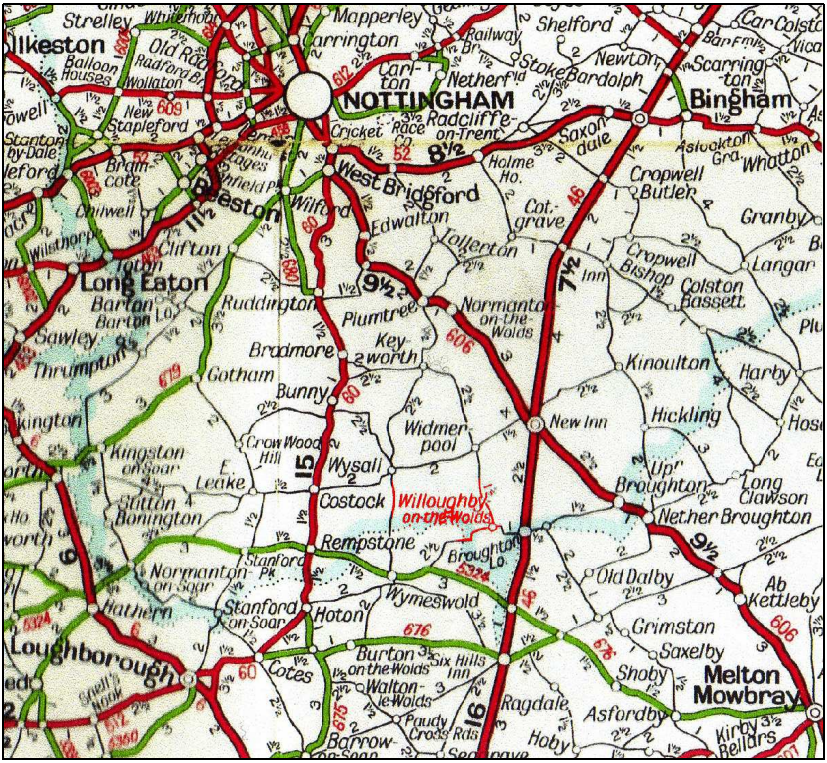
95 and 97 Main Street, Willoughby, photographed in 1985.

'Bailey's Croft', Willoughby on the Wolds

David Bailey

From the early part of the eighteenth century the Bailey families who gave their name to the 'Bailey Croft' development at Willoughby lived in these cottages and the farm at the rear. The families originated in Nottingham before moving to the parishes of Wymeswold and Nether Broughton in Leicestershire, close to the border with Nottinghamshire. They finally settled at Willoughby on the Wolds in the southernmost tip of Nottinghamshire. There they lived and worked, within the village community, for two centuries.

A greater part of that time was spent living in the cottages pictured above. This building witnessed their growth into an established village family who, over five generations, were involved in shoemaking, joinery, shop-keeping and farming. They were joined in marriage by other families from Willoughby and nearby parishes. The family had also become monconformist in the early ninetenth century and followed the Wesleyan Methodist tradition. Their lives were far from being uneventful, experiencing their share of tragedy. The advent of the twentieth century heralded the

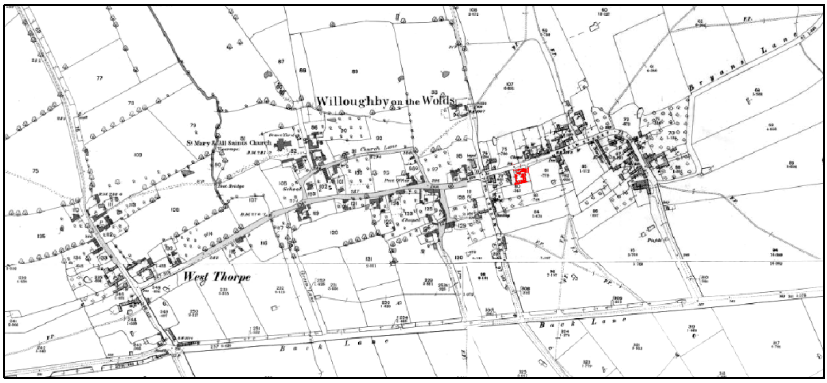


Road map with distances (in miles) to surrounding settlements.

decline of village life. Two World Wars, improved transport links, mass production and new farming methods changed village life forever. No longer was there a requirement for craftsmen or tradesmen within the community. Family members sought employment away from the village, where they married and raised a family. Consequently, with the passing of time, many of the families in the village ceased to exist. The Bailey family was no exception. In 1987 the last family member living at Willoughby on the Wolds died.

William Bailey

My 4xgreat-grandfather, William, was living at Nether Broughton from about 1750, until his death in 1797. The son of Matthew and Hannah Bailey of Wymeswold, he moved to Nether Broughton to become a cordwainer or shoemaker. He taught his eldest son, William (junior) who married Mary in 1785 and moved to Willoughby. Following the birth of their third child, Mary



Willoughby as shown on the 1899 Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map. 95 and 97 Main Street, have been highlighted in red.

died. He was married a second time to a widow, Sarah Hubbard, with whom he had a further nine children. We know little about William apart from his tragic family life. Of their twelve children, he had buried seven in Willoughby churchyard, including his first three sons, who he had christened 'William'. He died in 1829 leaving one son and heir, John, born in 1810.

John Bailey (I)

At the time when William Bailey moved from Nether Broughton to live at Willoughby, there were already three other Bailey families, resident in the parish. One of these was also a John Bailey. He described himself as a 'yeoman', a term used for an owner of a small estate or freeholder. Little else is so far known about this John Bailey, as his date and place of birth, together with the identity of his parents, all remain undiscovered.

John first appeared in the Willoughby parish register in 1761, when he married Anne Ball, by licence, at the parish church. Their licence states that John, a bachelor, was twenty-seven and a butcher by trade. Anne was shown as a spinster, age thirty and both were stated to be 'of the parish'. Anne was the daughter of Thomas Ball and Mary. A farmer at Willoughby, Thomas died in 1751, ten years before Anne's marriage. From his will of 1750, we learn that he too was a yeoman and that he left all his lands and properties to his daughter Anne. Mary Ball died in 1756 so, at the time of her marriage to John Bailey, Anne was a very eligible young woman, with her own properties and farming business.

The transcript (on the next page) of the Inventory taken after Thomas Ball's death, gives us an idea of the size of his farm.

An Inventory or appraisement of the Goods and Chattels of the late Thomas Ball of Willoughby in the County of Nottingham Deceased.

Appraised this 13th day of September in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty one by us the appraisers hereafter mentioned have set our hands the Day and Year above written.

	£	s	d
Purse and Apparel	0	1	6
For Household Goods	3	0	0
For Corn	1	10	0
For Sheep	1	10	0
For a Horse	1	0	0
For Cowes	10	0	0
For a Sow	0	10	0
	17	11	6

Thomas Hadden
Thomas Beferley his X mark

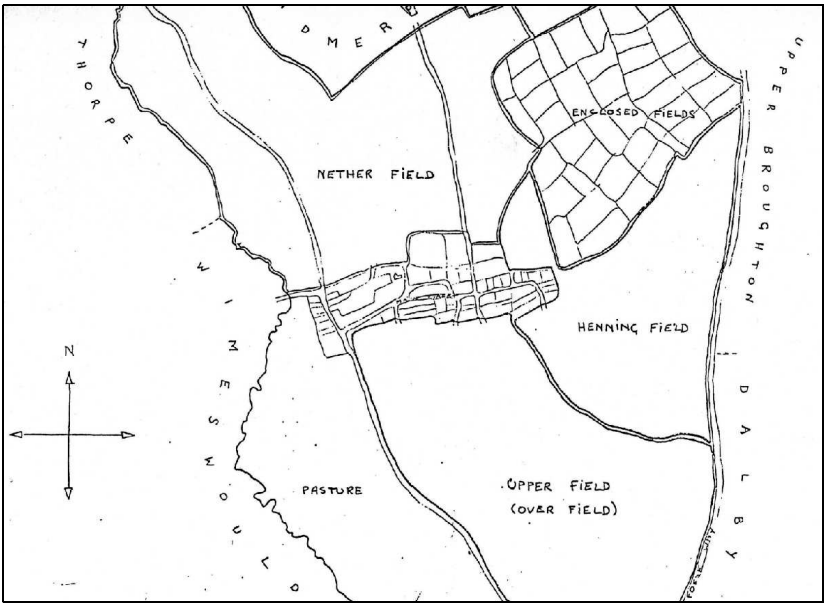
John and Anne continued to farm at Willoughby, where she gave birth to four children, Mary (1762), Benjamin (1764), John (1765) and Thomas (born 1767 and died in infancy).

Anne Bailey died in 1783 and was buried at Willoughby. Following his wife's death, John continued to live at Willoughby for the next four years. Land Tax assessments for the parish indicate that in 1788 he let his property to a William Flewitt. Meanwhile, his daughter Mary had married at St Mary's, Nottingham, in 1786. Her husband, Jonathan Atherstone was the son of a Nottingham dyer, who owned the dye works in Brewhouse Yard, close to the castle. The Atherstones built a new dye works at Ward's End, Loughborough, together with a large family house in 1790, which became the home of Jonathan and Mary.

Very probably Mary's widowed father, John Bailey, lived with them at 'Atherstone House' as this was where he made his Will in 1790. This document revealed a surprising piece of information. The first section of the Will describes his property, at Willoughby, in some detail.

> All that my Messuage or Tenemnt with the two little Homesteads Yard Garden Backside Outbuildings Pastures Commons and Appurtennances And also all those my four Closes or Grounds Inclosed called or known by the Names of Bosworths Closes.

The description matches that of the two cottages and farm buildings, occupied by later generations of our family and pictured above.



Sketch map of Willoughby before the Enclosure of 1799 prepared by Heather Hamilton.

The positions of his 'Bosworths Closes' are shown on a 1609 map of Willoughby and one of these plots of land, belonging to 'William Bosworth Junior' corresponds with the site of the two cottages on the south side of the main street. This important information also confirms that they were the cottages and farm buildings, that John had inherited on his marriage to Anne Ball.

At the time of the Enclosures at Willoughby, John Bailey, purchased just over five acres of enclosed land at a cost of £17-0-11d, to the east of the parish, in Henning Field, close to the Fosse Way. Sadly, he did not live to receive the award of that plot of enclosed land. He died and was buried, with Anne, at Willoughby, in 1796, three years before the award was made.

Like his father-in-law Thomas Ball, John, bequeathed all his land and property to his daughter, Mary, with sums of fifty pounds to each of his surviving sons, Benjamin and John. Mary and her husband were still living at Loughborough, when she received her inheritance, in 1796. They moved again, shortly afterwards, when Jonathan opened two further dye works at Leicester and purchased a large estate in Belgrave Gate. Mary's time as an absentee landlord, was not to last for very long. She died at Leicester in 1798.

Matthew Bailey

Another Bailey family, resident at Willoughby at that time, was that of a Matthew Bailey, about whom we know very little. He is quoted in the Wysall parish register as having come from the parish of Langar, when he married Mary Hogg at Wysall, in 1757. They had three children at Willoughby and Matthew became parish clerk. His wife Mary died and Matthew remarried at Willoughby in 1770. This marriage, to Elizabeth Jacob, produced two more children in 1771 and 1773.

The following year, in January 1774, Willoughby was headline news in all the local newspapers. Their parish clerk, Matthew Bailey, was committed to the County Gaol at Nottingham, charged with stealing two sheep.

Samuel Bailey

Parish registers also indicate a third Bailey family living at Willoughby about that time. Burials are recorded for Samuel and Elizabeth Bailey in 1804 and 1790. Apprenticeship records state that Samuel (or Sam as he was known) was a 'miller' at Willoughby and in 1778 paid stamp duty on an apprenticeship indenture.

John, Matthew and Sam were probably all related to each other, as there are clues that may link them. The three Baileys, were also contemporaries of William (senior) of Nether Broughton and were probably the reason why young William chose to move to live and work at Willoughby

John Bailey (II)

At the turn of the nineteenth century the two cottages and farm at Willoughby, bequeathed by John Bailey to daughter Mary, were put up for sale by her husband, Jonathan Atherstone. This sale by auction took place at the Three Horse Shoes public house at 2.00 p.m. on Saturday 15th August 1817. The property was then in the tenure of John Biggs. The identity of the buyer is unknown, but we do know that William Bailey from Nether Broughton, continued to live in his rented home until his death in 1829.

William's only surviving son, John Bailey, my 2xgreat grandfather, carried on his father's business as a cordwainer at Willoughby. Age nineteen, he shared the tenure of a cottage in Widmerpool lane, with Samuel and Elizabeth Harding and it was there that he met their niece, Mary Marshall. Born at East Leake, Mary was five years his senior and had been brought up in the Wesleyan Methodist tradition. They married at Willoughby on 18th March 1833.

John and Mary lived and worked at Willoughby, in the cottages and farm pictured above. He was to be the first member of the Bailey family to become nonconformist. He joined Mary at the Willoughby Wesleyan Methodist chapel where the numbers were growing rapidly. By the time of the religious census, taken in 1850, the average Sunday attendance at the parish church was 160, whereas 161 attended the Wesleyan chapel and 114 at the Primitive Methodist chapel. Christenings could take place at nonconformist chapels, but marriages and burials continued to be performed at the parish church.

John and Mary's first child, a boy and predictably christened John, was born in January 1834. Records suggest that his christening took place at Castle Donnington, Leicestershire, though the reason for the choice of venue is unclear. There followed six more children, Elizabeth (1836), William (1838), Thomas (1840), Samuel (1843), Mary Ann (1847) and lastly Sarah (1849). Methodist baptismal records have so far only been found for three of the children, Elizabeth, Thomas and Mary Ann, and these appear in the register for the Wesleyan chapel at Leicester Road, Loughborough, which was probably the main register on the Methodist circuit of which Willoughby was a member.

Willoughby, by the time of the first National Census in 1841, was a parish of small farms, with no Lord of the Manor, no gentry and a population of 570 in 105 households. Nearly half the inhabitants were children! The village school was not opened until 1863 and until then a few received some tuition in a room in the parish church. Whether this included the Baileys is uncertain in view of their nonconformity. It is more likely that young John received most of his education at home. He grew up in Willoughby and was to become my great-grandfather. His uncle, George Hickling, probably had a great influence on his adult life. George was a wheelwright and joiner in the village, a trade which young John was to follow.

John senior continued his trade as a cordwainer throughout the 1830s, though he would have been acutely aware of his uncle Samuel's dire situation at Nether Broughton. Samuel, his father William's younger brother was a cordwainer at Nether Broughton. His business failed in 1830 and he lost everything, becoming an 'insolvent debtor'. At the 1841 census for Willoughby, John's occupation is shown as a cordwainer, though it is likely that he was also experiencing a severe downturn in trade, as a result of the mechanisation of shoemaking in Leicester and other places. He was only in his late thirties when he took the decision to change direction and opened a grocery shop on the premises. The extension to the right-hand side of the

cottages (see 1985 photograph) incorporated the shop, with living accommodation above. The 1851 census and trade directories for Willoughby amended their listing of John Bailey from cordwainer to grocer. John also had the availability of the farm buildings at the rear of the cottages, which he would possibly have utilised to supplement the family income.

John (III) and William Bailey

At fourteen, young John became apprenticed to Jonathan Glover. He was a joiner at Willoughby and John was living at the Glover family home at the time of the 1851 census, by which time he was seventeen years old. During the 1850s the Glover family left the village and went to live in the New Basford district of Nottingham. John, having completed his apprenticeship, went with them, and worked for Jonathan. It was there that John renewed his friendship with Ann Turner, who also came from Willoughby. She was living, possibly in service, in the nearby suburb of Carrington. John and Ann had grown up together in the village, where her parents were farmers. They married at the newly built St John's parish church Carrington, Nottingham, on 3rd November 1857. John was twenty-three and Ann twenty-two years old. They set up home in Nottingham where, the following year, their daughter Elizabeth was born, and where Ann was to die, possibly in childbirth. She was buried at Willoughby in April 1858, at the age of twenty-three.

At the time of the census taken in March 1861, second son William lived at home, helping his parents in their grocery shop. He moved shortly afterwards to work at Upper Broughton and the next we hear of him is in a report on the inquest into his death, in the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* of Friday 1st November 1861.

On Tuesday October 22nd, William had been driving a horse and cart at 'a rapid rate' through the village of Kinoulton. He had been drinking and fell out of the side of the cart under the wheel. He was carried into the Neville Arms public house at Kinoulton, where first aid was given. He was then taken to his parent's house at Willoughby, where sadly he died from his injuries on the following Sunday. The inquest was held the following day, Monday 28th October, at the Wheel public house, Hickling. William was buried in the parish churchyard at Willoughby the next day. He was twenty-three years old. Two weeks later, another report appeared in the local paper, which stated that,

> Thomas Bailey, publican, of Kinoulton, was convicted in the penalty of five shillings and 25s 6d costs, for allowing drunkenness upon his premises

Thomas was publican at the Volunteer public house, Kinoulton, and it was doubtless there that William had too much to drink. By the early 1870s, the Volunteer had ceased to exist. An Act of Parliament in 1869 decreed that all public houses had to be approved by local magistrates. This was in an effort to restrict the trade in drink and to appease the temperance lobby. There does not appear to be any family connection with Thomas Bailey of Kinoulton and I doubt that the 1869 legislation was a direct result of William's death.

Following the sudden death of his wife Ann, young John Bailey, with daughter Elizabeth, came home to Willoughby. They moved into the cottages with his parents, who themselves were still bringing up two young daughters, Mary Ann and Sarah. John's mother Mary, now in her fifties, suddenly had an infant grandchild to bring up, in addition to her own family. She had the help of a house servant, but it was still hard with two more mouths to feed. Husband John, senior, having given up shoemaking, was continuing to be a full-time grocer. Young John worked as a joiner in the village, opening his own workshop in the outbuilding at the rear of the left-hand cottage. He renewed his friendship with Elizabeth Skinner, a girl he had known from childhood, as her father John Skinner was the other cordwainer at Willoughby. John and Elizabeth were married, by banns, at Willoughby parish church on 5th September 1859, but something about Elizabeth's appearance, on that happy day, set village tongues wagging. She was eight months pregnant. The following month on October 5th 1859, she gave birth to a boy, who they were to call Thomas, and who became my grandfather.

Imagine the speculation which must have run riot at the time, and two years later, when in 1861 their second son was born. He was christened John Skinner Bailey, his father's name and mother's maiden name which were usually given to the first born. In order to avoid any possible twenty-first century speculation, two important factors should be noted.

John, senior, had lost his younger brother Thomas, who had died in infancy and then his son Thomas had died at the age eight. It would therefore have been seen as a mark of respect to his parents, to continue the christian name with their first born. Secondly, we are lucky in that photographs still exist of both my grandfather Thomas and his youngest brother Samuel John, born in 1867. They were, without doubt, brothers and children of John and Elizabeth. Although Thomas' conception may have been ill-timed, it was by no means uncommon in the middle of the nineteenth-century.

The two John Bailey families lived side by side in the cottages in the main street, and both attended the Wesleyan chapel on Sundays. Little John Skinner Bailey was to live for only three years and died in 1864. Two further

sons were born to Elizabeth, William (1864), Samuel John (1867), and then Ann Eliza (1869). Suddenly it had become fashionable to give children more than one christian name, much to the delight of today's researchers and family historians. With an expanding family, space was becoming a problem for John and Elizabeth, and so an extension to their cottage was built. Evidence of this work is still visible on the left hand cottage.

The other children of John (II)

Next door John senior and Mary were still devoting all their energy to the grocery shop. Their two youngest daughters were growing up and, in 1870, Mary Ann was married to Edward Nixon, the son of a family friend, who lived in the village. Edward was a widower, whose wife had died shortly after the birth of their first child, leaving him with an infant daughter. Edward and Mary Ann lived in Willoughby, and had one child, a daughter, Sarah Ann, who died in her teens.

John, junior and Elizabeth went on to have two more children, both girls, Mary Marshall Bailey (1872) and Martha a year later. Martha was to be the last of so many in the family to die in infancy, and was buried at Willoughby on 27th February 1873. Elizabeth, John's eldest daughter by first wife Ann, also died in early January 1873, aged just sixteen.

John, senior and Mary, with the help of daughter Sarah, were still running their grocery shop, when in 1878, John made his Will. This document confirms that he did own the cottages and farm, which he had bought with the help of a mortgage. He appointed two friends, William Garton and Joseph Nixon as trustees and executors to administrate his assets and maintain the property for the benefit of Mary during her lifetime. He left a cash sum to Sarah, together with all his personal goods and furniture. After Mary's death, his trustees were to dispose of all his assets and sell his property, either by auction or private contract. Having paid all expenses, the balance was to be shared between his other three children, John, Samuel and Mary Ann Nixon.

John died shortly afterwards, on 31st August 1881, leaving John junior to help his mother Mary and Sarah run the shop, as well as the joinery business. In 1883, Sarah finally married at the age of thirty-three. Her husband was Marin Albert Green, son of George, the village baker, postmaster and family friend. The reason for his unusual christian name was due to his mother's German nationality.

John Bailey (III) and family

John Bailey junior was to be widowed for a second time. In 1884, his wife Elizabeth was diagnosed with cancer. She was only forty-eight years old and died at home on January 31st 1884.

Son Thomas, now 25, was living and working as a joiner in Nottingham. William and Samuel were still in their teens, and so Thomas returned to Willoughby and the family business. Ann Eliza (or Annie as she was known) was fifteen, and became 'mum' to the family, looking after her twelve-year old sister, Mary, and housekeeping for her father and elder brothers.

Mary, John senior's widow, was still the grocer in Willoughby, and helped by Mary, her grand- daughter as soon as she had left school in 1886. The family, particularly the younger members had learned to adapt to new roles following the loss of their mother. As the years rolled by to the end of the decade Mary senior gradually handed over to her son John, and by 1891 he was running the shop with daughter Mary, and the three sons all now tradesmen were running the joinery business from the workshop at the rear of the left-hand cottage.

Tragedy was to strike the family again before the turn of the century. It happened in 1895, when John's youngest daughter Mary died suddenly at the age of twenty-two. Two years later, in 1897, his mother, Mary, also passed away. She had lived for ninety-two years, certainly longer than any other family member, and far longer than the average for that period. She was buried in the parish churchyard with husband, John, and the family erected a slate headstone to their memory. This stands on the left of the short pathway that leads up to the church door.

John and Mary's gravestone.

In 1897, John (III) was in his sixties, a widower, with just half of his family left to survive him. He still kept himself occupied by being a part-time joiner, but the business was being well looked-after by two of his three sons, Thomas, who had married in 1896, and Samuel, who was still single. William had married in 1895 and moved to live at Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. John continued to run the grocery shop and 'Annie' was still keeping house for them. She was twenty-seven and, under normal circumstances,

would have been married long before then. She had a boyfriend in the village. He was Tom Sketchley, a Poor Rate and Tax collector, who lived with his mother Mary Ann Page.

Tom was very friendly with Samuel Bailey. In fact, they were both members of the Fallow Field, Willoughby Lodge of the Nottingham Ancient Imperial United Order of Oddfellows. The Lodge held their meetings in one of the cottages next door to the Baileys (now 99, Main Street) which was then known as 'the clubhouse'. A photograph of the members, taken in 1896, still hangs in the village hall.

Thomas Bailey

My grandfather, Thomas, following his return to Willoughby after living at Nottingham, worked in the family joinery business. He was a practising Wesleyan Methodist and would no doubt have been actively involved in the building of the last nonconformist place of worship in the parish, the Methodist Church, on land donated by Mr W.B. Garton in 1891.

Thomas married Adah Rear Baldock in the parish church at Hose, Leicestershire on 18th November 1896. The Baldock family were also Methodists and came originally from the nearby parish of Wysall. Adah was one of eight girls and one boy, born to George and Sarah Baldock. The family had moved from Wysall to Willoughby about 1870, when Adah was four years old. They moved into a smallholding comprising cottage, outbuildings and four acres of land at the end of Chapel Lane, on the southern edge of the village. By 1896, George and Sarah Baldock had moved from Chapel Lane, Willoughby to farm at Hose Lodge, Hose, in the Vale of Belvoir and it was there that the wedding took place, following the reading of banns.

Thomas and Adah lived in the Bailey family cottage on the left, while father John lived in the adjoining right-hand cottage and shop. Their first child, a boy, was born in 1897. The practice of following a traditional family naming pattern from one generation to the next had changed with the century, and they were now selected more on the basis of personal choice and to some extent fashion. Their new born son was christened Reginald Baldock Bailey and a daughter, Marguerite Mary followed in 1899. The use in families of pet or nicknames was becoming more popular and it wasn't long before Reginald became 'Rex' and Marguerite Mary, 'Madge'. These pet names stayed with them for life.

Twentieth century changes

At the end of the century Queen Victoria was still on the throne after 63 years and the country was again at war, this time in South Africa against the Boers.

Life for the parishioners of Willoughby had not changed much during those hundred years since the land was enclosed. The population of the parish was still about five hundred, and the old village families were still the nucleus of the community. The twentieth century would see very radical change in the village, and quickly.

Thomas Bailey's new house built in 1907.

Remains of the joinery workshop (far left) behind the large grey door.

Thomas was running the joinery business together with his brother Sam and possibly an apprentice. They were also wheelwrights and probably built many of the farm carts used in the parish. Their father, John, now sixty-six, was devoting his time to the grocery shop, but was also turning his hand to grazing cattle.

The year 1901 saw the death of the Queen and the start of the Edwardian era in England. The following year my father, George Eric (always to be known as 'Eric'), was born in the cottage at Willoughby, on 13th August, and Thomas and Adah's third son, John Skinner Bailey, was born two years later in 1904. With four children space in the cottage was again at a premium. The joinery business provided a reasonably comfortable living and so, with the help of a mortgage, Thomas acquired land fronting the main street and directly opposite their cottages, on which he commenced the building of a new house for the family (pictured below). The date stone on the house front indicates that it was completed in 1907.

The new family house stood next door to the Primitive Methodist Chapel, built in 1871. When the Primitive Methodists joined the Wesleyans in 1932, the old chapel became redundant and was later demolished in the early 1940s. The site became a garden for the family. Along with the main house Thomas built a number of outbuildings, including a two-storey building to the north of the old chapel for storing timber for his joinery business.

Thomas Bailey's house in May 2021.

Annie and family

In 1901 Thomas' father, John, was living in the right-hand cottage and running the grocery business. Living with him was his daughter Annie and her husband, Tom Sketchley. Tom had become the grazier, looking after the small farm at the rear of the cottages. In 1902 Annie gave birth to a son, John, who sadly died at birth. Three years later, in 1905, twin daughters Mary and Elizabeth were born. They continued to live in the cottage with John Bailey until the census was taken in 1911. Shortly afterwards Tom and Annie Sketchley, with the girls, left Willoughby and moved to Snibston, near Ravenstone, in north-west Leicestershire. John Bailey, then seventy-six years old, closed the grocery shop and went with them to live at the Yews Farm, where Tom continued farming.

Thomas and Adah's fifth child, Bertha Alice, was born in their new home in 1910. The following year the census was taken. For the first time the census return was not completed by an enumerator, but by the householder, which gives us the opportunity of seeing Thomas Bailey's handwriting. Thomas and Adah's family had certainly grown. There were ten people living in the house on the census night of 2nd April 1911. In addition to their five children there were also three other people.

- Hannah Ward, a 62 year old single lady, who was Adah's cousin
- Cecil Ernest Trayford, a 15 year old apprentice from Saltby, Leicestershire
- Alice Maud Doubleday, a 15 year old servant from Whittlesea, Cambridgeshire

The joinery workshop behind the left-hand cottage across the road was quite primitive with an earth floor and wooden work benches round the walls. Entrance was by double doors large enough to allow newly-built horsedrawn carts to be taken out of the workshop. There was a saw-pit in the centre of the earth floor to allow long lengths of timber to be cut with a hand saw.

Cecil Trayford would have completed his indenture during the Great War. Records show that he served in the Royal Navy. In 1924 he married Grace Parker at Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, where they spent their married life. Cecil was in his nineties when he died at Melton in 1990.

Rex was conscripted into the army in 1916 and served in the Durham Light Infantry. He was posted to the 2nd Line Sixth Battalion, who were based in Essex. Thomas and Adah visited him and on returning to Willoughby, decided to call their new home 'Brentwood' after the Essex town. His battalion moved to France in May 1918. Rex became a First-Class Signaller and was awarded the Military Medal. After the war he taught mathematics at Heywood Grammar School in Lancashire.

On leaving the village school, Madge worked at home helping her mother. In addition to her three brothers and little sister, there would have been at least one apprentice joiner living in the house. She became an excellent cook. By the end of the war, Eric and John were still teenagers. Eric went on to Loughborough College to study engineering and John went into farming.

The 1920s saw further change in Willoughby. There was less dependency on the land and on many of the traditional village craftsmen. More people of working age sought employment in the nearby towns of Loughborough, Melton, Nottingham and Leicester, which were soon to have a regular motor

coach service from the village. Although he was now over sixty, Thomas was still kept busy, as there was still a demand for his services as a joiner and wheelwright. Bertha, like her eldest brother, on leaving the village school went on to Mundella Grammar School, then to University College Nottingham and became a teacher.

In 1921, my great grandfather, John Bailey, was still living at 'The Yews Farm', Snibston with the Sketchley family, when on 1st May of that year he died, aged eighty-seven. Tragedy struck again eight weeks later when his daughter, Annie Sketchley, who had been his carer for so many years, also died.

Madge had continued to help her mother care for the household, when, in 1934, Adah was diagnosed with cancer and died on 28th May. She was sixty-eight. Madge took on the mantel of 'mother' to the family. Still single, she was thirty-five and took an active part in village life. She was one of the founding members of the Willoughby branch of the Women's Institute.

We do not know when Thomas actually gave up his joinery business. It was quite likely to have been a gradual process. The last listing for him as a joiner, in Kelly's Trade Directory was in the 1932 edition, when he was seventy-two years old, so it is likely to have been about that time. His working life had run its course and with no successor the workshop remained empty for many years. The two-storey 'timber room', built by Thomas at the rear of the Primitive Methodist chapel, became a store for animal food and the ground floor, a garage for Bertha's car.

Second World War

Life at Willoughby at the outbreak of war, in September 1939, was much the same as it had been throughout that decade, then everything changed. The government had been preparing for conflict for months. On 29th September 1939, National Registration took place, when every household in the country completed a census giving details of all those who were resident on that day, their ages and employment. This information enabled the authorities to issue Identity Cards and Ration Books to the whole population including children. Thomas Bailey's occupation was given as a 'Dairy Farmer', Madge as 'Unpaid Domestic Duties' and Bertha as a 'Teacher'. Staying with them, at the time, was a teacher friend of Bertha's.

Thomas was eighty, nominal head of the household which was run by his eldest daughter Madge. The old Bailey family cottages, on the opposite side of the main street, were occupied by Mr and Mrs Hornbuckle in the left-hand cottage, which had been given the name 'Linden Lea'. The Hatherley family lived in the right-hand one with the shop front.

Madge, with the help of 'cowman' Walter Wisher, ran their small farm at the rear of the cottages. Unfortunately, no photographs of the old farm buildings exist, but I remember the layout well. Built at the same time as the cottages, there were two milking sheds with stalls for their dairy cows, stables for the two horses, a pig sty, a hay barn and a large chicken house. At the rear of these buildings there was land comprising a yard with a dung heap, and an unmade lane providing access to London Lane and a paddock.

Food rationing was introduced in January 1940, at a time when the country was enduring the coldest winter for forty years. Willoughby, like most of the country was covered in deep snow. There was a severe shortage of coal and fresh vegetables, which were frozen into the ground. Britain was a net importer of food. Consequently, there was an urgent need to turn land over to growing crops to feed the nation. Most farmland was given over to pasture and this was certainly the case at Willoughby.

The government set up War Agriculture Committees in every county, whose job was to ensure that targets set for food production were achieved and achieved quickly. The 'War Ags', as they were known, had draconian powers. For example, tenant farmers could be replaced if they were unable to reach the target set for them. All the Bailey fields at Willoughby were given over to pasture and I remember at least two were ploughed up and planted with corn and potatoes. No easy task for Walter. There was no tractor at that time, just the hand plough and heavy horse. For many farms the urgency to plough the land meant that they had to work at night. This was made more difficult as it had to be done without showing any light.

Fearful of immediate enemy bombing, the government decreed that there was to be a total blackout during the hours of darkness. It changed daily life for every household and was the most disliked legislation of the entire war. An army of Air Raid Precaution (ARP) wardens was mobilised in every town and village to ensure compliance with the law. Their roll was also to advise the public on how best to deal with this nightly task and only recommend prosecution to police in the most extreme cases. The Bailey family at Willoughby fell foul of this law at a very early stage. Twice! I had no idea that my grandfather, Thomas, had a criminal record. As head of the family, he was prosecuted on two occasions. The *Nottingham Evening Post*, on Wednesday, December 29th 1939, reported:

> Thomas Bailey 80, Farmer Willoughby. (external yard light). It was stated that the light could be seen a mile away.

Thomas was fined ten shillings. The report on his second offence was published in the *Evening Post* on Saturday, September 28th 1940.

This time the fine was doubled to one pound. Thomas was far from being the only one. In 1940, 300,000 people, nationwide, were prosecuted for showing a light during the hours of the blackout. The law had a disastrous effect on road transport. In February 1940, the speed of cars was restricted to 20 m.p.h. in built-up areas. Nevertheless, accidents involving pedestrians and blacked out vehicles were frequent.

To ease the situation, British Summer Time (BST), when clocks were advanced by one hour, was brought forward to February in 1940. This additional hour of daylight was made permanent. In May the following year, the government introduced Double British Summertime. Clocks were put forward a further one hour and this arrangement was retained all the year round for the next four years, until the end of the war, in the hope that it would help farmers.

Bertha still lived at home, at Willoughby and commuted daily to school in Nottingham on the No. 12 Barton bus from Leicester. Throughout the war years Madge had the help of Walter Wisher who was to work with the family until Madge gave up the farm in the 1950s. Added help was provided by her brother Rex, who spent all his school holidays at Willoughby, working on the farm. They kept pigs, so we ate a lot of pork and there was a plentiful supply of fresh eggs. The butcher, Jack Bailey, from Upper Broughton, delivered meat and pork pies every Friday evening. Coincidentally the same surname but unrelated. In 2017, F. Bailey & Sons, butchers in that village for over a hundred years, closed their doors for the last time.

Madge was in her forties. She never married and lived all her life at Willoughby, keeping house for her father, Thomas, and sister, Bertha. It was hard manual work. Whilst there was electricity, there was no mains water at Willoughby until after the war. All water had to be pumped by hand from wells. 'Brentwood' had its own supply, but many villagers had to use the village well, which was situated in the main street. Consequently, the toilet was outside in the building furthest from the house and freezing in the winter. Baths were taken in a tin bath in the kitchen!

For a small boy from the town, weekends and holidays on the farm were a joy, with wide open spaces and fields in which to play, farm buildings to explore, animals to feed and eggs to collect. Whilst the deprivation, caused by rationing, affected everybody, fresh food at Willoughby seemed plentiful. Many fields had been ploughed to grow much needed vegetables. 'Brentwood' had a large rear garden which provided fruit and vegetables for the family. I recall that they grew what seemed a large amount of the most enormous rhubarb. Its size was a consequence of the liberal amounts of manure that were spread on the garden. This came from a large dung heap,

by the pig sties, and on to which the contents of the outside toilet were also emptied!

The cows had to be collected from the fields twice daily to be milked, and I remember assisting Walter or uncle Rex in this task. Occasionally I was allowed to do it alone. While walking along the lanes behind the cows, I was intrigued to note the very wide grass verge on one side of the lane, which had been put to good use during the war. The authorities had erected corrugated iron shelters at regular intervals along the wide verge. They were open at each end and full to the roof with small arms ammunition boxes. Presumably it was thought to be the safest and least dangerous place to store it, although I never discovered what the boxes contained. It was not until many years later that I discovered that the wide verges at Willoughby were not there by accident. When the fields of the parish were enclosed in the eighteenth century, it had been decided to make wide verges to enable carriages to pass each other, and to allow for future widening of the highway. Evidence of this is still visible throughout the parish.

After the War

At the end of the war in 1945 Willoughby remained largely unchanged. The buildings behind the cottages were still a working farm. The horse and cart were still the mode of transport, but mechanisation was on the way, with the introduction of the tractor on to the larger farms, which was to change the traditional way of farming.

The snowfall in the winter of 1946–47 was the heaviest for seven years. It brought everything at Willoughby to a standstill, with drifts as high as the hedgerows.

The following year, on 30th July 1948, Thomas Bailey passed away at the age of eighty-eight. It was a wet summer day when my brother, Paul, and I watched from the front bedroom window as they carried his coffin from the house, followed by the family, down the village street to the parish church. There he was buried with Adah, and later a memorial stone was erected to mark their grave. The confusion over the spelling of Adah's second christian name has unfortunately been perpetuated on the headstone.

Their small herd of cows was still providing milk for their regular customers in the village and the balance was collected daily by a local dairy. The interior of the large heavy metal churns was cleaned daily by Madge, but on one occasion it was not done well enough. In May 1949 Madge was fined after water had been found in a consignment of milk.

Madge and Bertha continued to live at 'Brentwood' after the death of their father and Madge, with Walter's help, carried on operating their small farm at the rear of the cottages across the road. Bertha commuted daily to Trent Bridge School in Nottingham and brother Rex was still a regular visitor in his school holidays. Madge had more time to herself, and was often able to leave Rex in charge during the school holiday period and take a well-earned break. Towards the end of the 1950s she gave up the farm and retired. From teenage, Madge had devoted her life to caring for her widowed father and managing their small farm.

The copy of the Annual Valuation of the farm, dated May 1955, (see next page) would have been one of the last to be taken. Comparison with the Inventory taken after the death of Thomas Ball, two hundred years earlier, shows that the farm had not grown in size very much during that period and like most others had become uneconomical.

Bertha retired from teaching in 1970, at the age of sixty. The two sisters lived alone, at 'Brentwood', their large Edwardian home. Bertha spent much of her retirement visiting their mother Adah's Baldock relatives in Western Australia, but in 1976 she was diagnosed with cancer. Following a short illness she died at the City Hospital, Nottingham on 9th March 1976.

Madge was then seventy-seven and living alone with her cat and Golden Retriever dog. Her eyesight gradually began to fail due to the onset of glaucoma, and by the early 1980s she had totally lost her sight. In 1985 she went to live in a nursing home at West Bridgford, Nottingham, where she died in 1987. She was buried with her sister Bertha, mother and father, in the parish churchyard at Willoughby.

EIGHTH Annual

VALUATION for Stocktaking Purposes of

TENANTRIGHT LIVE and DEAD FARMING STOCK, etc.

upon the Brentwood House Farm, in the Parish of Willoughby-on-the-Wolds, in the County of Leicester.

Made for:— Miss. M. M. Bailey.

As at:— May 31st 1955.

	£	s.	d.
10. Dairy Cattle.	280.	-.	-.
19. Other Cattle.	607.	-.	-.
3. Horses.	65.	-.	-.
Sheep.	-.	-.	-.
10. Pigs.	34.	10.	-.
Poultry.	37.	-.	-.
Stores.	-.	-.	-.
Produce.	-.	-.	-.
Tenantright.	-.	-.	-.
Tractors.	-.	-.	-.
Motor Vehicles.	-.	-.	-.
Implements & Machinery.	122.	10.	11.
Fixtures.			
	£1146.	-.	11.

The foregoing Valuation amounts to the Sum of ONE THOUSAND ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY SIX POUNDS, AND ELEVEN PENCE.

F.A.I.P.A.

The Annual Valuation of the farm, dated May 1955.

95 and 97 Main Street, Willoughby in May 2021.

After the Baileys

The two centuries of Bailey family residence at Willoughby on the Wolds had come to an end. Madge had lived in the village all her life and for nearly eighty years in the same house built by her father in 1907.

At the close of the twentieth century all the village farms together with most of the old families had disappeared. Many of the farms were redeveloped into housing. 'Brentwood', now 86, Main Street, had been sold at auction.

The two cottages on the opposite side of the road on land once known as 'Bosworth's Close' and home to the family for so long, were given street numbers and in 1983, were Grade 2 listed. They were later developed into a single dwelling which became number 97, Main Street. The shop front and door on the far right have been replaced with a matching window. The redundant farm buildings and joinery workshop, were all redeveloped into housing in the early twenty-first century, with a new access road from Main Street on the left side of the refurbished cottage.

Although nothing, except the cottage, now remains as a memorial to the family that spent five generations plying their trades as shoemakers, joiners, grocers and farmers in this place, the name has not been forgotten. The new development, standing on the site of their endeavours, has been given the name 'Bailey's Croft'. A lasting tribute to a village family.

'Bailey's Croft' Main Street, Willoughby on the Wolds, May 2021.