekly GP surgery at "The Cottage" on West Thorpe.
1965	Noting the retirement of a doctor and hence closure of the Costock Surgery 'it was proposed to extend surgery hours at East Leake, and continue the surgery at Willoughby.'
1968	East Leake Health Centre opened, and was the first purpose built health centre in the County [Village Health Group]
1975	'Mothers at Willoughby are to be asked (by South Nottinghamshire Community Health Council) for their reaction to a proposal to cut the child clinic service there from fortnightly to once a month, the average attendance having fallen below 4 persons per session.'
2020	Village Health Group was established from the merger of two existing GP surgeries, East Leake Medical Group and Keyworth Medical Practice [Village Health Group]

HEDGE CUTTING COMPETITION

The 6th annual Hedge Cutting competition (encouraged by the Quorn Hunt) was held at Willoughby in 1913. Hedges were provided by local farmers. Competitors had to 'cut, lay and bind' 11 yards of hedges as a bullock hedge, within a specified time.

A report on the 1969 hedge cutting competition was filmed by the BBC for Midlands Today. That video still exists, and is deposited with the Media Archive for Central England (macearchive.org), but at the time of writing is not yet available to view online.

HOUSING

Advertisements for property sales & auctions are commonplace in newspapers of all ages, but the post WW2 desire to own a home drove a big increase in property advertising, with the use of photographs to illustrate the property, and the growth of special sections or supplements devoted to “Houses for Sale”. There are plenty of Willoughby’s houses featured in this way.

The 1999 survey in Willoughby on the Wolds, compiled by Christine Everard, indicates growth spurts in the number of new houses in the village in the 1930s, 1960s & 1970s. In addition we know a number of new developments have occurred since 1998.

By the early 1970s, newspapers started regularly printing a list of planning applications submitted to local authorities, and occasionally there would be an editorial comment or correspondence on an application, e.g. the demolition of the second Manor House.

Today all recent planning applications on available online.

I noted many press cuttings relating to houses, so I will just list a few below:

1919	At a meeting of Leake Rural District Council on housing, the Medical Officer said there were a lot of house at Willoughby which ‘were unfit for human habitation.’
1943	Basford Rural District Council agreed to take steps to earmark land for the development of housing schemes for the working classes, a total of 1400 houses including 12 in Willoughby.
1956	Basford Rural District Council announced a 5 year plan of slum clearance, some 204 dwellings. ‘12 houses at Willoughby will be dealt with in year five.’
1974	Willoughby Parish Council wrote to Rushcliffe Borough Council Planning Department to say that ‘the nine dwellings recently erected had spoilt the appearance & character of the village.’
1984	Willoughby Parish Council opposed plans for a 40 bed residential nursing home to be built on London Lane.

Using the planning website, you can see when new developments were submitted for the village in the last 30 years or so.

~1998	Cross Hill
~1998	Brook Farm Court
~2001	Field Farm Close
~2002	Baileys Croft
~2008	Horseshoes Close
~2015	Chestnut Farm Close

LORD OF THE MANOR (HR p6)

Once the manor property was broken up in 1616, who if anybody was entitled to call themselves 'Lord of the Manor' and what rights did they have because as I understand it these can vary significantly?

Early 19th century newspapers offer a clue with the annual appointment of game keepers, and Willoughby appears spit between two gamekeepers. The first was appointed by Lord Rancliffe of Bunny 'to cover the manors/royalties of Bunny, Bradmore, Ruddington, Keyworth, Wysall, Willoughby, Thorpe, Costock and East Leake.' The second by Frederick Robinson Esq. of Widmerpool for ‘Widmerpool, Stanton-on-the-Wolds & Willoughby.’

Lord of the Manor was a standard entry in Trade Directories. In 1832 it was Frederick Robinson Esq. of Widmerpool, but from 1853 - 1895 it was the resident at Bunny Hall (Mrs Forteath, then Miss Hawksley). Once the Bunny Estate was split up & sold off in 1909, trade directories no longer listed a Lord of the Manor for Willoughby. The Directories also note other major land owners.

Nottinghamshire Archives have a series of deeds relating to the tenancies within the Bunny Park Estate and its subsequent 1909 sale, these include Willoughby, although I have not yet looked at them.

Whether Lord of the Manor or not, in 1893 'Major G.C.Robertson J.P. Widmerpool Hall, in accordance with his annual custom, has presented to the widows & aged & needy poor of Willoughby, 12.5 tons of coal this Christmas.' When the Major died in 1924, his will included life pensions for two disabled residents of Willoughby.

Interestingly, a substantial auction in 1919 of land, farms & property in Willoughby had a lot titled 'The Lordship of Willoughby on the Wolds.' The title sold for £6.

Also a short 1958 article (not currently available on BNA), had a pencil sketch of the Manor House and a short chat with Mr Hamlet Yates, farmer and owner of the property until 1968/69. He was described by some tenants as 'Lord of the Manor', but found the reference amusing, stating it was only a 'token title'. If I had owned it, no doubt I would have said the same.

MANOR HOUSE (1686 - 1979)

According to the board in the community park, the original Manor House was located there, and is shown on the 1604 estate map.

The second Manor House was south of the Church, west of Church Lane (as the photos illustrate).

Two local residents have a collection of documents on the building, and I thank them for the chance to look through them.

It is clear that originally the building had a large attic, but at some stage that was completely removed. Photos or sketches exist of both versions. Cottages were added to the east side of the Manor House in the 19th century.

Some of these documents came from a file created by The Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (England), and this now resides in the English Heritage Archives in Swindon. I have their permission to reproduce some of the photographs in that file, but for this website only. Copies without watermarks can be purchased from them, and fees are payable should you wish to publish them.

Manor House 1970 #0 BB043044

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Manor House 1970 #1 BB043045

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1969	For sale 'by order of the executors of Hamlet Yates deceased, the sale of the Manor House (& some land), a detached freehold country house of some considerable age, converted into 4 cottages, 3 of which are vacant, plus outbuildings, total 3 acres.'
1972	A letter published in 1972 claimed 'Once again the ancient Manor House of Willoughby is threatened with demolition to make way for several modern houses.'
1974	Rushcliffe Borough Council's Planning Committee wanted advice on its possible restoration before agreeing to it being demolished. A report from the chief planning officer says the house was now in poor repair. Both the CPRE & Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust said it was 'an important feature in village & worthy of retention.'
1978	The issue of 'rehabilitation & conversion of the Listed Manor House into dwellings' came to a head in 1978. I have read the two 1978 reports prepared by the Planning Department at Rushcliffe Borough Council but it is not my place to comment on what happened in 1978, to a building I never saw.

I conclude this page with a comment made by local historian Henry Rowlinson to the Nottingham Evening Post in 1990, 'the Manor House was knocked down & cottages built instead because it was dangerous, and very cold & dirty.'

PEOPLE

Four stories caught my eye

1852	'There are a lot of healthy, old people in Willoughby. One woman aged 81 continues to work, and she can dance & sing a song...there are three people here with a combined age of 230 years.'
1916	'The village lost three nonagenarians (people aged 90 to 99) during the last few weeks, two had lived in the village all their lives.'
1916	More on the incredible record of Mr Samuel Screaton (HR p16) who had died aged 90. 'He held a unique record, 75 years in the church choir, parish clerk for 60 years, and Sunday school superintendent for 50 years - teaching & superintending twice each Sabbath.' A highly prized member of the community, with a stained glass window in the church dedicated to his memory, and an impressive monument in the graveyard.
1928	A Willoughby man was national news after winning £22,000 on a horse called Black Watch which came third in The Derby. After inflation, that would be worth about £1.5 million in 2024. He won the money on the Stock Exchange draw, which appears to be a bit like lotteries today. He would have won double that, but had sold half his ticket to a Northampton man for £1500. Unmarried, the press claimed he was inundated with 'many offers from rogues and charitable appeals', but was un-phased by them all.

A long-standing local resident recalled some of the village characters:

“Like every village, it was the characters that made up the fabric of the village. One farmer loved to attend horse racing events, and was picked up on the Fosse by buses, and travelled all over the country. One resident mended our clocks and watches, another cleaned our chimneys, as well as holding a full time job.

A resident who lived at the Meeting House was a Methodist lay reader, biking to surrounding areas. He could often be heard practising his sermons if you passed by at the right time.

Everyone knew not to knock on the door at Mount Farm between 4:15 and 4:30, when Mrs Dale's Diary was on the radio, because the resident would not answer. [Mrs Dale’s Diary was a soap opera on BBC Light Programme].

THE PLOUGH (before 1821 - circa 1874), Main Street

The Plough was opposite the Three Horse Shoes (HR p14), but there is little to be found in newspaper cuttings other than a confirmation it was open much later than quoted by some sources.

Landlords(approx dates)

1822	1826	William Hallam
1827	1852	Joseph Smith
1861		Martha Smith
1874		Thomas Lees

POLICE HOUSE

Short of detail, two cuttings from 1843 and 1861 refer to Parish Constables, all of whom were members of the community. The village had a resident police officer until the 1960s, based at the Police House in Main Street.

1881	1884	PC Upton & Family, house in Willoughby
1901	1904	PC Marsden & Family, house in Main Street
1939	1946	PC Copley & Family, house in Main Street

The final mention of a Police House in the village is 1967, when work on a new police house had been stopped because the tenders were all in excess of the available budget.

POST OFFICE

I found no early press references to the Post Office, but we know from White's Directory for 1874 that 'a messenger with letters arrives in the village from Loughborough about 11:10am, and the box closes at 4pm.'

I don't know when the Post Office at the corner of Main Street and London Road, took over from the house now known as 'Old Post House'. The older building is still marked P.O. on the 1916 O.S. Map.

In 1907, the Parish Council agreed to write to the Postmaster Loughborough to ask him to place two letter boxes at each end of the village, 'as the ends are a considerable distance from the Post Office.'

The Post Office had expanded to be a Post Office & Village store by 1974 when it was advertised for sale, and in 1983 Planning Permission was granted for the single storey outbuilding on the Main Street frontage to be used as a shop.

In 1996 there was a most unexpected & distressing incident when two female robbers raided the store at 3pm in the afternoon. The press coverage and reference to the robbers as 'Thelma & Louise' can hardly have been welcome to the victims.

The Post Office & Store ceased trading in June 2000.

RAILWAYS (from 1879)

The Nottingham - Melton Railway had two Midland Railway stations near the village, Widmerpool and Upper Broughton, the latter being passengers & parcels only.

Freight services started on November 1st 1879, passenger trains on February 2nd 1880, and for the 40 years before the buses started, they were reasonably popular with the surrounding villages.

Typically from 1879 to 1922, 13,000 tickets were sold at Widmerpool each year, with the number of season tickets rising year on year to 52 in 1920.

Upper Broughton sold around 7000 tickets a year, and again the number of season tickets had increased to 44 by 1920.

Former stationmaster Mr Nason said in 1949, that “passenger traffic at Widmerpool had been made up mainly of people from seven villages – Widmerpool, Wysall, Willoughby, Hickling Pastures, Hickling, Kinoulton and Owthorpe.” It is possible some residents used the Saturday summer specials to East Anglian holiday resorts. Widmerpool station was popular with poachers who would travel from Nottingham, and a handful of residents also worked on the line or the associated iron ore activities.

As for goods, there are several records of ash purchased for local road improvements (HR p17), being moved by local carriers from Widmerpool station to the village, and looking at known goods traffic for other stations on the line, it is reasonably likely that other freight and occasional animals travelled through the station. Mr Nason also reported that up to 60 dairymen sent their milk via Widmerpool.

Once bus services commenced, passenger traffic at all the stations started to drift away (apart from Old Dalby) because buses were more convenient than the distant railway stations.

Upper Broughton was first to go, the Sunday service stopping in 1930. It lost its own stationmaster in 1936, and the last known passenger train called in May 1948, with the station closing that autumn. The booking office and stationmasters house at Upper Broughton still exist today as private property.

Widmerpool hung onto passenger services until Feb 1949, losing its own stationmaster in 1960, and closing to goods on August 1st 1965. The station building then became a pub/restaurant trading under various names but closed early this century, the building being demolished in 2022.

The overall line closed in stages, before being converted to a high speed test track, for further information see 'The Nottingham & Melton Railway' by Colin Aldworth, i.e. me.

Please do not trespass on the line (difficult given the new fencing) as high speed trains still use it, and the line is patrolled by a security team.

ROADS

Most of the press reports on local roads talk of their poor condition, or how narrow they are, plus the occasional accident. Here are a few examples:

1855	Mention of **Town Street** in Willoughby and again in 1883 and 1897. Town Street was part of the road now known as Main Street, westward from its junction with Widmerpool Lane.
1927	A letter endorsing the surveyor's opinion that the road between Willoughby and Wysall is 'ghastly, indeed all the roads to Willoughby are the worst in Nottinghamshire.'
1939	re the widening & resurfacing of Wymeswold - Willoughby and Willoughby - Wysall road, Notts Highways and Bridges committee have found there are a number of encroachments in the form of enclosed gardens which have been let by the Parish Council for many years, 40 on road from Wymeswold, 14 on the road from Wysall. The committee decided they will need to take possession, either when they become vacant, or by action no later than 31 March 1941.
1964	Properties on Main Street were given house numbers, these would appear for the first time in the 1965 Electoral Register.
1966	Children walking along Main Street in Willoughby have to use the road in places as there is no pavement, the Parish Council said. The narrowness of Wysall Lane is a problem, in places two vehicles cannot pass, 'requests to build passing places have been ignored by the County Council.'
1970	Nottinghamshire County Council imposed a 30 mph speed limit on Widmerpool Lane north of the Main Street junction.
1996	Leicestershire County Council imposed a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes on Back Lane between Wymeswold & Willoughby to stop it being used as a short cut between the A6006 and A46.

It appears the Fosse Way was upgraded several times in the last 200 years:

1853	Letter to Nottingham Journal, 'the "Foss" Road is now in repair from Newark to Leicester, apart from 2 bits belonging to Widmerpool, and 4 miles from the boundary of Widmerpool lordship to Six Hills.' The two sections not in repair were the subject of a dispute over responsibilities.
1910	During a discussion at a meeting of Loughborough Rural District Council, if was suggested that if the Fosse Road from Six Hills to Willoughby was reconstructed, it would reduced the distance from Nottingham to Leicester by a mile.
1922	The Fosse Way from Bath to Grimsby to is classified as the A46, although the route today is different in places to 1922, e.g. the Leicester Northern Bypass (Sabre-roads.org.uk).
1938	'3 miles of the road on the south side of the Leicestershire-Nottinghamshire border were recently reconstructed with dual 20 foot carriageways, it is now proposed to continue the improvement for 5 miles from Six Hills, to the junction of the Nottingham - Melton road at Widmerpool.'
1951	'Nottinghamshire County Council are currently widening the Fosse Way at WOW, and somewhere in the region lies the remains of the Roman station of Vernometum.'
1963-1964	After recent accidents at the crossroads between the Fosse Way and the road from Willoughby to Upper Broughton, a flyover was constructed, the bulldozer unearthing two spearheads leading to the excavation.

These dates are confirmed by the replacement dates for the railway bridge over the Fosse Way at Widmerpool (bridge 38) which are 1909, 1939 and 1964.

SCHOOL - DISPUTE OVER THE SCHOOL BUILDING (HR p10)

I found many press references to the school, but most are just routine. Except this one.

The School opened in 1863, 'We are happy to add, that the new schools recently erected at Willoughby are working extremely well, under the able “superintendence” of the master, Mr Unwin, a large number of children are in daily attendance.' It was a Church school, controlled by the vicar and its own Board.

All might have continued harmoniously had it not been for The Elementary Education Act 1870, which set in place the structure for Elementary Schools 'to give a basic education to the children of working class families.' These schools were to be run by an elected school board, were secular (other than Bible reading), funded by local taxation, and eventually (1891) free of charge to pupils.

Because of their secular nature, Church Schools were fundamentally opposed to the new Elementary Schools, and in Willoughby it was no different.

The new Elementary School Board was elected in 1871, and thereafter started a dispute with the vicar and wardens over the use of the school buildings. The vicar wanted the school to be based on Christian principles, the Act of Parliament said that was a non starter. Compromises were made over the use of the building, often short term, and the situation festered until at least 1894. Consideration was even given in 1872 to constructing a second school building for the Elementary School.

In 1894, things came to a head, with the vicar and two members of the Elementary School Board appearing at Nottingham Assizes. The case was listed as 'The plaintiffs, the vicar, and the churchwardens of Willoughby (the trustees of certain lands and buildings), alleged to have been broken & entered, and certain fencing taken away by the defendants X & Y, members of the Willoughby School Board.'

The jury heard that on 10 June 1894, two members of the School Board & other men started to remove goods owned by that Board from the school, including some fencing. Somehow the vicar heard what was happening, and quickly made the 3 mile journey from Wysall to stop them. He was alone as, being a Saturday, the Church wardens (who were farmers) had gone to market. On telling the men to stop, the vicar was pushed into the road, and briefly arrested by the Parish Constable.

The jury found for the plaintiffs (the vicar etc), with damages £5, the cost of erecting the fence, which was to be returned to the plaintiffs. The jury expressed the opinion that all the members of the School Board (defendants) were equally responsible, and they were fined.

I don't know what the final agreement for the building was, nothing else was said in the newspapers, no doubt the detail is in the minute books at Nottinghamshire Archives.

SCHOOL HOUSE
At first the Headmaster lived in a house rented by the School Board, but in 1895 the School Board invited tenders for the erection of a Schoolmaster's house. I assume this is the house on Main Street now known as Old School House.

SCHOOL CLOSURE (HR p10)

First Closure Attempt (1971 - 1972)
The building of a new school in Keyworth, was a direct threat to Plumtree & Willoughby schools, with Nottinghamshire Education Committee keen to move those pupils to Keyworth. A well organised local protest, championed by David Derrick (PC Chairman at the time) ended up on the desk of Education Secretary Margaret Thatcher. She decided that closure of the school 'would not be in the best interests of the children because of the distance they would have to travel' and told the Education Committee she wouldn't approve their proposal. Plumtree did close, and became a private school.

Second Closure Attempt (1976 - 1977)
Undaunted, the Education Committee was back in November 1976 with a formal notice that the school would close at the end of the Summer term 1977, with pupils transferred to Keyworth. Again a well-organised protest ended up with the Secretary of State Shirley Williams, who again rejected the proposal. A seven hour party was held on the school field to celebrate the saving of the school, with the ringing of the church bells.

In both cases, closure was opposed by local MP Kenneth Clarke, who had great influence at Westminster.

The school continued to appear in the press from time to time:

1969	The Magic Microphone Club was recorded at the school for broadcast on the new BBC Radio Nottingham
1970	A celebration was held for the Centenary of the Elementary School
1987	Peter Taylor (as in Brian Clough & Peter Taylor) coached football at the school weekly
1990	The creation of a conservation area in the school grounds
1990	An auction of items collected from famous people including the Queen Mother (forks), David Bellamy, Catherine Cookson, Paul & Linda McCartney and Paul Daniels
1990	The school featured in an 8 page special in the Nottingham Evening Post (4 Dec 1990 pages 31 to 38)
1995	The opening of the new mobile classroom
1999	A school photo won first prize of £5000 in the Capital One / NTL Schools Mission 2000 competition

Schoolmasters / Head Teachers (partial list)

1863		Mr Unwin (Church School)
1873	1889	Mr David Hemmingway (Elementary School)
1889	1891	Mr Webb Humphries
1896	1923	Mr Benjamin Moorhouse
1926	1942	Miss Alma Atwell
1943		Mrs Outram
1949		Mr Wakerley
1968		Mr James Hall

SEWERS (HR p18)

Progress on bringing a sewerage system to the village to replace the cesspits was occasionally reported in the press.

1961	Meeting of Basford Rural District Council notes that Willoughby 'is to have a sewerage system.'
1966	Basford Rural District Council was instructed by the Ministry of Housing & Local Government, to seek tenders to double the capacity of East Leake pumping station. In theory this would allow Willoughby and 3 other villages to have a sewerage system, but at this time the Ministry had not approved to the erection of pumping stations in these villages.
1967	A report prepared by Basford Rural District Council describes how at Willoughby, ‘cesspools overflow into the village's main street and are a threat to public health.’
1969	The Ministry of Housing & Local Government finally approved a £200k East Leake drainage scheme, which would bring mains sewers to Wysall, Costock, Rempstone & Willoughby.
1971	Completed.

TELEPHONES, TELEGRAMS, BROADBAND & TELEPHONE BOX

I don't know when Willoughby was first connected to the telephone network. The National Telephone Company opened an office in Loughborough in 1885. By 1928, Willoughby village Post Office had a telephone, and a house for sale in Willoughby in 1949 had its own telephone.

The telephone exchange was and still is in Wymeswold, and also served Willoughby, Wysall, Burton-on-the-Wolds, Hoton, and Rempstone. At first the telephone numbering plan had 3 digits, so for example in 1955, the telephone number for the Vicarage at Wysall was Wymeswold 300.

In the 1970s, Wymeswold telephone exchange was replaced by an electronic exchange.

By 1982, the number plan had been brought in-line with the national standard, so for example the Three Horse Shoes in Willoughby had the number Wymeswold 880511. Within a few years the Wymeswold area code had been dropped and replaced by the Loughborough area code.

In 1993 Wymeswold's new digital exchange went live. It cost £350k, serving 1700 customers, and took 8 months to install. There was no change to the number plan.

BROADBAND

Broadband capability was available on Wymeswold Exchange from 29 Oct 2008. Early in 2025, BT Openreach were doing preparatory work, ahead of bringing a fibre-to-the home internet service

TELEPHONE BOX

I don't know when Willoughby got its own public telephone box outside the Post Office. In 1963, a car crashed into the box, whilst in 1971 after complaints that the kiosk was unbearably hot inside, engineers found that a cable under the floor was over-heating.

In 1988, Rushcliffe Borough Council wrote to the Department of Environment asking for telephone boxes in villages including Willoughby be preserved as listed buildings, especially Widmerpool which was believed to be the first ever rural kiosk in the country.

Our kiosk is still there, and contains the village defibrillator.

TELEGRAMS

Younger readers may not be familiar with a Telegram. Telegrams were short messages sent on an electric circuit rather than a telephone call. Telegrams were useful because they did not rely on the recipient being there at a particular time. They were also bringers of bad news, particularly in war time.

When Upper Broughton railway station opened in 1880, so too did a Telegraph office where people could send and receive Telegrams. Wymeswold had a Telegraph Office by 1922, and as did Willoughby Post Office by 1928.

THREE HORSE SHOES Main Street (HR p14)

Lots of press cuttings mention the Three Horse Shoes, not just as a pub, but as a place where auctions, inquests and celebrations were held.

The pub may have been there longer than thought. Nottinghamshire Archives have a copy of the 1822 ale keepers bonds for the pub, and in 1851 it was described as an 'old-established inn.'

In the 19th century, the property changed owners at least three times, on one occasion being described as 'a public house, with stable for 3 horses, bakehouse, storeroom, out building, yard and garden.' In 1910 the pub was sold by auction again, this time as part of a package of 15 pubs and a brewery known as Thorpe End Brewery.

A 1906 advert in the Nottingham Evening Post proclaimed 'Cyclists and Pleasure Parties will find good accommodation at the Three Horse Shoes Willoughby on the Wolds, 12 miles from Nottingham, Private comfortable Rooms, proprietor & caterer C Robinson.'

A 1958 article on the village reported that 'The only pub is the Three Horse Shoes, landlord Alfred Belton & his wife have 2 water pumps, one outside for drinking water, one inside drawing rain water from a huge underground tank for washing purposes.'

Its most famous landlord was Mr Frank Cyril Matthews (HR p16), former Nottinghamshire fast bowler. His 1961 obituary described how he was 'born 1893 in Willoughby, at one time landlord Three Horse Shoes, later farmed Old Hall Farm, one time member of Parish Council, and on the board of managers for village school.'

In 1966, the original pub was closed at 10:30pm on the Monday night, and the new, larger pub which had been built behind it over the previous 18 months, opened at 1pm the next day. The original building was demolished to allow the car park to be built. Mr James Shipstones, chairman of the brewery was there in person to greet the press and punters.

I have found many adverts for the new pub. For example in 1996 a 'Mother's Day Special 3 course meal £6.50', and 'Aussie-style Barbecue' every weekend in the summer. Two years later '3 Course Sunday lunch £4.95, Steak Night on Tuesdays £3.95.'

In early 2004 the pub closed. Despite all the promotions, it had been making a loss since at least 1995/96. It was quickly demolished but it would be a few years before planning permission would be given on Appeal, for Horseshoe Close to be built.

Landlords (approx dates)

1822	1824	John Dalby
1825	1826	William Widdowson
1844	1851	John or Joseph Widdowson
1853		J Tuckwood
1861	1871	Thomas Barnett
1874	1895	John Wells
1901	1906	Charles Robinson
1911		Fred Pardy
1922		Edwin Clarke
1924		C.W.Lee
1926		Frank Cyril Matthews
1929	1932	Elizabeth Brooks
1935	1961	Alfred George Belton

VILLAGE HALL

According to the Board in The Community Park, the Village Hall was erected in 1932. I didn't find any press cuttings referring to its opening, but there are many cuttings relating to events and meetings being held at the Village Hall. It is the same today, the home of the pre-school playgroup, wraparound childcare and social events such as the Sunday breakfast in the colder months.

1939	In December 1939, Parish Council meetings moved to the Village Hall.
1977	Rushcliffe Borough Council made a grant of £86 to the Village Hall Committee, to cover one quarter of the cost of proposed interior work.
1998	Rushcliffe Borough Council made a grant of £15k towards the refurbishment of the hall. Half the £80k project cost has been covered by a National Lottery Grant. Work would include replacing walls, an extension for a boiler room & better storage facilities, toilet refurbishment & new toilet for disabled.

WATER SUPPLY (HR p18)

For decades whilst most other areas had running water, because Willoughby was 'uphill' it didn't and had to rely on wells, or water carted into the village in milk containers for purchase.

The main village well was in Main Street, the top of which can still be seen. It was said to 130 feet deep with 90 feet of water, apparently when used the well rope reached the wall of the Three Horse Shoes, 50 yards away.

1881	At a meeting of the Loughborough Rural Sanitary Authority, the retained expert made a report as to the water supply at Willoughby. 'Most of the water used for domestic purposes is derived from surface sources, and is more or less contaminated. So the supply of water from the public wells should be made more accessible to residents, at present neither well has windlass or buckets. One of the wells is 30 yards deep, so people go elsewhere to avoid the labour & risk of using it.' He advised the Sanitary Authority to provide a manual pump for each well, this was accepted and put out to tender.
1892	Sanitary responsibilities previously held by Loughborough Rural Sanitary Authority were transferred to Basford Rural District Council.

1937	A proposal to extend Nottingham City Waterworks to areas including Willoughby was agreed, and subsequently 'The Nottingham Act of 1938' empowered Nottingham Corporation to do so by not later than 1948, but clearly minds were rapidly distracted by the war.
1944	Basford Rural District Council approved a scheme to provide water to 8 parishes including Willougby, with a piped water system supply. This would be achieved by arranging with the Nottingham Corporation to extend their mains, with 21 miles of pipes and a water tower at Upper Broughton.
1944	Basford Rural District Council asked Nottinghamshire County Council to include their scheme in the Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Act 1944. Alas the Willoughby section was not approved by the Ministry of Health, because an alternative proposal to supply Willoughby from Widmerpool had not been costed.
1946	Villagers were still getting water from wells, when tragically a child who went with his mother to draw water from the village well, slipped, fell & drowned in about 90 foot of water. Shortly afterwards, following a report from the Medical Officer at Basford Rural District Council (who had analysed the well water in Costock & Willoughby), the wells were closed and the council authorised water to be carted twice weekly to the two villages.
1950	'Willoughby is only parish in Basford with no prospect of a piped water supply. Meetings have been held but nearest water trunk is overloaded. Part of the problem is Willoughby stands on high ground.'
1953	'Drinking water is brought to the village by wagon on the same day as the garbage collection. The stench is absolutely appalling. Until recently windows had to be tight closed for an hour after the garbage van passed. There had been 4 serious epidemics in the village last year, at one time only two children had been at school.'
1954	In desperation Basford Rural District Council sunk a 250 foot borehole in the village but failed to find an adequate supply of water. Some said it was the wrong end of the village. 5 years ago Basford RDC asked Leicester Corporation if they could supply the village, but they said not for a few years. The council would ‘ask Nottingham again.'
1958	Rushcliffe MP Martin Redmayne received a letter from the Ministry of Housing & Local Government, stating that work is proceeding well on a £4.25 million water board scheme that would supply water to the village by 1960 or early 1961. The village has had to rely on water carried in milk containers. The water wagon - a war surplus bowser equipped with a rotary pump - distributed more than 200,000 gallons of water to the village each year, visiting on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Attempts by the Rural District Council to bore for water had been unsuccessful.
1959	Leicester Water Corporation, which ‘started 111 years ago’, is taking over responsibility for water from a number of organisations including the 2 Melton Councils, and for the parishes of Upper Broughton & Willoughby.
1959	Because of the summer drought of 1959, the well was temporarily uncapped to pump out thousands of gallons of water for the village farmers.
1960	At the November meeting of Basford Rural Council, it was reported that the laying of water pipes in the village is nearing completion.

WILLOUGHBY COMMUNITY PARK (from 2011)

The park is too recent to have press cuttings in the BNA, so I refer to what it says on the sign in the park:

Walter Skinner (1923 - 2007) left a generous legacy which has funded equipment for this Community Park, and the designing of a Village Sign. The park was declared open and the Sign was erected in 2011.

The idea appears to have been under discussion for some time.

1991	At the Parish Council meeting, it was noted that Mr Walter Skinner would agree to the renting of his field for a year as a village playing area.
1992	Notts Archives have colour photographs of the construction in 1992 of the multi-play unit in Walter Skinner's field, Church Lane, Willoughby.

WILLOUGHBY (LODGE) HOTEL (on the A46) 1986 – c.2009

A planning application was submitted in 1983 to build a 34 bedroom hotel on the former filling station site just south of the Go-Kart track. Operated by the Beaufort Palace Hotels Group, it opened in 1986, and was initially very popular, quickly expanding to 71 rooms.

A planning application in 2002 to refurbish the hotel and add a swimming pool was rejected. Later re-branded Comfort Inn (part of Best Western Hotels) it closed around 2009, and was converted for private use.

1986	'The new Willoughby Hotel opens on 12th Sep 1986, with 34 double rooms, a grill room, à la carte restaurant, Sunday lunch menu, conference facilities for up to 200, weddings & parties.'
1989	Loughborough Rotary Club held a Ladies Evening at The Willoughby Hotel.

WILLOUGHBY WOOD (from 2000)

The planned new wood had several mentions in local newspapers.

1997	'An appeal is to be launched to create a beautiful community wood, in conjunction with the Woodland Trust who together with the Millennium Commission are looking to create 200 new sites. Locals have to raise £12,795 towards the site purchase, planting & managing. Villagers will have to choose a name for it.'
1999	April - The Woodland Trust will be in Willougby for a meeting to gather residents views on the design of the woods, followed by a walk in the woods. This is part of the "Woods on your Doorstep" project to create 200 new community woods.
1999	December - There will be a public tree planting day at Willougby on Saturday.

WILLOUGHBY's old CLUBS & SOCIETIES

VILLAGE CHOIR
Mentioned in 1992 at a concert marking the 40th anniversary of the accession of Queen Elizabeth II.

WIDMERPOOL & DISTRICT YOUNG FARMERS' CLUB
mentioned in 1954 and 1956.

WILLOUGHBY & DISTRICT CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY
Held a meeting at the School in 1902.

WILLOUGHBY CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATION
58 members in 1948, and in 1986 Rushcliffe MP Kenneth Clarke attended a cheese & wine party held by the association in the village.

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE (closed 2022)
Numerous press mentions between 1934 & 1981.

THE WILLOUGHBY FAMILY

Let me close with a controversial note. Over 200 years of newspapers, I have often seen versions of the following 'that owning much land in Willoughby, Richard Bugge changed his surname to Willoughby, and that this was the start of the Willoughby family.'

But the Willoughby family pre-dates Richard Bugge, so I suggest that Richard Bugge changed his name on marrying into the existing Willoughby d'Eresby family.

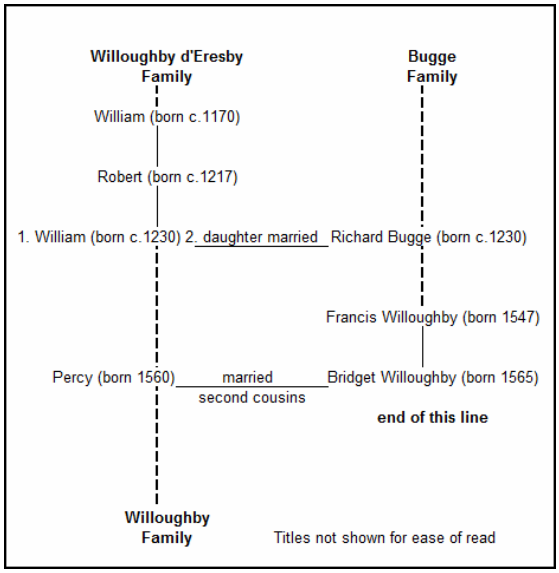
In order to get a better understanding of the Willoughby family line, I decided to sketch it out using whatever resources were available. I started with Richard Willoughby/Bugge and moved forward in time until there was no son to carry on the line. Fortunately 'The Family of Willoughby' published by the Thoroton Society in 1902, tells us:

"Sir Francis (born c.1547) settle the great part of the estate on his eldest daughter Bridgett (born 1565), who married her distant kinsman Percy (Sir Percival Willoughby born c.1560), of the house of Eresby in Lincolnshire". "Sir Percival's marriage with Bridgett resulted in a fairly numerous family, who henceforth quartered the arms of the two houses of Willoughby."

Elsewhere, it is reported that Sir Francis, encouraged the marriage of Bridgett Willoughby to her second cousin Percy Willoughby (the 'distant kinsman'), so as to keep his assets in the family.

So now I had two houses of Willoughby, the one which started with Richard Bugge, and a second the 'House of Eresby' or rather the Willoughby d'Eresby family. If they were second cousins, I needed to go back in time on Willoughby d'Eresby's family to find the connection.

With the help of wikitree I found that connection, as the following drawing attempts to explain. Robert Willoughby (born c.1217) had two children, son William (born c.1230) and an unnamed daughter who married Richard Bugge.



So can I trust wikitree? I hope to find other evidence to collaborate wikitree, but if we accept the second cousins-line, then there has to be some link between the 'two houses of Willoughby'.

I have approached the family's agent for comment, but have received none so far.

2026 UPDATES – CRICKET RESULTS

Last year I was given two Scoring books for Willoughby cricket team, the contents of which are summarised here. The result is not always shown in the book, so I have drawn my own conclusion based on the content available, for example “probably rained off”. The teams for each match are listed in full, so if any reader wishes to look at their family members please contact me.

Date	Day	Opponent	Venue	WLD	Notes
25/06/1955	Sat	R.O.F. Toolroom	Highfield Park	Lost	
02/07/1955	Sat	Ratcliffe	Home	Draw	probably rained off
09/07/1955	Sat	Olds Discount	Home	Lost	
16/07/1955	Sat	Keyworth	Away	Lost	
23/07/1955	Sat	Home Brewery	Home	Draw	WOW 10 men / probably rained off
01/08/1955	Mon	WOW friendly	Home	z	Warbler's IX v Wanderer's X
01/08/1955	Mon	WOW friendly	Home	z	Hatherley's VII v Hammesley's VII
03/08/1955	Wed	Brittania	Home	Lost	18 overs match
06/08/1955	Sat	Albert Hall Methodists	Home	Lost	WOW 9 men / Albert Hall 10 men
10/08/1955	Wed	Dalby	Home	Won	20 overs match
13/08/1955	Sat	Keyworth	Home	Won	34 over match
20/08/1955	Sat	Dalby	Home	Draw	probably rained off

Date	Day	Opponent	Venue	WLD	Notes
12/05/1956	Sat	Dalby	Home	Lost	
19/05/1956	Sat	Home Brewery	Valley Road	Lost	both sides 10 men
21/05/1956	BHM	WOW friendly	Home	z	Hatherley's XI v Hammesley's XI
26/05/1956	Sat	WOW friendly	Home	z	Wakerley's XI v Hatherseys's XI
29/05/1956	Tue	Broughton	Home	Win	Henstock 47 retired
02/06/1956	Sat	R.O.F. Toolroom	Home	Lost	
09/06/1956	Sat	Ransomes	Home	Lost	
19/06/1956	Tue	Wymeswold Young Farmers	Home	Won	Oldham 34
20/06/1956	Wed	boys match	Home	z	
23/06/1956	Sat	Dalby	Away	Won	
26/06/1956	Tue	Upper Broughton	Away	Lost	20 overs match
27/06/1956	Wed	Nether Broughton	Home	Won	20 overs match
28/06/1956	Thu	Sharman & Ladburys	Home	Won	20 overs match
28/06/1956	Thu	WOW friendly	Home	z	Atkinson's VIII v Hopewell's VIII
07/07/1956	Sat	Olds Discount	Home	Lost	
09/07/1956	Mon	Nether Broughton	Away	Lost	20 overs match
11/07/1956	Wed	Dalby	Home	Won	20 overs match / Dalby Ten men
14/07/1956	Sat	Strelley	Home	Lost	Baker 35 retired
28/07/1956	Sat	Old Paviors	Home	Won	R.Hammersley 26 retired
04/08/1956	Sat	R.O.F. Toolroom	Highfield Park	Draw	probably rained off
25/08/1956	Sat	Ransomes	The Forest	Draw	probably rained off

Date	Day	Opponent	Venue	WLD	Notes
27/04/1957	Sat	Dalby	Home	Won	G.Atkinson 47
04/05/1957	Sat	boys match	z	z	
11/05/1957	Sat	Old Paviors	Home	Draw	Atkinson 30, probably rained off
18/05/1957	Sat	Ellerslie	The Forest	Lost	
25/05/1957	Sat	Stoke Bardolph	Home	Lost	
01/06/1957	Sat	R.O.F. Toolroom	Home	Lost	
05/06/1957	Wed	Broughton	Home	Lost	20 overs match
08/06/1957	Sat	Keyworth 2nd	Home	Lost	Atkinson 30
10/06/1957	BHM	Boomhill Rd Methodists	Home	Lost	WOW appears to have conceeded
12/06/1957	Wed	Wymeswold Young Farmers	Home	Lost	20 overs match
15/06/1957	Sat	Basford Corinthians	Vernon Park	Lost	Baker 27
19/06/1957	Wed	Nether Broughton	Away	Won	18 overs match / Henstock 43
22/06/1957	Sat	Dalby	Home	Won	Wakerley 74 not out
06/07/1957	Sat	Olds Discount	Home	Lost	Harding 31 not out
13/07/1957	Sat	Sketchley Dye Works	Home	Lost	Wakerley 32
20/07/1957	Sat	Ellerslie	Home	Lost	
25/07/1957	Thu	Broughton	Away	Lost	WOW 10 men
27/07/1957	Sat	Nottingham Talisman	Victoria Embankment	Lost	Talismen 9 men, WOW 10 men
03/08/1957	Sat	R.O.F. Toolroom	Highfields Park	Won	Atkinson 49
05/08/1957	BHM	Nuncargate (Kirkby)	Home	Draw	probably rained off
17/08/1957	Sat	Basford Corinthians	Home	Lost	
24/08/1957	Sat	Old Paviors	High Pavement School	Won	both 8 men / Atkinson 24
31/08/1957	Sat	West Bridgford Baptists	Home	Lost	Atkinson 23

Date	Day	Opponent	Venue	WLD	Notes
24/04/1958	Thu	B&K Thomas	Home	Won	
10/05/1958	Sat	Nuthall match 1	Away	Lost	different teams for each match
10/05/1958	Sat	Nuthall match 2	Away	Won	different teams for each match
17/05/1958	Sat	Keyworth	Home	Draw	probably rained off
20/05/1958	Tue	Hickling	Home	Lost	18 overs match
24/05/1958	Sat	R.O.F. Toolroom	Highfields Park	Won	Hatherley 35
26/05/1958	BHM	Bromhill Rd Methodists	Home	Lost	"customary 2 innings match"
31/05/1958	Sat	Old Paviors	Home	Lost	very close match
04/06/1958	Wed	Sharman & Ladbury	Home	Won	20 overs match / WOW 9 men
07/06/1958	Sat	Nottingham Talisman	Victoria Embankment	Draw	"Match abandoned"
11/06/1958	Wed	Upper Broughton	Home	Lost	20 overs match / WOW 10 men
14/06/1958	Sat	Rigley Athletic	Home	Lost	
19/06/1958	Thu	Sutton Bonnington	Away	Won	18 overs match / SB only 5 men
21/06/1958	Sat	Basford Corinthians	Home	Draw	probably rained off
24/06/1958	Tue	Sutton Bonnington	Home	Lost	20 overs match
05/07/1958	Sat	Olds Discount	Home	Lost	
17/07/1958	Thu	WOW friendly	Home	n/a	Hopewell's VII v Barker's VIII
19/07/1958	Sat	Ellerslie House	Home	Won	
26/07/1958	Sat	Nottingham Talisman	Home	Lost	
02/08/1958	Sat	Old Paviors	High Pavement	Lost	both 10 men
04/08/1958	BHM	WOW friendly	Home	z	Hatherley's XI v Hammersley's XI
09/08/1958	Sat	Basford Corinthians	Vernon Park	Lost	Basford 10 men, WOW 8 men
16/08/1958	Sat	B&K Thomas	Home	Won	
23/08/1956	Sat	Thrumpton	Away	Lost	WOW 10 men
06/09/1958	Sat	Keyworth	Home	Won	both sides 9 men

Date	Day	Opponent	Venue	WLD	Notes
09/05/1959	Sat	Basford Corinthians	Home	Lost	
16/05/1959	Sat	Keyworth 2nd	Home	Won	
18/05/1959	BHM	Broomhill Rd MethS	Home	Lost	Two innings
23/05/1959	Sat	R.O.F. Toolroom	Highfield Park	Won	
30/05/1959	Sat	Old Paviors	Home	Won	
06/06/1959	Sat	Cotgrave Colliery	Home	Lost	
13/06/1959	Sat	Nottingham Talisman	Home	Lost	

2026 UPDATES – 1942 Farm Survey

In 1942, the Ministry of Agriculture and Farming sent every farmer and small holder a detailed form to complete, followed by further requests. These returns are available to view at the National Archives, along with a map – but in the case of Willoughby the map is missing (probably misfiled rather than missing). There are some contradictions between the first and subsequent returns.

The initial survey had four sections - Tenure, Condition of the Farm, Water & Electricity, and Management. Subsequent returns sought information about farm output.

These were sent to 38 people in the Electoral District of Willoughby. I have listed the largest entities below. If any reader wishes to look at returns by their family members please contact me.

Business Name	Address	Owner/Tenant	Acres
Home Farm	Willoughby	tenant	316 acres
High Elms Farm	Willoughby	tenant	184 acres
Baxtor Farm	Willoughby	owner	160 acres
Brook or Lilacs Farm	Willoughby	tenant	157.5 acres
Church Farm	Willoughby	owner/tenant	118 acres
Holme Farm	Willoughby	owner	103 acres
Willoughby Lands	Willoughby Lands	owner/tenant	96 acres
Field Farm	Willoughby	tenant	89 acres
no name	Willoughby	owner/tenant	83 acres
Mount Farm	Willoughby	tenant	76 acres
The Gables	West Thorpe	owner/tenant	72 acres
Holly Dene	Main Street	tenant	65 acres

Looking at the responses, there are some interesting points.

Water – we know there was no mains water in 1942, so all the properties collected water from roofs, and utilised wells and even the stream. All reported seasonal water difficulties

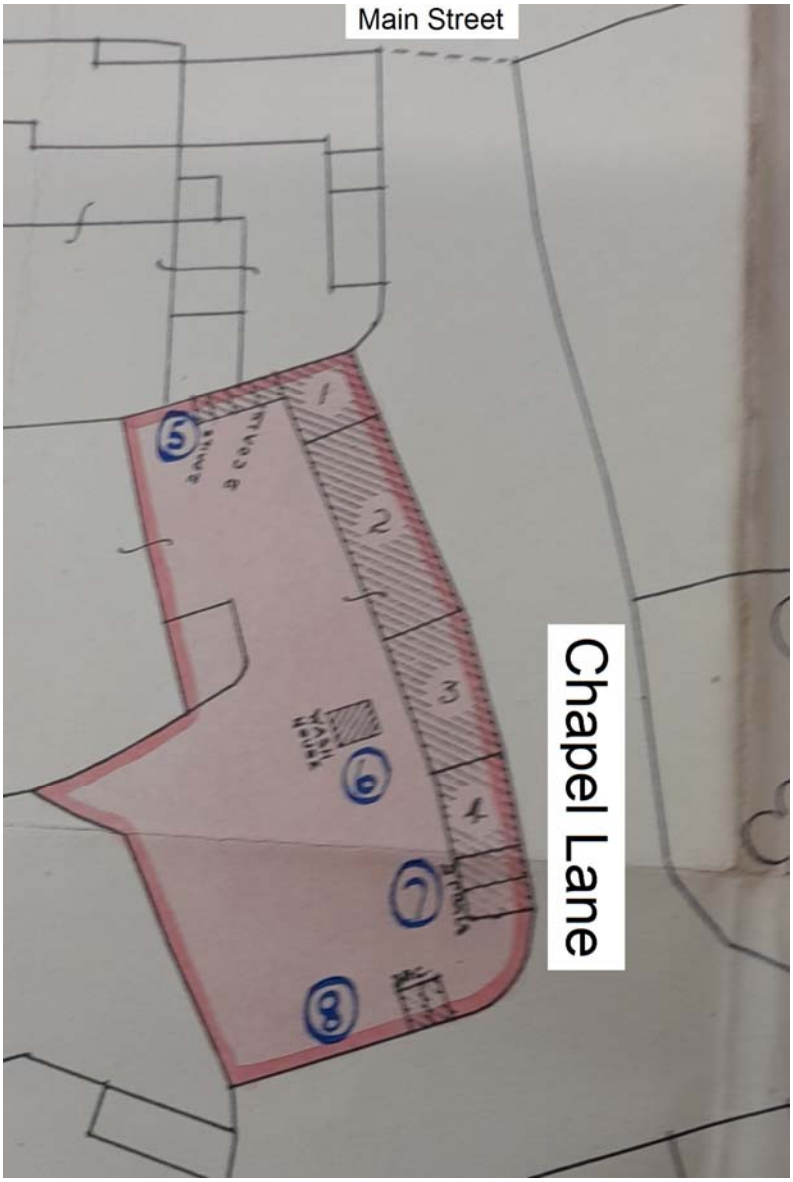
Under infestation – around half reported problems with moles and occasionally rabbits.

Around half had a connection to public electricity for lighting only, but only four had a public lighting and power circuit. None generated their own power.

There was also a question which asked why the individual wasn't doing more! This was often replied with "Lack of Ambition".

2026 UPDATES – 1938 Demolitions in Chapel Lane

There are several instances of Basford Rural Council ordering the demolition of properties in Willoughby. Known as Housing Confirmation Orders, the intention was to demolish “unfit” housing, and redevelop the site.



This particular order referred to four houses (1 to 4), two pail closets and 2 coal sheds (5), a wash house (6), two coal sheds (7) and two pail closers (8). All were owned by one individual in Willoughby, so would have been rented out.