

A Walk around Whissendine

*The walk begins & ends at **The Village Hall**. This was built in 1937 in place of an army hut that had been used for village activities since 1920.*

A feature to look out for in Whissendine is buildings that have been elevated and/or extended. Many houses built before the 19th C were single storey and built of stone. While there was local production of bricks from the late 18th C, industrial production and railways made them cheaper. These factors together with more prosperity, enabled many houses to be enlarged or refaced, during the Victorian period.

You will see a variety of building in Whissendine, both in style and height, but none of what used to be a common sight - mud cottages. These mud houses had thick walls and low ceilings, making them good retainers of heat. Later ones had brick chimneys added to an outside wall, but no services were ever laid on. The last complete mud dwelling was only demolished in 1970.

Fox hunting at Whissendine features in several famous prints of the sport in its 19th C hey day. The development of many 'hunting boxes' in the village provided new business and employment at a time when agriculture was in decline.

*Walk downhill from the Village Hall, towards the bridge, then cross the road into the Nook. This was formerly called Horse Pit Lane because the lawn to your right did not then exist, the land was much lower and an overflow from the nearby brook enabled it to be used for washing horses and carts. **The White Lodge** (Grade 2) to your left, was the house of the brewery manager, but later became a hunting lodge. The large **Red House** just ahead was a brewery from the 1870s to 1893. This building might look imposing now, but a top storey was been removed when it was converted into a hunting box.*

*Walk further past **Brewer's House**, passing nos 31-23 until you come to **Number 21, Gaol Cottage** which was probably near the village lock up. There were mud houses behind, in the garden. This area of the Nook used to be known as Penn Yard, possibly because it was close to the pin or penfold used for holding stray animals. *Continue to your right passing some modern bungalows on your left.* The field in which the bungalows stand was called Tithe Barn Close and there is evidence from the 1763 map of a building on this site (the tithe barn?) which had disappeared by 1861.*

*Cross the bridge into Main St, keeping the Village Green on your right until you come to an opening in the hedge on your left. You will see a private house that was once **The Old School**. This was opened in 1868 and cost £440 to build. The building was lit by oil lamps, heated by an open fire and had very primitive toilets. A far cry from being taught in the cramped church organ chamber, which for some had previously been the case! There were 2 classrooms with a small playground for the girls and a separate larger one for the boys. The children were also allowed to play on the Village Green. The bungalow to the right of the school was formerly the village **Post Office**. *Continue walking up Main St, passing other buildings, two of which have also housed the Post Office: one has the post box attached and the shop is further along the path. Previously the shop was a restaurant called Slipcote named after a very popular cheese that used to be made in the village and was shipped in large quantity to London, until the turn of the 20th C when tastes changed. Keep walking until, across the road, you see **The Present Day Village School**. Building work began on this in 1968 when the Old School was celebrating its Centenary. Walk past several houses on your left, **the Old Butcher's Shop** & also **the Old Baker's**, where a prominent village family called Hayes lived. Many of these Victorian rebuilds have stone platforms revealing that they may have been of wood or mud construction before hand. *Continue round the corner until you see a large imposing brick house on the left with a blocked up doorway. It is marked **Bouverie Court**.***

The Bouveries were wealthy bankers and this was their hunting box at the early part of the last century, their simple needs required 14 servants, in 1901. *Turn around and look on the right-hand corner of Melton Rd where there is a modern house.* This was where **The Wesleyan Chapel** stood until it was pulled down in the 1980s.

*To go to the windmill proceed up the Melton Rd for a few hundred yards, otherwise retrace your steps back along the path, passing **Number 6**, which was **The Rose & Crown Pub**.* Notice the barrel shoot (now painted blue) to the side of the door. *Cross the road carefully towards the bus shelter and proceed in the direction of Stapleford Rd. On the right hand corner facing you is **Ebury House**, a stone house with a red brick facade. Walk along to look at the back wall where you will see the original roof line of a much smaller cottage, an old doorway, a bricked up window and lintels to other doorways & windows. The next house is **Inglenook House**, the home of the miller, Eli Kitchen, in the 19th C. Notice how the smaller stone house has been extended to one side to make a larger brick Victorian home. Cross over the road towards this house and look back, for a view behind a high hedge, of **Harborough Cottage**. In the 19th Century this was the home of the Earl of Harborough's mistress. She had lived in this house at Stapleford Park, but not surprisingly, the Earl's new wife objected and the house was dismantled and rebuilt on this site, for her and her two sons. Most of the houses and farms in the village belonged to the Stapleford Estate, such as **South Lodge**, to your left, & **West Farm Lodge**, ahead to your right. These farmhouses, together with a large part of the village were sold off in the great sale of 1861. Keep walking until you see the entrance to **Sherrard Close** on your left. On your right is **Mulberry House**, which was once a grocer's shop. Between this house and the next, look beyond a five bar gate through the space between the houses for a fine view of the Church. The next house with two front doors is said to be the former **Greyhound Pub**. Note the cellar under one of the windows and faint black writing up on the side brick wall which says **Stafford Cottage**. At the back of this house was Staffords Yard and housing for the navies that built the railway. The house further down is called **Dobneys Cottage**, here is another example of a doubly raised roof (note the stone and two types of brick on the side wall). Mr Dobney was one of the village two undertakers. Across the road is a thatched cottage called **Windrush Cottage** which is at least 18C. To the left was last remaining mud cottage, demolished in 1970. Further down the road was a WWII **P.O.W Camp** that housed, first Italian, then German prisoners of war and finally became a Land Army Hostel. The camp site was built over in the 1990s.*

*Walk back around into Main St. Go beyond the entrance of the School and observe how high the playground is compared to the modern houses next door. In the 1950s, there was a dairy farm on the School Site and a garage where the houses are. The cows were not properly fenced and one unfortunate animal managed to get onto the garage roof which was at field level. It fell through the roof on to a vehicle and had to be rescued by being wheeled out still in the motor. Continue to the Green, on your way look to the right at **Woodbine Cottage** one of the villages few remaining thatched buildings. It has been refaced with brick to the front but the side elevation still shows the original stone building. Look through the second set of big gates you pass, between the village sign & the bridge, to a large house on your left. This is **Whissendine "Cottage"** a former hunting lodge and home in the last century of Eric Chaplin. The Chaplins were also bankers and benefactors of the village and there is a plaque to Mr Chaplin in the church. After Mr Chaplin died, the house became a Youth Hostel for a short time. Go over the bridge which crosses the brook. Although this may look calm today, this area often floods, causing traffic to be diverted and difficulties for those trying to get from one side of the village to the other.*

The White Lion Pub has had the cellars flooded a few times.

If you wish you can extend your walk slightly to the east side of the village taking you to the Church and back to the Hall. From the Hall go straight up Main St, across the turning for Paddock Close.

The cottages you pass on your left are 18th Century and were originally single storey stone built thatched cottages. These were either completely built or raised to two stories at the end of the nineteenth century. Note the difference between the stone & brick on the front wall of the middle cottage. By the 1970s part of this row of cottages was derelict, but they have all been well restored. **Number 64** was a shop with large display windows. **The 3 Horseshoes next door** was recorded as a 'Beer House', in 1863. In the yard of the pub was a mud house, the outline can still be made out in the foundations of left hand wall of the car park. There is a large stone outside number 68, placed there to stop carriages catching against the wall of the

house which was also a shop. Note the large widow to right which have had a display. The next house had workshops and a bakehouse behind. People would take bread to be baked here or leave their Sunday joint in while they were in Church. **Stone Cottage** was a former school, run by a Miss Stafford. **The Water Pump**, further up the hill, is now sealed. *Look across the road to your right at **Honeysuckle Cottage*** (formerly Globe Cot.) which had, in the late 19C, a private school for eight girls in a room behind. The large **Church**, dedicated to St Andrew, dominates the skyline on all approaches to the village.' Building present church began in the 13th C, and if you would like to go in, there are notes to follow inside. The house opposite, **89, Main St, Old Church Farm** is late 17C with indications that it was earlier in date. You will notice how it was built in two parts, one lower than the other, following the line of the hill. The lower probably started life as a barn. This was usual so that any effluent from animals would flow away from the house.

*Just beyond the Church you will see part of **The Old Vicarage***. The original building has been altered many times. It is Grade 2 listed and described as an 18th C house with a Victorian wing. The changes of 1862 are largely what we can see today. Besides being used as a residence for the incumbent at the time, it was the centre for Feast Week Celebrations in the 19th C and then in WWII the local Home Guard used the cellar as their headquarters. It is now a private house. *Continue walking up Main St to where Station Rd begins. **Whissendine Station***, 2 miles outside the village, was opened in 1848, it closed in the 1955. *Look across Main St at nos 93-95*. The house was built by 1727, possibly earlier. For the next 2 centuries it had various tenants & owners, but by the 1980s was sadly neglected and overgrown compulsory purchase was necessary to ensure the buildings restoration. Also on the opposite side of Main St is the last survivor of the four chapels that were in the village. The **Primitive Methodist Chapel** was built in 1868 but closed for worship in 2010 and was converted to a house. On the same side, further up the hill, *look at the cream-coloured cottage, which used to be three cottages, it is called **Stoup Cottage***, and contains some evidence of mediaeval work.



Retrace your steps and walk back down, passing **Foxhill** and **Hall Close**, the latter on the probable site of a medieval manor house, both built in the late 1970s. **Horton's Lane** bears the name of another of the one time prominent families in the village. The head teacher in the school from 1937-1960 was Miss Alice Horton. There was a mud house on this lane where her grandmother lived. *Now return to the Village Hall as this is the end of the guided walk which we hope you have enjoyed.*

