

THE PLOUGH: PAST INTO PRESENT

On Thursday 27th May, our meeting was based on the story of the house known as "The Old Plough," shown in this photo of about 1925.

This began with Richard Langton of Whilton, who sold a house in Whilton to Thomas Mutton sometime in the mid 1600s, probably after the Civil War. Thomas was a prosperous shepherd. He and his wife, Lucy, seem to have lived in this house, where they had two children, Alice and Thomas. In December 1656 Thomas Mutton was unwell, and "*considering the weak and fraile estate of my mortall bodye*" he made his will, and died in 1658. The house was left to his widow for life, and then to Thomas, his son, who was aged about six at his father's death.



Young Thomas Mutton grew up in Whilton. He became a husbandman, or farmer, and was active in adding to his property and building. Other houses were also being built in Whilton at this time of renewed confidence and prosperity after the Restoration. Thomas bought a parcel of ground from widow Alice Dawson, on which she had built a new house. There was a yard and orchard adjoining it. He also bought an orchard from William and Hannah Cleaver to the west of Alice Dawson's house and orchard, and laid it all out together. William Cleaver kept his yard, which lay to the south end of this plot. Alice Dawson's house became the core of what was to become the Plough.

In 1693, when he was 41, Thomas Mutton had, at least temporarily, left Whilton and gone to Long Orton near Peterborough. In that year he took out a mortgage on his Whilton property, borrowing £70 from Thomas Emery. Borrowing money in this way was common before the days of building societies and banks for all. The witnesses to the deed were Jonathan Newbold the blacksmith and Eleanor Edmunds, the cooper's widow.

Thomas Mutton was not away long. He is recorded in the poll book as being in Whilton in 1695. In 1697 John Ball, a Whilton weaver, died, and Thomas Mutton helped his widow, Mary, to administer his estate. In the next year he married widow Mary Ball at Long Buckby Church. By now Thomas was 46. I have found no record of any children of this marriage. Thomas and Mary settled to married life in Whilton, and it appears that they were living in Thomas' newly built house, almost certainly what we know as Dormer Cottage. Thomas was overseer of the poor for the year 1698.

By 1722 Thomas was 70 and had found someone to take over some of his property. George Judkin, (sometimes spelt Judkins) a carpenter, took a lease of what had once been known as Dawson's House. The house had probably been enlarged, and consisted of four bays and part of a fifth, and with it part of the yard and orchard were leased too, with detailed instructions about the provision and upkeep of the mounds on the boundaries.

These were thatched cob walls, which required maintenance. Thomas Mutton was to make and keep a sufficient mound the whole length of 26 yards on the east side, and on the south end of the orchard the 20 yard mound wall belonged to George Judkin.

Thomas Mutton was a widower and getting old and described himself as in "*indifferent health*" and so made his will in August 1723, dying a few months later. He left his barn and part of the yard and homestead which "I sometime since agreed to sell to him, or leased to him, and which is now in his possession", to George Judkin. His other bequests were to distant relatives, and his administratrix was his kinswoman Barbery Daniell of Whilton. On 4 Feb 1723/4 she left her mark on the statement: "*I acknowledge Tho. Mutton received of George Judkin sometime since twenty pounds towards the purchase of a house he bought of the said Tho Mutton in Whilton witness my hand Barbaray Daniel.*"

Thomas Mutton had intended George Judkin to have the property, but George had only paid £20 at Thomas's death, and Barbary stood to inherit the residue of Thomas' estate. George Judkin considered that by his will Thomas had left the property to him and refused to pay the rest of the money. As a result Barbary and her husband, Sam, would not assent to the bequest. The dispute was

finally solved by George Judkin agreeing to pay £11 5s of the £18 10s he still owed and by the Daniells assigning the premises "and the other part of the said fifth bay" to George in November 1724.

George Judkin and his wife Ann now became the owners of the house, where he ran a carpenter's business. The property stayed in Judkin's ownership for generations, although after the first George Judkin they did not live in the house, but farmed from Roughmoor.

The property was let to a variety of tenants and other properties were taken in. These included the site of a cottage which was "*ruinous and much out of repair*", conveyed by John Blencow to tailor William Moss. William Moss pulled down the cottage, which was to the west of Dawson's house and built a new one with a brewhouse and outbuildings, borrowing £30 from George Judkin to do this in 1789. His fire insurance certificate noted that all these buildings were thatched. William Moss then became tailor, shopkeeper and publican. No doubt he needed every penny as he had twelve children, although one died as a baby.

Other tenants followed and the house was split up into smaller cottages, with a variety of people calling themselves "publican", but none depending on this entirely for a living. There can have been little profit from the pub.

By 1810 the publican was Joseph Emery, a carpenter as well, assisted by his first wife, Susannah, and then his second, Mary. After his death in 1835, Mary Emery and her step-daughter Zillah took over from her father at the Plough, as it was now known. Before long Mary found a new husband, and married John Kilsby, a mason and victualler, yet again combining the pub with another job. But John Kilsby died in 1844. Mary, his widow, conveyed her pub to John Hyde in 1851. She remained in one of the little cottages adjoining the Plough. Her gravestone, dated 1857, is in the churchyard near the gate. It was John Hyde who took out a mortgage with Phipps Brewery, which by 1894 had taken over the Plough.

The brewery also acquired a little cottage near the street between the Plough and the modern Dormer Cottage. This cottage had once belonged to John Facer, who died here in 1760. He sold it to John Jellis, a Whilton woolcomber. His son and grandson, both called James, inherited the cottage, but were farmers in Leicestershire and so let it out to tenants. The younger James sold the cottage to Phipps in 1894.

Despite a boost during the Second World War, when soldiers from Brockhall and Whilton used the pub, trade gradually declined, and the pub finally closed its doors at Christmas in 1954. It seems fitting that Harold and Trudy Haynes were able to acquire the pub as a home. Harold had Dunkley ancestors, and Harry Dunkley ran the Plough and a carrier's business in Victorian and Edwardian times.