

# Rutland Local History & Record Society

Registered Charity No. 700273



## Whissendine Village Walk September 2014 (updated 2022)

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### INTRODUCTION

The place-name is based on the Old English *Hwicce*, which is probably a folk-name. The actual meaning is obscure but is probably 'valley of the *Hwicce*'.

The village is divided into two by the Whissendine Brook and its tributary, which rise in the parish. The older part on the high land to the east is grouped around the church, while the larger group of later houses is on the high land to the west.

A feature to look out for in Whissendine is buildings that have been elevated and/or extended. Many houses built before the 19th century were single storey and built of stone. While there was local production of bricks from the late 18th century, industrial production and railways made them cheaper. These factors together with more prosperity, enabled many houses to be enlarged or refaced, during the Victorian period.

You will see a variety of building in Whissendine, both in style and height, but no mud cottages which used to be a common sight in the village. These mud houses had thick walls and low ceilings, making them good retainers of heat. Later ones had brick chimneys added to an outside wall, but no services were ever laid on. The last complete mud dwelling was demolished in 1970.

Fox hunting at Whissendine features in several famous prints of the sport in its 19th century heyday. The development of many 'hunting boxes' in the village provided new business and employment at a time when agriculture was in decline.

### WHISSENDINE VILLAGE MAPS

#### Whissendine West and Whissendine East

The maps with this guided walk are based on the 25 inch to one mile Ordnance Survey first edition map of 1886. Later buildings, extensions and demolitions are not shown. Numbers in the text, e.g. [12], refer to locations shown on the maps.

**Please:**

**Respect private property.**

**Use pavements and footpaths where available.**

**Take great care when crossing roads.**

**Remember that you are responsible for your own safety.**

### THE WALK

Following the **Whissendine West** map, walk downhill from the Village Hall [1], towards the bridge, then cross the road into The Nook [2].

This was formerly called Horse Pit Lane because the lawn to the right did not then exist. The land was much lower and an overflow from the nearby brook enabled it to be used for washing horses and carts. **The White Lodge** [3] (Grade II listed) to your left, was the house of the brewery manager, but later became a hunting lodge. The large **Red House** [4] just ahead was a brewery from the 1870s to 1893. This building might look imposing now, but a top storey was removed when it was converted into a hunting box.

Walk further past **Brewer's House** [5], passing numbers 31-23 until you come to number 21, **Gaol Cottage** [6], which was probably near the village lock up. There were mud houses behind, in the garden. This area of the Nook used to be known as Penn Yard, possibly because it was close to the pinfold used for holding stray animals.

Turn left at Gaol Cottage and walk up the lane. After 50 metres or so enter a children's play area through the left-hand gate [7]. This area is called **The Banks** and has been the property of the people of Whissendine since 1763. Walk up the area and turn right at the end of the younger children's play area. Then walk down the slope to the bridge at the bottom. This area had been intended to be used as a sheep wash in perpetuity and has had recreational use during Feast Week. It was also set aside for 'Fair Folk'. Cross the bridge and walk by the brook to the gate on Cow Lane [8]. Turn right into Cow Lane. As you walk around the corner, note the field to your right which was called **Tithe Barn Close** [9]. There is evidence on a 1763 map of a building on this site, possibly a tithe barn, which had disappeared by 1861. Turn left onto Main Street with The Green to your right. At the gateway to number 59 pause to view a private house that was once the village school, and which is now named **The Old School** [10].

The school was opened in 1868 and cost £440 to build. It was lit by oil lamps, heated by an open fire and had very primitive toilets. A far cry from being taught in the cramped church organ chamber, which for some had previously been the case. There were two classrooms with a small playground for the girls and a separate larger one for the boys. The children were also allowed to play on the Village Green.

The bungalow to the right of the school was formerly the village **Post Office** [11]. Continue walking up Main Street, passing other buildings, two of which have also housed the Post Office, and one still has the post box attached. The shop [12] further along the path was a restaurant called *Slipcote*. It was named after a very popular cheese that used to be made in the village and which was shipped in large quantities to London. This ended at the turn of the 20th century when tastes changed.

Keep walking until, across the road, you see the present-day **Village School** [13]. Building work

began on this in 1968 when the Old School was celebrating its Centenary.

Walk past several houses on your left. **The Old Butcher's Shop** and **The Old Baker's [14]** are where members of a prominent village family named Hayes lived.

Many of these Victorian rebuilds have stone platforms revealing that they may have been of wood or mud construction beforehand.

At the junction, turn left into Oakham Road. On the left, **Number 6** (marked 'PH' on the map) was **The Rose & Crown [15]** public house. Notice the barrel shoot under the window to the left of the door. Further along on the left you will see a large brick house with a blocked-up doorway named **Bouverie Court [16]**. The Bouveries were wealthy bankers and this was their hunting box at the early part of the 20th century. Their simple needs required 14 servants, in 1901.

Turn around and look on the right-hand corner of Melton Road where there is a modern house. This was where the **Wesleyan Chapel [17]** stood until it was demolished in the 1980s.

To see **Whissendine Windmill [18]**, walk along Melton Road for a few hundred yards, and then turn left into the track leading to the windmill site.



*Whissendine Windmill. (RO)*

Whissendine Windmill is Grade II\* listed. It was built in 1809 by the Earl of Harborough of Stapleford Park to replace an earlier windmill. The mill was sold to Stephen Whitehead of Gedney, Lincolnshire, in 1862 who refitted it. It worked until 20th April 1922

when it was damaged in a gale but not repaired. The windmill was sold to Nigel Moon, the present owner, in 1995. Since then, a new top and four new sails have been fitted. It finally worked again on wind on 14 August 2009.

The windmill has a fine set of machinery including four sets of millstones, three flour dressing machines and a roller mill dated 1877. It works all-year-round producing bread and pastry flours, spelt and barley flours, ryemeal and oatmeal. as well as middlings and bran for pigs, chickens and horses.

The small building near the site entrance was the mill office in the late 19C. It was in ruins until its recent restoration. It is now used as a public display area.

Now retrace your steps back along Melton Road to its junction with Oakham Road. Turn left, walk past the bus shelter and enter Stapleford Road.

The first house on the right is **Ebury House [19]**, a stone house with a red brick facade. Walk along to look at the back wall where you will see the original roof line of a much smaller cottage, an old doorway, a bricked-up window and lintels to other doorways and windows.

The next house is **Inglenook House [20]**, the home of the miller, Eli Kitchen, in the 19th century. Notice how the smaller stone house has been extended to one side to make a larger brick-built Victorian home.

Cross over the road towards this house and look back for a view behind a high hedge of **Harborough Cottage [21]**. It was probably built by the 6th Earl Harborough of Stapleford Hall during the period of estate development which began in the 1820s. A popular legend that it was once the home of the Earl's mistress is almost certainly untrue.



*Harborough Cottage*

Most of the houses and farms in the village belonged to the Stapleford Estate, including **South Lodge [22]**, to your left, and **West Farm Lodge [23]**, ahead to your right. These farmhouses, together with a large part of the village were sold off in the great sale of 1861.

Keep walking until you see the entrance to **Sherrard Close** on your left. On your right is **Mulberry House [24]**, which was once a grocer's shop. Between this house and the next, look beyond a gate through the space between the houses for a fine view of the church.

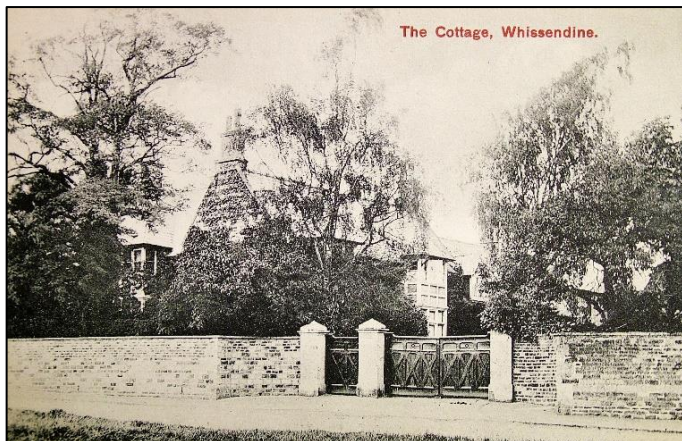
The next house with two front doors is said to be the former **Greyhound** public house [25]. Note the cellar under one of the windows and faint black writing up on the side brick wall which says **Stafford Cottage**. At the rear was Stafford's Yard and housing for the navvies that built the railway.

The house further down is called **Dobneys Cottage** [26], another example of a double raised roof. Note the stone and two types of brick on the side wall. Mr Dobney was one of the two village undertakers. Across the road is a thatched cottage called **Windrush Cottage** [27] which is probably 18th century. To the left is the site of the last remaining mud cottage. It was demolished in 1970.

Further down the road was a Second World War **Prisoner of War Camp** that housed Italian, and then German prisoners of war, and finally became a Land Army Hostel. The site was built over in the 1990s.

Walk back to and down Main Street. Go beyond the entrance to Whissendine Primary School [13] on the left and observe how high the playground is compared to the modern houses next door. In the 1950s, there was a dairy farm on the school site and a garage where the houses are. The cows were not properly fenced, and one animal managed to get onto the garage roof which was at field level. It fell through the roof on to a vehicle and had to be rescued by being wheeled out still in the motor.

Continue down to The Green and on your way look to the right at **Woodbine Cottage** [28] one of the villages' few remaining thatched buildings. It has been refaced with brick to the front, but the side still shows the original stone building.



*Whissendine Cottage in 1910. (Jack Hart Collection)*

Look through the second set of large gates on your left between the village sign and the bridge to see **Whissendine Cottage** [29], a former hunting lodge and home in the last century of Eric Chaplin. The Chaplins were bankers and benefactors of the village and there is a plaque to Mr Chaplin in the church. After Mr Chaplin died, the house became a Youth Hostel for a short time.

Cross the bridge over the brook. This area often floods, causing traffic to be diverted and difficulties for those trying to get from one side of the village to the other. **The White Lion** [30] has had its cellars flooded a few times.

Now follow the **Whissendine East** map for the second part of the walk.

From the Village Hall walk east along Main Street towards the church. The cottages [31] you pass on your left are 18th century and were originally single storey stone built thatched cottages. These were either two stories or raised to two stories at the end of the 19th century. Note the difference between the stone and brick on the front wall of the middle cottage. By the 1970s part of this row of cottages was derelict, but now they have all been restored. Number 64 was a shop with large display windows.

The modern house next door occupies the site of **The Three Horseshoes** [32] which was recorded as a 'Beer House' in 1863. There used to be a mud house in the pub yard.

The large stone outside number 68 was placed to stop carriages catching against the wall of the house which was also a shop. Note the large shop window to the right.

The next house had workshops and a bakehouse behind. People would take bread to be baked here or leave their Sunday joint to be cooked while they were attending church.

In the early 1900s, a small private school was run by a Miss Annie Sophia Stafford in the drawing room of **Stone Cottage** [33]. She called it North Lodge School. Later, a schoolroom was built behind the cottage, but the drawing room was still used in cold weather. The school closed in 1936 when Miss Stafford became ill.

Note the village **water pump** [34], further up the hill. The well below is now sealed off.

Look across the road from the pump to see **Honeysuckle Cottage** [35] (formerly **Globe Cottage**). This is where Miss Stafford had an earlier private school. In 1876, she was advertising for young ladies to attend as boarders.

**GLOBE COTTAGE, WHISSENDINE, Rutland**  
MISS STAFFORD, having taken the above premises, is desirous of meeting with a few Young **LADIES** as **BOARDERS** in addition to her Daily Pupils (after the Christmas vacation). The village is considered very healthy, and is pleasantly situated. Any pupils placed under Miss Stafford's care will have careful moral and religious training with all the comforts of a happy home - Terms very moderate. Prospectus forwarded on application.

*(Stamford Mercury 24th November 1876, page 1)*



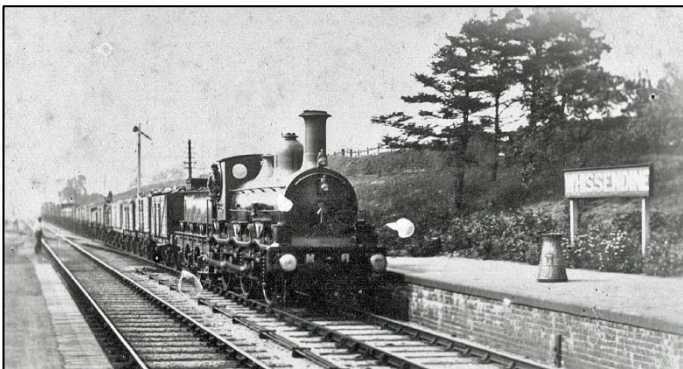
*Whissendine Church c1915. (Jack Hart Collection)*

The large **church [36]**, dedicated to St Andrew, dominates the skyline on all approaches to the village. Please feel free to enter and explore the church. There are notes to follow inside. The house opposite, at **89 Main Street**, is **Old Church Farm [37]**. It is late 17th century with some elements of an earlier in date. Notice how it was built in two parts, one lower than the other, following the line of the hill. The lower part probably started life as a barn. This was usual so that any effluent from animals would flow away from the house.

Just beyond the church you will see part of **The Old Vicarage [38]**. The original building has been altered many times. It is Grade II listed and described as an 18th century house with a Victorian wing. The changes of 1862 are largely what we can see today. Besides being used as a residence for the incumbent at the time, it was the centre for Feast Week Celebrations in the 19th century and then in the Second World War the local Home Guard used the cellar as its headquarters. It is now a private house.

Look across Main Street at numbers **93-95 [39]**. This house had been built by 1727, possibly earlier. For the next two centuries it had various tenants and owners, but by the 1980s it had become sadly neglected and overgrown. Compulsory purchase was necessary to ensure its restoration.

Continue along Main Street to where Station Road **[40]** begins. **Whissendine Station**, two miles outside the village, opened in 1848 and closed in 1955. Originally it was named Wymondham Station because it was just over the border into Leicestershire, but by 1863 it had been renamed Whissendine. It was demolished in 1984, having been derelict since closure.



*A coal train from Nottingham bound for London passing through Whissendine station in 1882.  
(Horton Collection)*

On the opposite side of Main Street, is the last survivor of the four chapels that were in the village. The **Primitive Methodist Chapel [41]** was built in 1868. It closed for worship and converted into a private dwelling in 2010.

On the same side, further up the hill, look at the cream-coloured cottage, which used to be three cottages. It is called **Stoup Cottage [42]** and contains some evidence of medieval work.

Retrace your steps along Main Street towards the Village Hall, passing Foxhill **[43]** which was developed in the late 1970s.

Horton's Lane **[44]**, on the left just before the Village Hall, is named after another of the one-time prominent families in the village. The head teacher in the school from 1937-1960 was Miss Alice Horton. There was a mud house on this lane where her grandmother lived.

Horton's Lane also leads to Hall Close, another late 1970s development. It is on the probable site of a medieval manor house.

Now return to the Village Hall **[1]**. This is the end of the guided walk which we hope you have enjoyed.

Ian Ryder

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