

# Glensford Local History Society

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## NEWSLETTER SPRING 2007

**FREE TO MEMBERS (25p where sold)**

Once again it is my pleasurable duty to produce the Society newsletter and print the latest offering of articles and items of interest. As I type this I am still recovering from the shock of a CANCELLED GLHS meeting due to snow(!) thus proving global warming seemingly doesn't apply to Glensford - we're far too environmentally responsible! What a shame Ashley Cooper could not attend.

For a change I thought I would review a recently published book which, in passing, features our village. It's the latest offering by Great Cornard resident Charlie Haycock, whose sideways view of Suffolk dialect "Slightly on the Huh" outstripped sales expectations a year or more ago. He continues the theme with "A Rum Owd Dew" which consists largely of cartoons of typical Suffolk situations, often lampooning the cultural divide between the supposedly educated outsider and the crafty local who constantly outwits him.



Mr. Haycock's greatest gift is to be able to portray the indigenous accent phonetically to such a degree that even I, the proverbial "outsider", can speak it! I found this book very entertaining, and, as an aside it endeavours to preserve, in its

own way, a fast disappearing way of life now that "Estuary English" and Americanisms pervade our regional language. Never was the combined study of linguistics and applied psychology so much fun - we should invite Charlie to one of our meetings...

Steve Clarke has been continuing to update our website [www.glensford.org.uk](http://www.glensford.org.uk). It is always worth a visit and, if you don't use a computer you might consider visiting a member who can show you the site. Previous issues of the newsletter are there as well as quizzes, photos past and present and news. Meanwhile in this issue is another of Robin Ford's nature articles; the first instalment of a fascinating story of Jean Cook, a wartime evacuee in Glensford; a history of our Post Office from Gillman Game; a look at Glensford by Arthur Mee in 1941 and a list of future GLHS meetings. Sheila Willmoth is so busy researching her family tree she has promised her next instalment in the following newsletter; we look forward to seeing it.

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**June 28<sup>th</sup> 1916.** The run of bad luck which P.C. Gibbons of Glensford has had was told at Melford Petty Sessions when his landlord, Mr. Pettit, applied for a distress warrant for rent owing which was 3s 6d a week. The constable said he had paid the rent since he had been back at work, his wife had been laid up for 13 weeks and on the day she went to be churched he got kicked while on duty at Melford Fair and was disabled for 7 months, it was true he got paid while off work but they had lost a child aged 11 months and while the child was ill his illness had caused some expense. Order was made for payment of rent and 7s 6d a month off the arrears.

(from John Slater)

**GLEMSFORD BIRD RECORDS** – Robin Ford

The first record occurred over twenty five years ago. A member of the rufous-bellied race of the white throated dipper was found on the river Stour in late October 1981. This particular race of dipper is normally found in the north and west of Britain and seldom ventures over to East Anglia. In Suffolk, we are more likely to see the black-bellied race which summers in Scandinavia. There was just one Glemsford reference in the recently published 2005 edition of SUFFOLK BIRDS.

An osprey was seen flying over the village on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September. This proved to be the latest sighting of an osprey in Suffolk in 2005. Twenty five years ago, the appearance of a little egret on the Stour or Glem would have aroused considerable interest, but the arrival of this elegant member of the heron family in our parish in 2005 went almost unnoticed. Look out for these birds as you travel towards Stanstead or Hartest. They are a welcome addition to the village's wildlife.

... and more from Robin: **UPDATE ON THE WHITE-LEGGED DAMSELFLY**

Once again, white-legged damselflies were seen regularly on the Suffolk side of the River Stour during the summer of 2006, suggesting

a colony has established itself along this stretch of the river.

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More than sixty years ago, Arthur Mee published a series of travel books called "The King's England", where each book featured a county with a description of each settlement he had visited. Although at times his accuracy has been called into question he had a very readable "turn of phrase". Here's what he said about Glemsford in his volume entitled "Suffolk":

*Wolsey's Faithful Servant*

**G**LEMSFORD. It is the village (a wandering place with a great church and a glorious view) where Wolsey's faithful servant came to end his days far from the glamour and peril of the Court. It has a fine house with an overhanging storey which may have been here in his day; one of its upright posts is carved with a figure of the Archangel Michael, who has his sword uplifted to slay the dragon. Below St Michael is an angel which gives its name to the neighbouring inn.

Most of the church, with its lofty aisle and porch, is 15th century, but the chancel has an arcade with slender pillars 700 years old. There is a huge ironbound chest ravaged by the death-watch beetle, and a Jacobean pulpit with grapes and strange birds on the brackets of its book-rest. The oak reredos, with its carving of the Annunciation, was set up in memory of George Coldham, vicar here for 54 years last century. The treasure of the church is the 15th century font, its bowl carved with a fierce winged lion, a dragon, and four heads (a bishop and an angel, a king and a queen), with a curious little figure supporting the bowl.

Here sleeps George Cavendish without memorial, though indeed

he has no need of one, for his life of his master, Cardinal Wolsey, is his everlasting monument. As we see Wolsey in Shakespeare, noting the firm bold lines in which the character is drawn, following his speeches and sighing over the tragic greatness of his fall, we feel that here is the authentic man, body and spirit; and it is almost certain that Shakespeare derived his details from Cavendish's manuscript. Cavendish knew the cardinal better than anyone else, in his public life and in the secrecy of his chamber. Son of a Court official, he married a niece of Sir Thomas More, but at the age of 26, as Wolsey said, "abandoned his own country, wife, and children, his own house and family, his rest and quietness" to serve him as gentleman usher. He was with Wolsey in his greatest triumphs; he remained with him, constant, solicitous, loving, and loyal, to the tragic end. On Wolsey's death Cavendish was strictly examined as to the acts and sayings of his master, and though in peril of his life he answered with such valiant candour that the hostile council declared he had served the cardinal like a just and diligent servant.

Retiring to Glemsford, Cavendish wrote the beautiful story of Wolsey's life and conversation which stands as one of the earliest great biographies in our language. It remained in manuscript for a century, and then, in 1641, a garbled version of it was printed. Not until 1810 did it appear complete. Shakespeare had the manuscript, and we know that the words he makes Wolsey speak are the words George Cavendish wrote down.

## HAPPY VACCY by Jean Cook

### **Preface**

Although at the outbreak of war I was six years old, I have very little recollection of the time leading up to Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> 1939 other than a feeling of real excitement. I do remember quite clearly on Sept 3<sup>rd</sup> assembling in the playground of my school, South Park School at Seven Kings, Essex, along with my mother and sisters Pam (9) and Margaret (2) eagerly awaiting coaches to ferry us to the station and an unknown destination. I remember the train journey and after only a few miles asking mother if we were nearly there. We eventually arrived at Ipswich where we seemed to wait hours before we at last boarded the final coach for Glemsford in Suffolk. We were met in the school hall by a committee to be allocated our accommodation. I clearly recall crossing my fingers that the large stern-looking teacher would not be mine. Thus began my seven years of evacuation to this lovely village, a period of my life which I shall always remember with love, affection and gratitude. So different from the sad memories of so many evacuees.

Jean Cook (nee Wallace) January 2003

### My Life in Glemsford

It was quite late in the day when we finally arrived at the house of a Mrs Cross. We were given the front room and one bedroom with a small double bed and cot. Mrs Cross suggested that either Pam or I could sleep with her, an offer we both refused, so we slept with Mother, three in a bed. Margaret slept in the cot. The accommodation left a lot to be desired, with Mrs Cross often coming home from the pub the worse for drink. My mother wouldn't sleep until Mrs Cross, candle in hand, had climbed the stairs and was safely in bed. One day, Mr Cranfield, the village coalman, was delivering coal to the house and found my mother crying. He had been a widower for some years and needed a housekeeper, so we were taken in, the only rules being: we must be quiet when the News was on and not crunch apples in front of him!

On my first day at school, my fears were realised when my class teacher was the stern-looking Miss Kitty Pettit. The only lesson I recall that day was Art and I coloured a robin. I remember clearly that all the evacuees' names in the school register were written in red. We all remember how Miss Pettit, on pay-day, would go behind the black-board and stuff her wages inside her knickers, which I suppose she considered to be the safest place to keep them. We couldn't help but notice that she wore those long bloomers which our mother called "passion-killers".

We were fortunate (I suppose) to have full-time education throughout the war. We soon settled down to village life and acquired a Suffolk accent. As I grew older I always took advantage of any opportunities to miss school lessons, no doubt to the detriment of my education. Working on farms picking peas and gathering potatoes comes to mind. I also remember doing the annual inventory of school library books,

which I managed to string out for a week. Holidays were spent gleaning, blackberrying, roaming round the fields and woods and searching the local dump for jam-jars we could wash and sell to the local shop for a penny, enabling us to buy lemonade or crisps. Our lives revolved very much around school activities and the Methodist chapel which we attended regularly, hardly missing a Sunday. I loved singing hymns, especially those with a rousing chorus. Sometimes we would go to evensong at the Congregational Chapel at Cavendish which was Mr Cranfield's place of worship and where his daughter (Mrs Lee) played the organ. We always insisted Mr Cranfield drove the long way round, because we would then pass a house or farm that kept peacocks, but not once did we see their feathers displayed.

In the Spring there was a competition by the Sunday School to see who could find the most different species of wild flowers. On one of my father's infrequent visits he accompanied us, probably to see that Margaret wasn't outdone by Pam and me. There was an abundance of flowers in the meadows, hedgerows and banks and it never took long to gather a huge bunch. Somehow, on that occasion, I found one more than my sisters with a winning total of forty-three different species. The Harvest Festival was a wonderful time, when the altar would be festooned with flowers, wheat, corn, barley, etc. I remember particularly the variety of plaited loaves. The following day, the donated produce would be auctioned. Mrs Taylor, one of our Sunday school teachers, always bid for and won the fruit cake my mother had made.

Mr Lee (senior) was our Sunday-school Superintendent and he took Bible-study classes in his home. I thought this was a good idea, because he owned one of the local stores and at

the end of the class he would give us something from the shelves. We had plenty of spiritual guidance and sometimes on a Sunday afternoon a fire would be lit in the lounge - fuel not being a problem at the home of a coal-merchant- and I would take a service, usually re-enacting the morning's service. This always pleased Mr Cranfield as he was a good Christian.

When I was old enough I attended the Methodist evensong and on one occasion I was asked to pump the organ. This meant keeping a regular rhythm and watching the lead weight which hung from a piece of string didn't go above a marked line. This I managed O.K. until the last hymn, when my arms were beginning to tire. Suddenly, there was an awful drone and I heard the organist say, "Pump, Jean, pump!" I'd taken my eyes off the weight, being more interested in Allen Wright sitting in the front pew!

As well as being a coal merchant and haulier, Mr Cranfield was a lay preacher and also took villagers' livestock and produce to Bury St. Edmunds market. He purchased the fruit from orchards which we helped to pick and sort out to be sold on. House clearance was another sideline, so life for us was never dull. Another job he did was logging and he would fell old trees that landowners wanted removed, using a cross-saw. If male labour was not available to help, then Mother, Pam or I would take turns at one end of the saw, cutting the trunks into suitable sizes to load on to the lorry. Back at the yard, an electric circular saw was used to cut the timber into

small logs for sale to villagers who wanted to supplement their coal - or who preferred a log fire anyway. On one occasion Mr Cranfield cut more than the logs, when he sliced halfway through his thumb with the circular saw.

He kept chickens, rabbits and goats and, on occasions, pigs. The pig-sty was a rather ramshackle wooden shed which was in the process of being replaced by a brick-built one- too good for pigs, we thought, so before they could be moved in, we children did, making it into our "play-house", furnishing it with carpeting and bits of furniture found in the huge sheds of the coal-yard. It was approximately 5ft square and at least 6 ft high, not too high for us to be able to parachute off it with an umbrella! We used to play shops in it, using empty food packets, tins and bottles etc. as our stock. We also had a small Primus stove and would raid Mother's larder for ingredients to make sweets (not with much success). It remained our play-house throughout our stay. Several houses are now built on the site, but on our visit in 1984 the play-house was still standing in the corner of a garden.

We wanted for very little. With allotments just down the lane, my mother would often find spare produce on the doorstep. Eggs from the chickens were swapped for other luxuries, but bartering had always been common practice among country folk. The W.I. gave evacuees an annual party where tinned fruit, usually only seen on special occasions, miraculously appeared.

To be continued...

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### **Glemsford Post Office. Fair Green. 1898 - 1932 by Gillman Game**

The Post Office came to Fair Green from Egremont Street in 1887. There is some indication that at one time there was a brew house to the rear of the property so perhaps previously it may have been an ale house or some kind of Off -Licence.

My grandfather, Alfred Game, worked in a provision and general store in Horsham. The hours of business were from 7.30 to 7 pm, to 8 pm Fridays, 4 pm Thursdays and 10pm Saturdays. In 1892 he had to return to Glemsford to help his father, Walter Game, who was in ill health and who managed the Glemsford Co-operative and Industrial Society Ltd store, registered with the Friendly Societies in 1872, and situated in Bells Lane almost opposite to what is now Glemsford Motor Services - although the address was Church Road.

In 1898 Grandfather took over the Post Office and remained there until 1932. I suppose my actual memory would cover the period 1930 to 1932. Anything before that would have been handed down from my parents, grand parents or others. As you entered the door the post box was on your right. set into the window so it could be emptied from inside the shop. There were low counters round the three sides of the shop. The one on the right was the Post Office counter. There was a gap between this and the back counter to give access to the house. In the corner between the back counter and the left hand counter was a large round 'Tortoise' stove with an iron chimney to the ceiling. At Christmas time there used to be a large bag of Brazil nuts by this stove. The choice was Brazils or nothing. From the ceiling hung a large paraffin



lamp, also from hooks various cuts of maturing bacon and hams, all from pigs born in Glemsford, reared, slaughtered and the meat cured by people from Glemsford. Grandfather opened the Post Office at 6 am to receive the early mail, in the early 1900s from the mail coach which then moved onto Cavendish. In my time the mail van still arrived between 6 and 6.30. Just inside the door above the post office counter was a large poster with soldiers in brightly coloured uniforms and an invitation to join the army. It was here that all the business of the post office was carried out. All the letters and parcels posted in Glemsford arrived on this counter where the stamps were cancelled and dated with the Glemsford Post Office stamp. This was a job usually left to my grandmother as she was 'fleet of hand'. The stamp in her hand moved like lightning from the ink pad to the envelope and then back again. The mail was then put in a bag which was tied up and the knot sealed with a metal seal to await collection.



Glemsford Post Office in 1900 (photo from "Glorious Glemsford" by Richard Deeks)

At the end of this section was the passage to the house. A short distance down this passage was a door on the left leading to a small compartment about four feet square. This was the Glemsford telephone exchange. Light was provided through a window into the shop. That window still existed in Mr Chubbs' time. As I remember it, there was a panel opposite the door with I would think about 16 or 20 switches rather like human eye-lids. These 'eyes' were connected to a subscriber or another exchange. There was also an old fashioned telephone. The phone would ring from the exchange to be answered by grandfather or grandmother who would then be asked for a number. It was usually my grandmother who spent hours in that telephone box. He or she would then pull down the appropriate 'eye-lid' and then I think they had to turn a handle to ring the bell. This was easy. The problems came with out-going calls. A Glemsford subscriber would ring and ask for a number. Grandmother then called the exchange to ask for a line to the next exchange, that exchange might

have to put her through to another exchange which had the required number which they would ring. If any of these lines were engaged they might hold the line for a short time. But if not the whole procedure would have to start again.

One of the first persons to have a telephone in Glemsford lived at Tye Green. I have heard his name but it is now long forgotten although I think it may have been a Mr Fenn. Grandfather allowed a few privileged customers who were acquainted with Mr Fenn to enter the phone box. He would then ring Mr Fenn and pass the telephone to the customer who would then be able to share the miracle of modern technology whereby someone at Fair Green could speak to someone at Tye Green without even shouting.

There was a considerable amount of telegram business, much of it to Goulds, and Downs. There were a number of people around Fair Green who were willing to deliver telegrams sometimes as far away as Fenstead End. A Glemsford lady made her first foray to London, leaving by an early train. Later that day a telegram arrived at the post office addressed to her home. It contained just these words: "Lost in London. What shall I do."

I believe the telephone exchange moved to the purpose built automatic exchange in Egremont Street about the time grandfather retired - the long single storey building with one end facing the entrance of George Lane on the opposite side of the road That in turn became redundant in 1968 when the present exchange was built in Angel Lane. Between the phone box and the back door was a small dark office. This is where the postmen, Mr Tice and Mr Jarmin, uniformed from their coal-scuttle helmets to their boots sorted the incoming mail into their respective rounds. I have also seen Oscar Crissell in that office; he did not have a uniform so I think he may have been a relief postman. From there the passage entered the house kitchen.

Returning to the shop, there were well stocked shelves on the walls behind the counters at the back and along the left hand side. From the telephone box there were mostly household goods, wicks of all shapes and sizes for paraffin lamps, stoves and heaters. In 1932 there was still a quick turnover for candles, night-lights and paraffin. There were also materials, pins, needles, cotton and thread, soap (Life Buoy and Coal Tar), matches (mostly Swan Vestas), stove black, etc. Towards the end of this counter on the shelves I can remember some tinned food. The left hand counter was the main food counter. Beneath the counter were deep drawers of loose tea, sugar, Demerara sugar (this I well remember as I was caught by the open drawer, licking my fingers, putting them in the sugar and licking the sugar off my fingers. Oh dear.), sultanas and other items

which I can no longer remember. Beneath the drawers was another shelf. On the counter would be bread (baked on the premises), bacon, butter, margarine cheese etc. There would be one variety of cheese on a plate on the counter. Beneath the counter on the shelf would be a plate of the same variety and a plate of a second variety.

Glemsford people were particular as to the cheese they bought and many would expect to taste the cheese before buying. If the first cheese was not acceptable the second variety would be brought out. If this was not acceptable the third would come out (identical to the first). Grandfather reckoned that nine times out of ten this would be judged as far superior to the others.

On the counter were packs of various sizes of square paper. When a purchase was made of say half a pound of sugar, it would be weighed up on the balance scale. A square of paper would be selected which was rolled up into a cone, a twist was made at the bottom which held it together. The sugar was poured into the cone and the top tucked in. This packet would ride home quite safely in a shopping bag. I was taught how to make the cone but I could never really master the all important twist at the bottom which held it together.

Along one of the wall shelves was a row of sweet bottles. I cannot remember all that was sold in the shop but I can remember that with the exception of the post office counter, you had the impression that every spare inch was filled with items for sale.

At Glemsford fair (24<sup>th</sup> June) there was a stall holder who sold sweets and rock and styled herself "The Rock Queen". She used to buy her sugar from the Post Office and pay for it the following year. Not bad, a years credit. The fair used to be on the green and the greensward on the opposite side of the road. The weekend before the fair was known as "The Key of the Fair." It was the same at Cavendish Fair. I have heard some of the older generation talking of walking to Cavendish for the Key of the Fair. I suppose it may have been some sort of ceremony. Grandfather used to say that one year the fair did not arrive. If a single stall had arrived it would have counted as a fair but as a result they lost the right to hold the fair. Also, Dick Deeks came across a notice of a Vestry meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1776 to try and stop the fair. These make me wonder if there was some charter to give Glemsford the right to have a fair.

From the shop turn right past the next building which was the bake-house, then into Post Office Lane (Back Fields Lane before the advent of the post office). Beyond the bake-house was an arch-way with double doors leading into the yard and then a row of wooden-sided buildings alongside the lane. The bread delivery cart was kept behind one of the two doors. Next was the stable for Tommy, the pony who pulled the bread

cart and then storage compartments for harness, straw, hay and horse food. George Clarke was the delivery man and he also worked in the bake-house. On the right there was a passage between the bake-house and the shop to the bake-house entrance, now the front door of Fair Green Cottage. Through the doorway on the right were the steps to the upper storey, then the metal fire door and then the oven door. From the ceiling hung a cradle to hold the peels, the long wooden spades used to place the bread in the oven and remove the finished loaves. Along the centre and on both sides were hollow benches with removable tops. The lorries delivering flour from Bakers Mills at Cornard or Clovers at Sudbury parked beside the bake-house, then the bags were hauled up through a doorway into the upper storey and the flour let down into the benches as required. I cannot remember going into the top storey but I can remember watching George and grandfather kneading the dough in the evening and grandfather taking the loaves out of the oven. I can also remember seeing rows of shining hot cross buns. After the bread was baked the oven was still hot and for a few coppers people used to bring their dinners to be cooked. Some I can remember came from as far away as Windmill Row.



Post Office pump 1906 (photo courtesy Gillman Game)

Opposite the yard doors and just past the back door was a shallow storage cellar. Inside was a butchers bench, a lead lined pork pickling trough still in use in 1932 and a small cask of vinegar with various

funnels and measures - pints, quarts, pecks and bushels. Cheeses were in cylinder shapes about eighteen inches across and about twelve or fourteen inches high and were wrapped in a kind of cardboard held in place by two wooden hoops at the top and bottom. These hoops were in demand by youngsters to bowl along the street. I have been told the cheeses were supplied by Burton, Son & Sanders of Ipswich who had a good reputation for cheeses but they were always tasted before acceptance. For this grandfather had a small scoop about five inches long which he could push into the cheese and withdraw a sample. There was also a hand sausage machine and a heavy iron guillotine to cut lump sugar but I am sure these had passed out of use long before my time. When grandfather retired there was a bag of shot-gun pellets which makes me think that at one time they may have sold gun powder for muzzle loaders. I think he sold shot-gun cartridges in my time.

Next to the cellar door was the pump. Before the water tower was built, certain other houses had the right to take water from that pump. In 1932 the Post Office was not on the water main nor electricity. I must have drunk gallons of water from that pump.

The garden extended further up the road behind the neighbouring house. At the end of the garden was a small building divided into two compartments. One contained the closet, the other the paraffin tank again with a variety of funnels and measures. It was a large tank and to fill it the

tanker parked in the lane, the driver had two specially designed buckets in which he had to carry the paraffin to the tank, a distance of about thirty yards. This is the way the tank was filled until well after World War 2 when Mr Baines was Post Master.

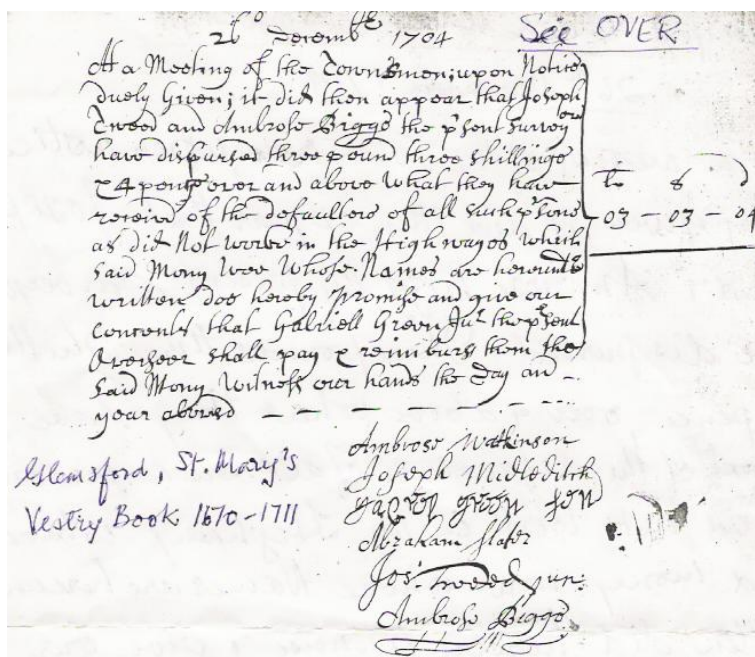
Finally, in front of the shop there were usually a variety of empty wooden boxes for sale. Some of these were of interest to lads who would fix wheels, usually salvaged from the rubbish pits to make trolleys which, a day or two later would be taking part in soap-box Derbies down Brook Street. The lads of the village kept an eagle eye for treasures in the rubbish pits at Place Farm, Seldon Waver and Skates Hill.

Mrs Cook used to help grandmother in the house and there was also a baccus boy. The one I remember was Kenneth Ablitt. I think a Mr Godfrey took over the Post Office in 1932, but grandfather was still partly involved as he had to instruct him in the working of the Post Office. The Press family were there in 1935 and in their time the baking business ceased. Tommy's stable and the store sheds were filled with cages of Angora rabbits, while Edna and Phyllis Press took dancing classes in the bake-house.

In 2000 after 113 years the Post Office moved again but only a few hundred yards up the road. The Fair Green, long ago known as Tillets or Tilney Green is no longer a play-ground with daily games of cricket or football but an ornamental village green.

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**Finally a contribution from John Slater from the Vestry Book of St. Mary's, 1670 – 1711:**



see over for interpretation:

