

# Whilton Local History Society

## Visit from Daventry

On the afternoon of Sunday 6th January 2019, Twelfth Night, the Local History Society entertained the History Walking Group from Daventry U3A. After coffee at the Locks we walked to see the site of the old Wharf House, the Spotted Cow and viewed the curve of the M1 re-aligned to prevent the loss of John Clements' cottage at the Locks. We then moved on to the village, visiting the church and its Christmas trees, and noting some of its history.

The afternoon was completed with tea in the Village Hall. Society members provided a superb selection of cakes and scones, which set us off to a good start for 2019. Thank you to all concerned.

## Victorian Roast Meal

The Local History Society AGM was held on 18th January, preceded as is now the custom by a meal. This year we recreated the **Victorian Whilton Choir Supper**, "of a good substantial dinner of roast beef and plum pudding."

Our meal consisted of roast beef, with accompanying vegetables and Yorkshire puddings, followed by plum pudding with cream, custard or hard sauce (rum butter). We used Victorian recipes, although the length of time for cooking vegetables was shortened for modern tastes. We thank Gordon and Mary Emery whose expert knowledge enabled the purchase of excellent beef, and the cooking team who entered into the spirit of the meal and willingly experimented with old recipes.

There were alternatives for vegetarians and those requiring a less rich dessert. We chose to use custard because Bird's Custard was relatively new but readily available at this time. Alfred Bird was a Birmingham chemist, who found his wife was allergic to eggs and so was unable to eat traditional egg-based custard. In 1837 he invented a cornflour custard and one day it was deliberately or accidentally served to their guests at a dinner party. There was such a positive response to this dish that he began selling the powder in his shop and soon afterwards in his factory. We guess that Whilton housewives would have appreciated this too.

In 2019 we completed the evening with the AGM, but in 1859: *"About eight o'clock the young ladies of the village made their appearance, which indicated that a change of proceedings was about to take place. After a short pause the sound of the violins was heard, and several quadrilles and country dances followed. The meeting separated highly gratified."*

We hope our members were equally "gratified" but less physically exhausted.