

## WHILTON LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

### THE STONE HOUSE

Members of the society met on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January to hear the story of the Stone House. This has probably been the site of a dwelling since Saxon times. To the north and east are the old manorial and ecclesiastical centres. In 1301, one of the seven farmers paying tax probably lived on this site, but we cannot tell if it was Henry Cappe, Luc Hynes, John Russenole, Richard Bendane, Walter Coupere, Walter de Fodringeye or Henry Eyr.

The Stone House does not follow the pattern of most of the farmhouses in Whilton, which have fireplaces at the gable end of the building. The Stone House has two fireplaces back to back in the centre, as does Dormer Cottage. The listing describes the house as dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, built of ironstone ashlar, with a slate roof with ornamental ridge tiles, brick end and ridge stacks, with 2 storeys and attic. There is a 4-window range, with a door to left of the centre blocked with a 2-light leaded wood mullion and transom window and hood mould. There are similar 3-light windows to the ground and first floors except for a small upright oval leaded window with stone surround over the blocked door. There is another similar window in the right gable. Around the base is a blue brick chamfered plinth. These blue bricks were perhaps added late in the nineteenth century, when they were fashionable.

The listing also mentions the quoins, moulded stone eaves and stone-coped gables with kneelers. Quoins are the dressed stones on the corner of the building. Kneelers are the roughly triangular stones at the base of the gable. The rear porch dates from the last century and is the work of Mick Gardner.

The interior has ogee-stop-chamfered spine beams and some stop-chamfered joists. (Ogee is the name given to a double curved shape, like an elongated S. The stop chamfered beams have shaped flat surfaces at the corners.) The 2 open fireplaces back to back have stop-chamfered bressumers, the beams supporting the masonry above a fireplace.

We do not know who built the house we recognize today. The first owner mentioned in the deeds was a yeoman, called Thomas Carr, who lived here in the early 1700s. He had two sons, named William and Thomas. The Carr or A'Carr family had lived in Whilton since the 1570s, and were farmers, holding positions such as churchwarden in the village.

Thomas Carr the father died in 1728. William inherited the Stone House from his father and continued farming here. The Stone House followed the usual pattern for a farmhouse, with a yard behind it and a way through to the back. Animals would go through this entrance on return from their grazing in the common pastures. This entrance shows up clearly in the late nineteenth century photo of the house.

In 1730 William mortgaged property including the Stone House to raise £756-3-0, a very large amount. The money was borrowed from John Rose a prosperous Daventry saddler. By 1735 he had borrowed another £100. However in 1744 William died,

without making a will; this suggests he may have died unexpectedly. His brother, Thomas, inherited the Stone House and the mortgage. Two years later he “had occasion” to borrow another £250 from John Rose. At this time the house was described as a messuage with yard, garden, orchard, homestead, home close, backside and appurtenances in Whilton, standing on the north or north-west side of the public street of Whilton.

Thomas Carr left the Stone House on the marriage of his daughter in 1756, and went to Welton to live with the young couple, leaving John Dunkley here as their tenant. By 1759 the house had been sold to William Humphrey, a butcher. Here he and his wife Elizabeth brought up their children Thomas, Elizabeth, William, John, Francis, Jacob and Robert. William added to his land and property, including the purchase of the south east end of the Dovehouse Close. After he died in 1812 his widow, Elizabeth had to collect her annuity once a quarter, from the church porch, and his son, Jacob, lived in the house until 1820.



*The Stone House in the late nineteenth century, looking as it would have done since the late 1600s. The roof is still thatched, including the three gables in the attic. The entrance gate to the yard, can clearly be seen, and above it a thatched garret room.*

The Humphrey family then sold the house to Walter Watson, but sometime after his marriage to Sarah Dalton of Rugby, the house was let. By 1863 James Adams, the Whilton carrier, was living in the house and paying 12 shillings rent. He continued to be their tenant for some years, but by 1872 he was able to buy the house for £250. He had to take out a mortgage and borrowed the money from Thomas and Elizabeth Ann Bull, the Watson's heirs.

James Adams was also the baker, with a bakehouse at the west end of the house, but he died as the result of an accident on 30 December 1875. He was only 48. His only son, James Wallace Adams, inherited the house and mortgage, and lived in the Stone House, but in 1878 Thomas Bull called in the mortgage money, giving the family until Lady Day to find the money. James Wallace Adams arranged to sell the house to James Emery of the central farm, and thus pay off his mortgage.

James Emery owned the property until his death in 1880, after which the Stone House and other Whilton properties were to be divided between his three sons, Thomas James, Robert and James. Robert bought out his two brothers in 1881. By this date the Stone House was occupied by William Dunkley, an agricultural labourer, who also did some gardening and was probably the carrier too. By 1901 it also had an “outdoor beer licence”. Thomas Essen was living there paying £14 rent. He was an agricultural labourer too, who finally died in 1933 aged 85, maybe still living at the Stone House.

By 1909 Robert Emery was probably in financial difficulties. Certainly by 1913 it was the bank which owned the Stone House and put it up for auction, along with other Whilton properties previously owned by Robert Emery. The auction was held at the Old Plough at 4 p.m. on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 1913, perhaps a bleak day. The purchasers were the brewers P Phipps and Co Ltd; they may have been eager to acquire a business competing with their own pub, the Plough. There is now a clause in the Stone House deeds preventing the sale of alcohol there.

Sometime after this, there was a disastrous fire, which destroyed the old thatched roof and dormer windows and the bakehouse, so that photos dating from about 1930 show the new slated roof. During the war Colonel Shaw of Whilton Lodge acquired the dilapidated house, which he hoped might make a new Rectory, but by December 1947 it was bought by Arthur (Mick) Gardner and his wife Edna.



*The Stone House after repairs following the fire which destroyed its roof and old bakehouse.*

*The door to the off-licence, run by Tom Essen, would later be replaced by a window.*

As in many other Whilton houses, conditions were primitive, but Mick used his many skills to make the house habitable, with help from other villagers such as Jack Wright and Roy Carpenter. He made use of some materials from other old buildings. These included the ornamental ridge tiles from a school in Northampton, and the banisters and wrought iron doorway halfway up the stairs with the date 1693, which came from Norton Hall. He closed off the old off-licence door onto the street, and added a porch at the rear. Even before there was mains water in Whilton, he installed running water in an upstairs bathroom and a new sink in the kitchen, by pumping well water up to a tank in the roof. A bath required one hundred pumps at the well!

It was the Gardners who gave the Stone House its name, as, like most houses in Whilton, it had no name until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Edna Gardner became the well loved Postmistress for 18 years, combining this with a small shop in what had been the bakehouse. After Mick retired from teaching at Daventry Grammar School, they moved away to Northampton and the house was sold to Mark and Bennie Eyton-Jones, who are still here today.

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