

ough, Leicester, Northampton and St Albans; to Birmingham the "Amity", the "Royal Dart" via Castle Donnington, Ashby and Tamworth; as well as others to Derby, Mansfield, Doncaster, Gainsborough and Manchester. Of particular interest was the "Granby" going three times a week from the Black Boy through Bingham to Grantham; the "Imperial" daily to Hull from the Lion via Bingham, Newark and Lincoln; and the "Accommodation" to Lincoln from the Black's Head via Bingham and Newark.

If not exactly a honeypot for Saturday night raves, Bingham did have some social attractions for the surrounding villages. There were three fairs during the year - the Tuesday and Wednesday before the 13th February, for horses; Thursday in Whitsun Week a holiday; and November 8th and 9th for pigs. There was a stallion show on Easter Thursday, and a large statute fair for hiring servants generally the last Thursday in October. The Vale of Belvoir was still very rural.

The Post Office was in Church Street. The mail gig for Newark, with the letters for York, left Nottingham at 5.00 in the morning, reached Bingham at half past six, arriving in Newark at 8.00. It returned from Newark at half past ten, reaching Bingham at a quarter past noon when the mail was dropped off, leaving immediately for Nottingham which was reached at half past one.

In 1830 some local enterprising Lancashire postmasters arranged for their mail to be carried on the new steam railway from Manchester to Liverpool. The world was changing. The response of the General Post Office, which must have been foregoing a lot of income to the carriers and the stage coaches, was to start in 1833 a second class mail coach service from Nottingham to Grantham, carrying four passengers but with only two horses. Ah well !

Images of Aslockton - The Post Mill & Bakery

This photograph is the oldest in our collection and dates from circa 1880.

The photograph was taken from the Scarrington end of Mill Lane and shows the Post Mill with the Bakery.

The Bakery still exists and is now a private house.



Cranmer Local History Group



Local History Digest

The quarterly newsletter of the Cranmer Local
History Group

Researching the history of *Aslockton, Scarrington and Whatton-in-the-Vale*

Volume 1

Number 2

December, 2004

Free

Forthcoming Local History Events

Tuesday February 1st 2005— 7:45 pm	The History of the Horse in Aslockton. <i>Brian Crawford</i>	The Cranmer Arms, Main Street, Aslockton
Tuesday March 1st 2005—7:45 pm	Echoes from the Past <i>Jean & Michael Flinton</i> Exhibition and chat of by-gone and interesting things.	The Cranmer Arms, Main Street, Aslockton.
Tuesday April 5th 2005—7.45 pm	The Jacobite Amen Glass <i>Dominic Johnson</i> The mystery surrounding the auction of this glass.	The Cranmer Arms, Main Street, Aslockton.

Visitors, particularly residents of the three villages, are most welcome.

Membership is only £5 per year (the Membership year runs from July to June). Come along to any meeting and join.

**Visit our web site at www.cranmerlhg.org.uk
e-mail: info@cranmerlhg.org.uk**

Along the Fosse were, amongst others :-

J Baker to Car Colston from the Wheatsheaf
J Brown to East Bridgeford from the Durham Ox
Mr Whyley to East Bridgeford from the Bell
W Parrett to East Bridgeford from the Swan
Mr Hodgkinson to Flintham from the Crown

and R Dixon operated the mail gig from the Durham Ox at the corner of Pelham Street and Clumber Street to Newark.

In 1825 the route of the mail coach from Nottingham to London was altered again to go via Loughborough and Leicester to Harborough and Dunstable, and it was advertised as leaving every afternoon at 5.30, arriving at the Bull and Mouth in London at 11.30 next morning, lighted and guarded. These two latter items are worth noting, we must not forget that not only were most roads still unsurfaced (the improvements of Telford and Macadam had only been done to the main post roads) but they were unlit and of course used by everyone for every purpose, so it was not unusual to meet flocks of sheep or herds of cows being moved from field to field, or being walked to market, as indeed it still was fifty years ago. A letter I have shows that monetary bills drawn on Banks were sent through the post in two separate halves, for anti-theft security reasons, and presumably both halves were required for presentation before the Banks would authorise payment.

Pigot and Co's series of National Commercial Directories appeared in 1828/29 and gave general information about the shire as a whole :- "The productions of this county are coals, lead, wool, cattle, fowls, abundance of fresh-water fish, liquorice, grains of all sorts, hops and weld." Most of this is reasonable, wild hops can still be found in local hedgerows between Aslockton, Whatton and Orston, liquorice (as in Pontefract Cakes, bootlaces and All Sorts) revelled in the soft deep black soils of the warp lands in the north of the county, but of weld, presumably grown as a dye plant I have found no traces nor can I account for lead as a 'production of this county'. No doubt someone will be able to put me right on this also. The population in round figures had grown from 65,200 in 1700 to 190,700 in 1821, so even though there had been a threefold increase, a very thinly populated county in 1700 still had plenty of wide open spaces.

The towns were listed as Bingham, Blythe, Mansfield, Newark, Nottingham, Ollerton, Retford, Southwell, Tuxford and Worksop, and Bingham was 'about a mile distant from the turn-pike road, which was the ancient Roman Fosse Way.' No mention whatsoever of the Grantham Road.

Coaches other than the Royal Mail coaches ran on national services through Nottingham - from York to London via Melton, Oakham and Uppingham; from Leeds "The Times", the "Comet", the "Courier", the "Royal Hope" (of snowstorm fame), and the "Express" to London via Loughbor-

In the normal course of events not many families bother to keep their everyday correspondence, but now land had been enclosed in relatively small parcels it could be identified, sold and bought quite easily, and lawyers being lawyers, the greatest amount of surviving correspondence is of a legal nature. At this stage there doesn't seem to be much evidence of hosiery/textiles outworking in the Vale (someone will put me right on this) but agriculturally new crop varieties were coming into use, mechanisation was beginning to arrive, land use was becoming more efficient and field drainage schemes were being put in by the major land owners. In fact more activity all round, and more trade for the carriers to meet.

The contrast with the world of private enterprise could not have been more marked. In 1814 no less than 127 carriers' routes were listed with pick-up points in Nottingham, ranging from one man-one horse operations to major national companies. Barnes and Ashmore went to Birmingham from the Milton's Head. Gear, Wilson and Co also went to Birmingham, Ashby and Tamworth on one direction, and to Grantham, Newark, Sleaford, Boston, Lincoln and Hull in the other. W and J Pettifor would take you to Leicester, Harborough, Stamford, Cambridge, and Norwich, and also to Coventry, Warwick and Bristol. You could go to London and all parts of Southern England with W Parkins from the Milton's Head, or with Deacon and Co. In addition to the southern parts of England, Acton and Co would also take you to Sheffield, Barnsley, Wakefield and Leeds, whilst Eyre and Pettifors would take you to Doncaster, York and all parts of the north of England and Scotland. Note only Gear, Wilson and Co of these national firms offered the possibility of a route along the Grantham Road.

Of the local carriers eleven or so would have made some use of the Grantham Road :-

- Mr Wetherill to Aslockton from the Swan
- Mr Baxter to Bingham from the Black Boy
- W Jackson to Bingham from the Queen's Head
- W Farnley to Bottesford from the Derby Arms
- G Wilson to Bottesford from the George and Dragon and
- J Wilson to Bottesford also from the George and Dragon
- R and J Silcock to Hose from the May Pole
- S Freer to Orston from the Horse and Groom
- T Pennington to Plungar from the May Pole
- J Parr to Redmile from the May Pole
- J Hitchcock to Scarrington from the Wheatsheaf
- H Parnham to Whatton from the Queen's Head

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Cranmer Local History Group

The Cranmer Local History Group as part of its' constitution is committed to promoting the history of Aslockton, Scarrington and Whatton-in-the-Vale in particular and local history in general.

As part of that commitment the group organises a series of talks throughout the year and this quarterly digest is intended to compliment that programme.

All information welcome

We are always interested in photographs, anecdotes and documents relating to the villages. We have already archived in excess of 100 photographs and have extracted references to the villages from documents dating back to the 11th Century.

We are able to scan material very quickly so any documents or photographs you may loan to us will be returned very quickly, unharmed.

If you can help, please contact:

Gregg Redford on 01949 851597

Or e-mail: info@cranmerlhg.org.uk

Local History Digest

Welcome to the second edition of the Cranmer Local History Group's quarterly newsletter. If you are reading this before Christmas, may we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. If you are reading this after Christmas we hope that you had a good Christmas and offer our best wishes for the New Year.

William Kelk – Vicar of Whatton (1763 – 1781)

Gregg Redford – November 2004

Whilst researching some background material for a talk on the History of Whatton that I am scheduled to give to the Cranmer Local History Group in August of 2005, I came across a series of letters in the Foljambe collection at the Nottinghamshire County Archives. The letters mainly concerned the Rev. William Kelk who was the Vicar of Whatton from 1763 until his death in 1781. It's basically trivia and little or none of it will be used in the talk, but it seemed a pity to not to record it somewhere, so here it is.

Whether or not the Reverend William Kelk was aware of his impending demise is not clear, he did however write to the patron of Whatton church John Hewett (Hewett was patron of the church from 1761 to 1793 when it passed to Richard Foljambe), on the 3rd of March 1781. In that letter he acknowledged the many favours he had received from Mr. Hewett, he went on to say that he would presume to solicit one other: *for my son to succeed me in the living of Whatton (if it please God he lives to want it) as there is a good and convenient house and all other necessary buildings upon it...*. It appears that Hewett replied declining to be committed saying: *I do not know your son's age or education or conduct so I cannot prudently enter into any particular engagement...*.

A relative of William Kelk also wrote to Hewett, regretting that his relative (William Kelk's) anxiety for his family has caused him to act improperly: *I know the vicarage of Whatton lies near his heart, and the allotments in Aslockton having improved that part of the living on third part. His only son is at Newark School and appears to be about twelve years of age....*. In fact, his son (also a William) was closer to being fifteen as he was baptised in Whatton Church on the 6th July, 1766, but clearly not of an age to take on the 'living'.

Events overtook the discussion as William Kelk died in October, 1781 apparently of some kind of 'fever' and was buried in Whatton Church on October 10th, 1781. His wife, Dorothy (nee Hyde), who he married at Whatton Church on the 26th September, 1765 approached the Reverend John Dixon for advice after her husband's death. John Dixon wrote to Hewett:

'He died without will...' and then went on to list his chief assets: '...his chief effects are in land: one farm of £56 p.a., another of £23 p.a., the last this at Rotherham and when the lease expires which is near out it may perhaps be raised to £30 or £40 p.a. He has borrowed money to buy one of the estates to the amount £825 and pays 4 percent...'. John Dixon went on to say that: 'I am to preach at Whatton again on Sunday as well as at my own church and hope in the meantime she find out some abler advisor'.

A second letter on the same day (9th October, 1781) apparently from John Dixon discussed the value of the living: *'...should guess about £70 to £80 p.a. It may be more for any thing I know, for Mr. Kelk would never give me the least information about it but concealed everything relating to it was a much care, as a farmer who has a good take does his rent'.*

There follows a number of letters in effect applying for the now vacant living at Whatton. A letter from John Hewett to John Dixon gives a possible insight into William Kelk's character: *'I entirely agree with you that everybody who has any thing to leave ought to always to have a will by them. For the want of this precaution Mrs. Kelk's difficulties will be endless and the daughter's provision very precarious. Mr. Kelk I find had hurt his constitution by drinking such quantities of ale every day, that in all possibility he would not have lived long, even if this fever had not attacked him'.*

at Tuxford. It's not yet clear whether anything like this arose from Belvoir castle and although large land holdings were being built up in the Vale the impression remains that it was a good place to come from, rather than go to.

On the 23rd August 1784 the first mail coach ran between Nottingham and London, still via Melton, leaving London at 6.00 pm arriving in Nottingham at 6.00 pm the following day. Remember this was over what we would now call unmade roads. Coal, textiles and canals were all spreading between Mansfield, Nottingham, the Erewash valley, Derby and Leicester. In 1785 the London mail coach was speeded up, leaving London at 8.00 pm, arriving in Nottingham at mid-day the next day. Can you imagine trying to sleep in a small swaying wooden box, slung on two leather straps, drawn by horses trotting along unmade roads? People were a hardier breed in those days.

Nottingham became a Post town in 1786, perhaps earlier, and by the following year coaches were passing through to Halifax, Clitheroe (why?), and Leeds, going into the city via Hollowstone, High Pavement, Weekday Cross, Middle Pavement, Bridlesmithgate to the High Street, which was the centre of all the activity. Where was the Vale of Belvoir in all this? Nowhere - although the great network of carriers still operated, enlarged, spread everywhere and was a far more efficient and cheaper carrier of letters and news than the General Post Office.

In 1790 W Marshall in "Rural Economy of the Midland Counties" wrote :- "The part I saw of (the road) between Trent Bridge and Bunny Hill may without prejudice be deemed one of the worst roads in the kingdom. The steepness torn into inequalities, strewn with loose stones and set with fixed ones, in true breakneck crash carriage style, and the levels loaded with mud up to the footlocks."

At last the world began to wake up. Enclosures were being carried out throughout south Nottinghamshire, and in 1791 there was again a cross post from Nottingham to Newark, this time going via Bingham. Does this mean the old Fosse had at last been re-surfaced?

In Nottingham the High Street was beginning to be busy. The North Mail left for Leeds at 3.00 daily and arrived from there at 9.30 every morning. The North Mail via Newark left daily at 5.00 in the morning and arrived from there at 5.00 in the afternoon. The mail for Birmingham left every afternoon at 5.00 and arrived from there every night at 11.00. The London mail set out every morning except Saturday at 10.00 from the White Lion in Clumber Street, and arrived from there at 2.30 every day except Monday, fare £2.12.6 or 2½ guineas.

Bingham, a receiving office only, had its own stamp by 1795, but an enterprising postmaster organised his own private delivery service to thirty two villages at 1d. a mile. However Tuxford had had its own stamp in 1709, Worksop in 1718, and Ollerton in 1782, so Bingham was lagging behind somewhat. Nevertheless things were definitely looking up.

Mail Services in the Vale of Belvoir

Michael Flinton—2004

The “posts” laid down for the Tudor Royal Mail service did not really affect the vale, being confined to the Great North Road, through Grantham, Newark and Tuxford and so onwards with periodic local services to Nottingham, when the route was from Newark along the Fosse to east Stoke, diverting along the foot of the old river cliff to Hazelford Ferry, across the river then via the higher (and drier) ground around Hoveringham and Caythorpe to Lowdham, again along the foot of the old river cliff to Gedling, Carlton and into the city via Barker Gate. Most of the Fosse south of the river was not used for this purpose, from which one may suppose that whilst on the northern side of the Trent was Southwell, with ecclesiastical correspondence, the south side was not worth bothering about.

By 1637, the date of John Taylor's 'Carriers Cosmography', it is clear from his listings of names and companies that there was a widespread and interlocking system of common carriers across the country. Taylor also listed an unofficial footpost every second Thursday from Nottingham to London, but there is no indication whether the (presumably) postman walked via Newark and the Great North Road or along the Grantham Road. Newark was the most important post town in the county, Nottingham was only a branch office.

Nottingham became a Head post Office in 1675, and soon after 'undertakers' began to farm and develop those mail services not on the old post roads. By 1690 the Nottingham - London route, according to John Ogilvy, was via Bedford, Kettering, Uppingham and Melton, keeping off the North Road but avoiding the Vale by following more or less the route of the current Nottingham - Melton road, running three times a week, and the Nottingham to Newark service ceased. Is it reasonable to suppose there was still no postal market to be served here? Gardiner's survey of 1677 had a horse post branch from the Chester Road at Towcester through Northampton, Harborough, Leicester and Loughborough to Derby.

By the turn of the 17th Century the hosiery trades were becoming established in and around the immediate vicinity of Nottingham and in 1736 Ralph Allen established a cross post between Nottingham and Derby, three days a week, leaving Derby at 6.00 am and returning the same evening. This is 116 years after the first by-post to Nottingham from Newark on the Great North Road, and 46 years after the start of the three times a week service through Melton and Sheffield. This seems to point to the very slow growth of economic activity in Nottingham and perhaps the London service through Melton was really aiming at Sheffield, Nottingham merely being a stop on the way.

By the middle of the 18th Century the ducal houses were becoming established in Sherwood Forest, with consequent postal activity and links to Mansfield, Worksop and the Great North Road

The daughter referred to in the previous transcript was probably Dorothy, who was baptised in Whatton Church on the 11th June, 1769.

The letters list a number of candidates for the vacancy, but John Hewitt finally settled on TF Twigge, the Vicar of Aldwark. Mr. Twigge replied that he would be happy to accept the living provided he could keep his current living at Aldwark. We know from the parish register that the Reverent Twigge appointed a curate to the Whatton parish an Edward Cresswell. The final letter in the series was sent by the Reverent Twigge to presumably John Hewitt detailing a report he had received from the curate about the condition of the Church at Whatton: '*...Mr. Cresswell tells me that the tower part of the church having long been out of repair, and the east part bulged, the Chancel will be totally demolished in the case the other part should fall, which appears very probable, unless taken care of in proper time...*'. It appears that the poor condition of the fabric of Whatton Church was of great concern to the parishioners, as Twigge continued: '*..the parishioners have formerly held several conferences about it but that nothing has been done towards repairing it in a proper manner, nor he believes, will, unless you or I interest ourselves it....*'.

Seemingly no one took any real interest in the problem Whatton had to wait 26 years before some repairs were made to the Church and it was 're-pewed' in 1807. But it was not until the Hall family reunited the patronage of the church with the Lordship of the Manor that extensive repairs to the fabric of the Church was undertaken. The Chancel was rebuilt in 1848 and the Church totally restored in 1878.

But what of the Kelp family? The letters unfortunately give no clue. There is no mention in the Whatton parish registers and I assume they moved elsewhere. It appears that Dorothy junior (the daughter) never married and died in Leicester in 1818. The son, William followed his father's profession and became the Reverend William Kelk. He married Elizabeth Catherine Hastings in 1793 and died in London in 1817.

Sources:
Foljambe, Thornhagn, Hewitt, etc. File—Vol v: Miscellaneous Affairs—ref DD/FJ/11/1/3 Date: 1715-1786—Nottinghamshire County Archives.
Whatton Parish Registers—Microfiche—Cranmer Local History Group.
Pedigree Resource File (CD-ROM #56) - FamilySearch™

Images of Whatton—The Griffins Head

This picture dates from around 1900 and shows the Griffins Head on the Old Grantham Road, Whatton-in-the-Vale. It was built in the mid 1800s, until 1919 it was owned by the Whatton Estate (Hall Family) and leased to the Nottingham Brewery. It was later owned by the Home Brewery Company, who demolished the old building and replaced it with a 'new' Griffins Head in 1964. The newer building itself was demolished in the 1990's to make way for housing, ironically called 'Griffins End'



Cranmers Mound

Gregg Redford—2002

It is thought that Cranmers Mound (or Mount) was built in the late medieval or post-medieval. It is possible that the Mound was raised by Reginald de Aslockton who was a tenant of Walter D'Ayncourt. Reginald settled in Aslockton in the 12th Century.



The site has been described as having possibly two bailes, one of which may have been a platform for the now vanished Manor House. There are a series of fish ponds which are linked together to form moats around five islands, north of the fishponds there is a block of ridge and furrows.

The tower could not have been substantial as the level area of the motte is only 4 metres by 6 metres. It is possible, however that an enclosure (a *Bailey*) extended from the foot of the motte which could have contained additional build-

ings. The area containing the *motte and bailey* was known in later documents as BAILEY CLOSE.

The name of the mound is derived from the belief that the young Thomas Cranmer (later Archbishop of Canterbury) climbed the mound to listen to the church bells of St. John of Beverley in the neighbouring village of Whatton. It is possible that Thomas's older brother, John Cranmer may have designed gardens around the mound, as it is thought that the mound was adapted to act as a *prospect mound* overlooking the pleasure gardens.

The Thomas Cranmer Bust



This bust of Thomas Cranmer is in the Cranmer Arms, a manuscript attached to the back of it read as follows:

'This bust in frame came from the old Manor House where Archbishop Cranmer was born at Aslockton and was in possession of William Freeman until 1800, when it came to Richard Wilson wheelwright of Aslockton, and afterwards to his daughter Mary Smith wife of Richard Smith, shoemaker of Aslockton, and afterwards to his daughter Mary Cooper'

Whatton Village Plan—1919

ASLOCKTON - WITHIN LIVING MEMORY

Margaret Auckland in conversation with Mrs. Beryl Wright - 2003

Beryl Wright (nee Birkin) lived 1925 until 1950 at Normanhurst (now the Vicarage) next to Aslockton Church. She lived with her mother Mrs. Florence Birkin (nee Baker) and grandmother Mrs. Harriet Baker (widow of Charles Baker who came from March in Cambridgeshire as a signalman on the railway and later become a farmer). Between 1950 and 1956 she lived with her mother at The Cottage on Abbey Lane, (which had been converted from a barn) until her marriage.

'The biggest changes to Aslockton are the increases in housing (especially since the 1950s), population and traffic. Before the 1939 many houses still used oil lamps (and candles to go to bed) as they had neither gas or electricity. Water was drawn from wells and there was no main drainage which meant 'earth-closets' and cesspits. There were no street lights or pavements.

The only school in Aslockton was a very small 'private' one, run by Miss Keyworth in Abbey Lane (in one of three cottages – now *Graylands*). Most children attended school at Scarrington or Whatton, possibly going on to Senior school in Grantham, Nottingham or West Bridgford. There was another 'private' school at Scarrington in the *White House*. Children walked to school, even at the age of 5 years.

The main event for everyone was THE FEAST, an annual fair on the field at the side of the railway in front of *Belvoir House* (now built on – four houses and four bungalows). The fair consisted of roundabouts, swings, stalls and a cake-walk. Other events were the ANNIVERSARY at the Methodist Chapel (now flats) on Chapel Lane and village sports on *Paylings Field* (next to the Village Hall).

Before the 1939-45 war orders were taken and delivered by HARDSTAFF & BROWN in Bingham. Milk was either collected from the farm on Abbey Lane with your own container or delivered to some homes after afternoon milking. Most of the morning milking was collected in churns and taken to Nottingham.

With the reduction in agriculture and mechanisation, most young people in the village were forced to look for employment in Nottingham, Grantham and Bingham. When they married they often moved away.'