

## CHRISTMAS PARTIES AT WHILTON LODGE

In the 1930s, when Colonel Shaw owned the Lodge, he and his family hosted a party for Whilton children in the week before Christmas. These parties were remembered for years afterwards by the village children, not only for the food and special treatment, but for the majestic journey in a chauffeur-driven Daimler or Lancia from the village down to the Lodge, and for the welcome by Colonel Shaw with his monocle and waxed moustache, accompanied by his film star-like wife.

Members of the society sat around a table, as the children did eighty years ago, and sampled thinly cut sandwiches, orange jellies and fancy cakes. Leaf tea was poured through a strainer and sugar was served with silver tongs.

As Christmas is coming we also enjoyed the nostalgic, perhaps rose-tinted, memory of Stanley Haynes, one of those Whilton children. This memory must date from about 1937 when Rev. Lawrence Edward Brown became Rector of Whilton.

*It was Christmas Eve. In the church new candles were in place, the stove was going well, and the polished copper lamps shone on the holly which decorated the lectern and the pulpit. There had been a brief snowfall - it would be a white Christmas - and as the congregation assembled they shook the snow from their boots on the welcoming doormat, warming their hands over the stove before taking their places for the Christmas Eve carol service.*

*The boy in the corner pumped the organ, Parson Brown announced the hymn, Betty Pride played the opening chord, and the church rang to the sound of "O come all ye faithful."*

*...There'd be two Christmas services for Dad to attend - the early communion and the mid-morning Matins. Then it was home to put the dinner in the oven. From the spring broods of poultry we'd keep a cockerel. By Christmas this bird would be in the pink of condition. For some weeks Mum would take a stick into the hen run to fight the blighter off as he'd always attack a woman - not a man, as a rule, but how did he know one from the other? Anyway, he'd now be trussed and stuffed - a feast for kings.*