



# Lillington Local History Society



SPRING 2017

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## Programme of meetings

Regular monthly  
meeting Free  
Church Hall,  
Cubbington Road,  
4.30 pm on the first  
Friday of each  
month.

## **Contact us by**

-Coming to one of  
the Society's  
monthly meetings,  
-or by referring any  
queries about the  
society,  
contributions,  
photographs or  
reminiscences to  
Graham Cooper –  
telephone 01926  
426942



*Image Peter Coulls*

## **HIDDEN COINS**

This is the headline that would have greeted when opening your copy of the Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser on the morning of Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> February 1922. The article that followed is set out as printed.

## **INTERESTING DISCOVERY AT**

## **LILLINGTON**

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Mr. George Greenway, who resides in one of the old thatched cottages on the Cubbington Road at Lillington, has just made an interesting find in the rafters.

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## MEMORIES OF LILLINGTON

**Pam Crump:** I was at school in the old school building, when there was an underground air raid shelter in the playground with duckboards placed over the water on the ground. Miss Jones was the headmistress when I was there. We had a coke fire with a brass-topped fireguard.



Where the car park is now, in front of Old School Mews, there were cottages and a Mrs Shepherd lived there. Tesco's, on the old Walnut Tree site, used to be a large ivy-covered house where the Proctor family lived. There used to be interesting photographs of old Lillington in the Lillington Club on Lime Avenue.

When the landmine fell on two houses in Kinross Road, we sheltered under the table in Highland Road. Beyond Braemar Road was just farmland. We used to go on nature walks from school with Miss Luggar, picking rosehips to make into rosehip syrup. Mr Cuthbert ran the Sunday School at Saint Mary Magdalene in the late 40s

**Wendy Shear:** On April 26, 1948 at the age of 10½, I moved to Leamington with my parents, sister and grandmother from Worcester. My father had gained promotion in the Fire Brigade along with George Cooper, Graham Cooper's father. Dad went to Cartwright's Estate Agents in Regent Street where Mr Metherall was selling his house in Braemar Road. He gave dad the keys to view and that was the beginning of our story.

It was not long after the war and very few people had a telephone, but dad had to have one because of his work in the Fire Service. We had a telegraph pole in our garden with wires coming over from Highland Road and the GPO paid dad rental for it having it there. We also had a concrete air raid shelter in the garden which had been built by Mrs Light, the first owner of the house.

There was a grass verge all round Braemar Road, and when dad was Duty Officer, he had to bring the Fire Brigade van home. This meant that the kerb outside the house had to be dropped to get the van off the road. I remember that it cost £12.10 shillings.

At the top of the road there were fields belonging to Mr McGregor and there was also a waste area where local boys who called themselves "Lillington Cyclones" made a grass track and used to have competitions with other local boys. My mum was a qualified seamstress and she made them a flag. At the bottom of the road it was still farm fields, leading across to the Leicester Lane houses. There was a pond halfway down where we used to play and collect frogspawn.

I went to Lillington School from April to July 1948 and while I was there we won a country dance festival. Miss Luggar, the teacher, was so proud. I went to Miss Waddon's dancing school at the old school and I joined the guides in Robin Patrol. I was taught to play the piano by Miss Kibbler in Manor Road and was confirmed by Father Carter at St Mary Magdalen Church. It was very high church in those days and we all used to sneeze at the incense

The nearest bus stop to our house was at the top of Highland Road. It cost 4d to Warwick Street, or we could walk down to the "Fare Stage" stop opposite Lime Avenue and that cost three pence ha'penny.



Mr Hume had a post office counter in the shop which is now a wine shops and Mr & Mrs Faulkner had the shop opposite where the carpet shop is now. Later on, until Crown Way was built, the post office was run by Mr & Mrs Griffin in a tin hut across the road. There were little cottages in front of the old school where there is now a car park. Mr Golby who had a market garden down Cubbington Road on the right, also had a small shop in the front room of the house just below Mr Aitkins the chemist. There was also a little unit making crisps: I can still smell and taste the grease (horrible!)

Dad bought a plot in what had been the orchard of the Grange and had a house built. When my late husband Peter and I married in 1958 we bought Braemar Road from dad so I have many very happy memories of it, even when mum and dad invited Peter to meet them and watch the Coronation on television! Our three children were born here and I would like to think that this is where I will end my days.

**D N Price** : I moved to 178 Buckley Road in 1952/1954 and the houses were still being built. Behind my house there was a cricket field where the locals would go mushroom picking. There used to be a cricket match every two weeks on a Sunday morning.



At the top of Wellington Road at the roundabout where the bus stop is now, there used to be a wooden hut which sold sweets cigarettes and groceries. I believe all the prefabs were built as temporary accommodation after the war. I think a businessman bought them at £100 each and moved them to a seaside resort.

*Images: Warwick County Record Office*

## THE “GROWING CORNER” NURSERY SCHOOL IN VICARAGE ROAD



**Janie Freda Bushill**, was the fourth of the five children of Thomas W Bushill, a Coventry Wholesale Stationer and Printer, and Frances, the grand-daughter of Major Abiathar Hawkes, the man who famously brought home Leamington’s Royal Charter.

Born at Bubbenhall in 1898, Miss Bushill trained at St Hilda’s College, Cheltenham, and first taught in the Junior Department of the Leamington High School (Now Kingsley School). In 1934, she set up her own school, the *Lillington Growing Corner*, at 17 Vicarage Road, where she lived with her mother.

*Lillington Growing Corner* was based on the ideas of Friedrich Froebel – the founder of the Kindergarten movement, whose educational philosophy was based on the importance of play and natural curiosity of small children. Froebel promoted the idea that small children should have free rein to develop their instinctive creativity and have hands-on practical education, with nature study, outdoor activities and above all play, as the prime focus of their lessons.

Miss Bushill opened her school with a handful of pupils of all ages. She went on to develop it as a Nursery School and Pre-Prep, based in two large ground floor rooms looking out on to the garden,



where she and her assistants spent a lot of time encouraging the pupils in all kinds of activities. She installed 1930s state of the art equipment, and held Sports Days, attended by all the mothers. For many years after the Nursery closed, the dark wooden sun shelter remained in the garden, as did the two large hooks set into a doorway, to hold a swing. A



row of coat hooks still lines a wall of the hall, but the big Victorian rocking horse is long gone. Photographs were taken at regular intervals, and pasted into an album, along with cards from pupils on holiday and Christmas cards from pupils who had moved from the district. The children can be seen sitting in neat rows at their desks in the schoolroom, eating formally together in the dining room, wearing a uniform, and brandishing their detailed reports at the end of the term. Miss Bushill ran the school for over four decades and is remembered by a former pupil, now a teacher himself, as teaching from a wheelchair in her later years, but always immensely patient and kind.

Miss Bushill took a leading role in the Sunday School movement, teaching, speaking at conferences and acting as secretary to the local Sunday School Union. She also took a great interest in the Society of Friends, and attended their meetings in Warwick.

When Miss Bushill became elderly and had mobility problems, the Hewitt family went to live on the top two floors of no 17, so that Mrs Hewitt could help look after Miss Bushill. She also acted as the Nursery cook. Mr Hewitt became Miss Bushill's driver. Their daughters, Lesley and her older sister Pip were not 'Growing Corner' pupils, but attended Lillington School. Lesley recalls two big dolls in the school room, named Elizabeth and Margaret after the royal princesses, and another collection of dolls and a special teddy bear, but these were kept in Miss B's bedroom on the ground floor at the front, - they were not playthings! Mrs Neale from the pre-fabs in Buckley Road helped in the school room. Miss Bushill seemed to have relatives on every continent, and so had lots of treasures, which the Hewitt girls were allowed to look at if they were 'good'. Amongst these was a chest of beautiful brightly-coloured silk saris sent home from India.

At a time when there were fewer Nursery Schools and places at local authority nurseries were restricted to families in need, Miss Bushill's was the Nursery of choice for many families in North Leamington. Pupils were happy at Miss Bushill's and thrived there. Many went on to Squirrels, Warwick Prep and Kingsley, but lots also went to Telford and Lillington Infants. Miss Bushill continued to run the school even when she was confined to a wheelchair and wore splints, but as her health deteriorated, the school closed in the mid-1970s. After her death in 1978, 17 Vicarage Road became a family home again. For twenty-five years, Tom and Lynn Long and family, and Lynn's mother Mrs Davies lived there. They were followed by the Millward family, and then the Downes, the present owners, who all carefully preserved Miss Bushill's annotated albums of photographs and family memorabilia, on which this article is based.

Margaret Rushton *Sources and Acknowledgements: Mrs J Downes & the Nursery archive, Leamington Courier online archive*

## HOLIDAY DISCOVERY



Some of you will know that I have more than a passing interest in railways and industrial history. In recent years those survivors from my school railway society have held an annual reunion at various locations in England, this year North Wales was our destination, specifically based around Portmadog. Our holiday cottage was a mile or so away in Tremadog, an area with which we were familiar, having spent a good deal of time in that area on previous holidays.

I usually purchase booklets giving information about the area, on this occasion, a publication entitled 'Tremadog – Historic Planned Town' from Tremadog's Building Preservation Trust. Whilst scanning through this booklet my eyes were drawn to a name familiar to some Lillington residents, that of John Whitehead Greaves who had Welsh connections with the slate industry.

Tremadog was an early and exceptionally fine example of a well planned town dating back to 1798. Inevitably any town will have at least one place of worship, here it was St. Mary's Church a Grade II\* listed building built for William Alexander Madocks. It was completed in October 1811, remaining virtually unchanged until 1898 when the original large windows were replaced with new slightly smaller ones. Where is all this leading you might wonder?

In 1899, a new window was installed in the east wall of St. Mary's to the memory of John Whitehead and Ellen Greaves financed by their children. Whilst there is no attributed maker it is thought it could be from the firm of Shrigley and Hunt of Lancaster. The Church is no longer used for worship as it was closed in 1995. It is now occupied by a Community Support Group for people with disabilities. My request for access to see the window was readily agreed. In adapting the building for an alternative use, unfortunately the lower part of the window is difficult to photograph as a new floor partially covers the dedication from the family. It reads as follows:

*"To the Glory of God and in loving memory of John Whitehead and Ellen Greaves this window was erected by their children 1899" .*

Lest you are unaware of the Lillington link, John Whitehead and Ellen Greaves are buried in the churchyard of St. Mary Magdalene's, **Lillington**, their grave identified by what appears to be a Celtic cross. Closer scrutiny of the top of the memorial may lead to an interpretation of a wheel similar to that found on narrow gauge wagons that would have been used to transport slate. Will we ever know? What we do know is that John Whitehead Greaves one time treasurer and then chairman of the Ffestiniog Railway Company, who retired to Bericote House.

Peter Coulls

## WALNUT TREE

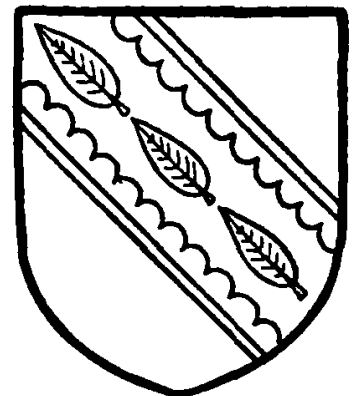


Henry Wise bought the manor of Lillington in 1709. When the Wise line died out, the manor passed by family connection in 1888 to Major-General Sir George Waller of Woodcote. Sir Wathen Arthur Waller died in 1947, leaving the manor to his widow, Viola, Lady Waller.

There are several versions of the Waller coat of arms, as is to be expected in such a large family. In some the leaves are green, and point to the left.

The Lillington Waller coat of arms is described in the Victoria County History as: *Sable a bend engrailed argent plain cotised or with three walnut leaves vert on the bend.*

The key phrase is “**walnut leaves**”. There are stories of a walnut tree on the site of the former public house, where Tesco’s now stands, and that its wood was shipped to America when it was felled. We know that the timber was NOT used for staircases in the Waldorf Hotel in New York, because that would have been a fire risk. All the main staircases in the hotel are marble or polished stone. Staff said that might have been used as paneling in one the bars.



Maybe the owner of the new public house wanted to make a nod to the former Lords of the Manor, and named their new premises after a key feature of Waller coat of arms. The name lives on in Walnut Drive, just behind Tesco’s.

Chris Rhodes

**HIDDEN COINS** See image on Page 1 Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser 1922

“Mr. George Greenway, who resides in one of the old thatched cottages on the Cubbington road at Lillington, has just made an interesting find in the rafters. He has come across a small leather purse concealed there, and its contents comprise ten ancient silver coins. The dates on them are hardly discernible, but one bears the dates of 1660 and others 1690.



It is Mr. Greenway's own house, and he was making some alterations to the roof. When he moved some boards a kind of cupboard was revealed, and it was hidden inside this that he found a crude leather purse containing the coins. Mr. Greenway has lived in the house for eight years, and prompted by what he has now found he intends to make a through search of his ancient dwelling. Some of the coins weigh over an ounce.

It is merely a matter of conjecture, but it is quite possible that an old local celebrity, known as “Billy Treen, the miser,” occupied the cottage at one time. Treen's frugal habits became a byword, and it is said that he lived miserably by begging potato peelings and turnips from the farmers, and unsuspectingly amassed money. When he died in February, 1910, at the age of 77, the following inscription was placed on his tombstone: -

*I poorly liv'd and poorly dy'd,  
Poorly buried, and no one cry'd*

Mrs. Greenway tells of an uncanny experience when sleeping in the bedroom in which the money was found. Try how she would to forget she was in the room, a feeling of uneasiness, which she cannot define, always crept over her! Mr. and Mrs. Greenway have let the cottage.”

The text is as printed, however the more observant will note that Billy Treen died in 1810. The cottages were demolished in the 1960's allegedly for road widening.

Peter Coulls

## Lillington Local History Society Website



The website address is: [www.lillingtonhistory.org](http://www.lillingtonhistory.org)

8 This Newsletter is published by the Lillington Local History Society, The Chain, Crown Way, Lillington. All references prefixed CR refer to documents held in the County Record Office, Warwick. For further information, contact The Chain, Crown Way, Lillington. The views expressed in the Newsletter are personal to the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Society.