

## A VOICE FROM WHILTON'S PAST

This was an opportunity to hear some of the recorded memories of Will Adams.

For various reasons, it seemed appropriate to listen to this recording in 2013 in the Village Hall. Will was born in Whilton in 1909 and died here in 1993, 20 years ago. Through his mother, Kate Rose Adams, nee Taylor, Will was descended from Thomas Taylor, the first schoolmaster of Whilton, who taught in Whilton School from about 1786. The old Whilton School is now the Village Hall in which we were sitting to listen. The recording was made in 1992, a year before Will's death. We were interested to hear the accent and speech patterns of an old man, steeped in Whilton history.



*Will and Freda Adams at the door of St Andrew's Church*

He referred to his grandfather, James Adams, who was a baker in Whilton. Will did not know where his grandfather baked, but records show that he lived in the Stonehouse, and that he took over from his father, another James Adams, who died in 1875.

Will also referred to his uncle, who had lived in Buckby Lane in a cottage long since demolished. This uncle was Joseph Adams, who was left with three children, when his wife Sarah, died in child birth in 1876. Will remembered that only the two daughters, Mary Anne and Isabella, lived with their father. Their brother George Lewis Adams, was brought up by his maternal grandparents, whose surname was Boot.

Will lived in several Whilton houses, renting according to the fortunes of the family. He was born at the Manor House, but when his father became a canal lengthsmen, they moved to Windlass Cottage.

At the beginning of the First World War the Adamsons moved back to the village, living a while in Tudor House, spending another period in the Manor House, and at Inglenook. Will grew up with family members around in the village, and with a younger brother Oliver, and a sister, Marjorie. His mother had memories of the 1890s in Whilton, and shared them with her children.

As a child Will knew a variety of people who came bringing services and goods to the village, among these were the tinman, who repaired metal utensils, "Clockie" who mended clocks and watches, especially if provided with a cup of tea and slice of cake, and the crumpet man, who walked over the fields with one of his baskets on his head.

There were memories of baking day, and the delicious smell of pork pies cooking in the communal oven at Whilton Feast. This must have been the memory of Will's mother, as Will said this had ended before his time. He did, however, give a clear description of the way the stick oven worked at Field View.

Will became a carpenter and married Freda Collier, from a family of carpenters and wheelwrights. They lived at Field View, where Will was still living at his death.

The recording included details of the Whilton wells, most of them open, but some with a pump. Langton House and Langton Cottage had the deepest wells at 50 feet. In Manor Lane the depth was only 10 feet, and Holly House and The Old Cottage had springs in their cellars.

Our minds were taken back over a century, helping us to appreciate the depth of experience within one small village.



*Sarah Ann Adams, with her son, George Lewis, about a year before her death in 1876.*