

Foreword

This booklet began with the need to make some repairs to the bank of Wellow Dam - requiring grant funding to help get the job done.

Enquiries led us to the Local Heritage Initiative, a national grant scheme helping local groups to investigate, explain, and care for their landscape, traditions, and culture. LHI was developed by the Countryside Agency, and is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the Nationwide Building Society.

At first, the only part we were interested in was the “care for” aspect above - but the investigation and explanation was a part of any deal, so we set off to meet that commitment. And the investigation proved interesting, if, in the end, inconclusive; more of that later!

We could not just deal with the Dam in isolation; it was, and is, a part of the life of Wellow - and so the booklet includes other features of the village, and seeks to give a flavour of how life was lived here in the past. With a little imagination, and helped by the fact that the shape of the older part of the village hasn't changed much, it is possible to picture Wellow through the ages.

We hope you find it interesting; we would like to thank the people who helped us, both by producing their own written reminiscences, and giving us verbal snippets to include. We have also listed the reference sources we have used.

Thanks too, to all those who helped us get the work done - including the members of Thoresby Colliery Angling Club, who have put in a lot of effort on this project. We are grateful to everyone involved.

Finally, if we got anything wrong, or left out something relevant, please accept our apologies; as sleuths we are definitely in the amateur league!

Eddie Ilett, Chairman Wellow Toftholders and Owners Association

Contents

1. Wellow Dam; when, why, and by whom?
2. Memories of the Dam in times past
3. Wellow through the centuries.
4. Common land and the Toftholders of Wellow
5. Acknowledgements/bibliography

Wellow Dam

When this project started, we had high hopes that by the end, we would be able to establish “beyond reasonable doubt” when, why, and by whom the Dam was made. Not so! If the evidence exists, we missed it!

Despite research, we are still left with a good deal of conjecture about the origins and purpose before 1657 - which was the first written reference found. So we have instead looked at the popular theories, and have reproduced them here - with maybe a view on how each one ties in with what we know of the circumstances in Wellow then, and what was happening in the country at the time.

When?

The earliest map clearly showing the Dam is dated 1738, and is a very stylised representation of the area - little detail, but the dam is clearly there. The reproduction is faint, but it gives a good idea of how the area looked then.

The Parliamentary Enclosure Map of 1842 is much clearer, and here you can see two ponds, marked 78 (the dam) and 79 (another, behind it). This is the only map we found showing two ponds.

A map of 1890 records the dam as a fish pond, and this seems to be confirmed by the earliest written record we could find; this was the 1657 reckoning of “Landes and cottages within the Lordship of Welley in the County of Nottingham, belonging to the Honorable Sir George Savile, Barron, taken on the latter ends of August in the year of our Lord 1657”. This makes reference to income from “the ffish pools”, and although these cannot be specifically tied into the dam and its companion pond, there do not seem to be any other likely candidates within Wellow.

It is likely that, despite the lack of formal confirmation, the dam is much older - but how much has to remain a mystery.

Why, and by whom?

The Dam is man - made, and would therefore have been dug out with one or more specific purposes in mind - we don't know whether the original excavation was the same size as now, or whether it was made bigger over time. But it certainly was not made for fun, and would have taken a considerable amount of hard work to complete.

Legend has it that the Dam was made by the monks of Rufford as a fish pond; given that it is a long way from the Abbey, and that they already had plenty of scope for fish stocks there, this doesn't seem too likely - particularly when you consider that the stocked pond would be much closer to the fishermen of Wellow than the monks! But remembering that the village grew up from the ex - settlers of Rufford and Cratley, it is not impossible that the men of Wellow made it with fish in mind (although that might not have been the prime purpose).

It might have been excavated for the clay; given that the early dwellings in the village would have been made of mud and clay, there would have been a ready source there for the early houses, or, later, to be used to make bricks. The amount of clay coming from the Dams' present size would have been far too much, though, for the original size of the village.

But to state the obvious, whoever begun the first excavation, did so deliberately in the path of a stream, in the knowledge that the hole they made would fill with water. If the only purpose had been to get at the clay, presumably the hole could have been dug somewhere a little drier! So the theory that the purpose was for a water supply for the settlers is also valid.

More likely, perhaps, that there was a dual need, for water, and for clay, and that this spot met both; perhaps with the later addition of a supply of fresh fish. It is likely, too, that the original dam was much smaller, and was expanded over time.

This still does not help us with a date, and despite our best efforts,

none has been forthcoming. So somewhere between 1145AD and 1657AD is the answer - and this is, admittedly, a very wide window of probability.

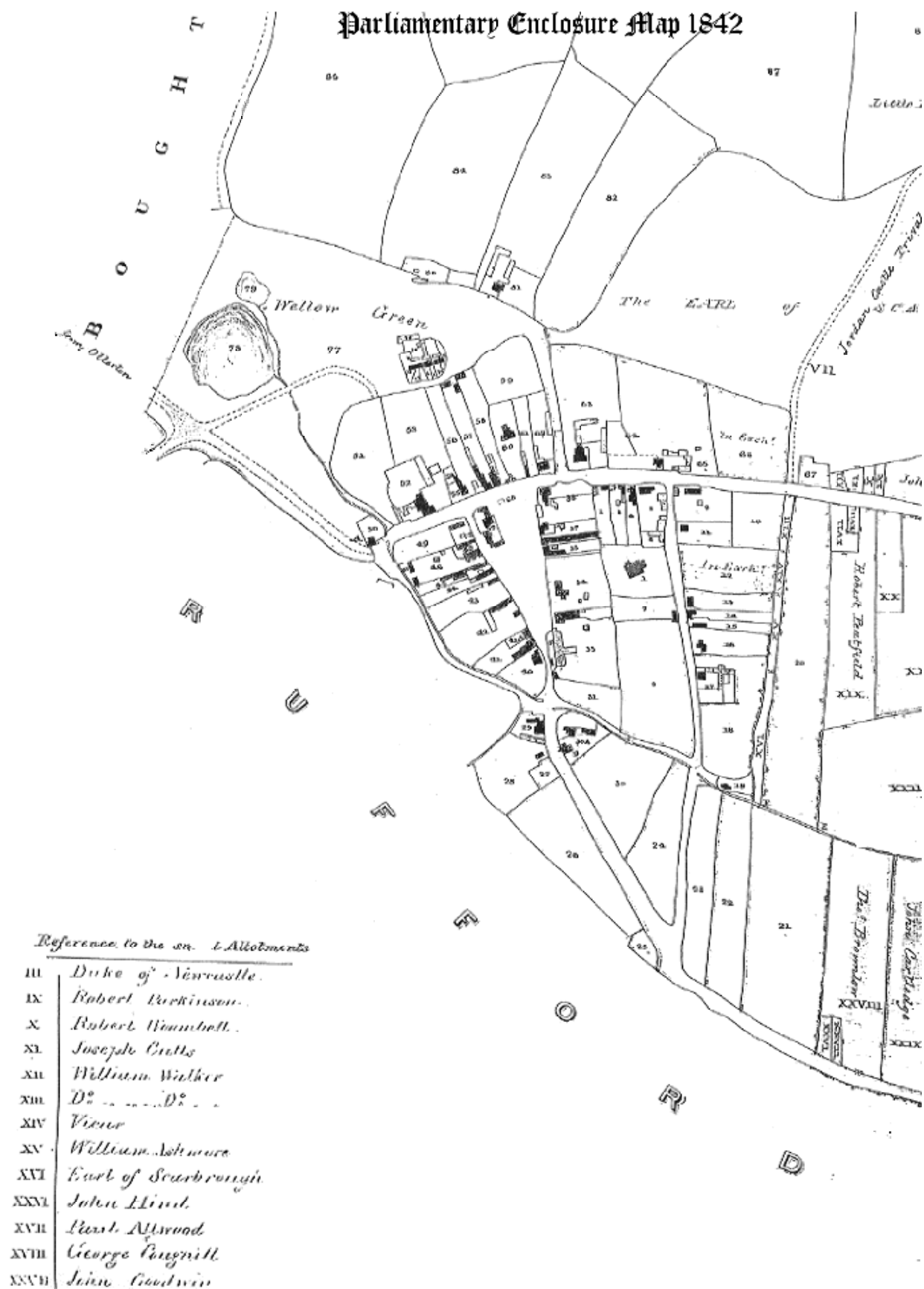
Looking at Wellow through the ages, there are times when it is possible to see a very distinct advantage in having that water source, outside the village, and independent of the (plentiful) water supply within it. It would be particularly beneficial to be able to water stock there, not only locally-owned livestock, but also the travelling animals on the way to market, and passing through Wellow because of the village's position on an important main road. Perhaps the livestock stayed overnight, whilst their keepers sampled the delights of Wellow's numerous pubs, and brought trade to the village.

So although the origins are still a mystery, we can be sure that over the centuries, the dam has provided practical benefits, but also fun and recreation. We know this for the 20th century - why should it not be so in earlier times? Children, despite hard times, would hopefully have had some time to play.

Records show that in 1928, the then Lord of the Manor gave his permission for the dam to be let out to a fishing club, and he waived his rights to the income from this, on condition that Toftholders used the fees to maintain the banks and the greens. But he stipulated that this should not interfere with the rights of local children to enjoy the water. And it is clear from the memories we publish in this booklet, that they certainly did that! The fact that so many memories revolve around skating on the dam brings home how much more severe the winters must have been then - the water is hardly ever frozen these days, and then not thickly enough to make the ice safe.

And what an evocative memory of the plough horses, after a hard day's work in the fields, having their legs washed and splashing around in the cool water.

So Wellow Dam is just as much a piece of history as any fine building or statue - and much more useful; we should be glad we have it.



Memories of Wellow Dam

From Dennis Crooks;

‘It is common knowledge how Common Land came into being, but there are no written records stating how the Dam was created.

It is my true belief that an area of ground on common land was used to provide clay for the purpose of making bricks at the local brick yard that was situated on Rufford Road at that time. The top soil was placed at the far side of the ditch and the area is now called Beech Hill. The crater that was created was used to provide a drinking area and a place for animals to cool in the summer heat whilst grazing on common land. This area has obtained the name of Wellow Dam, is fed from a spring, and discharges into the natural ditch.

Now that it is not required for the purpose of watering animals, it is being used to provide many hours of pleasure for people fishing, and also encourages young people to participate; in doing so it prevents them from getting bored and creating damage and untidiness to the village structure.

In addition to the pleasure it provides, it is also providing a regular income which helps to maintain the common land; this includes the triangular green around the maypole, which originates from the early days of settlement. The appearance of this green gives passing visitors a true reflection of the people that live in Wellow.

Should you obtain any document that records the true reason how the Dam came into being, I would be pleased to know”.

From about 50 years ago, from Margaret Lees;

‘I remember when the dam was really thickly frozen over, and most of us children would head down to play games on the ice, slide, and pretend to skate. I can’t remember any of us having proper ice skates. My dog, Rover, always came with me, but after trying to join me on

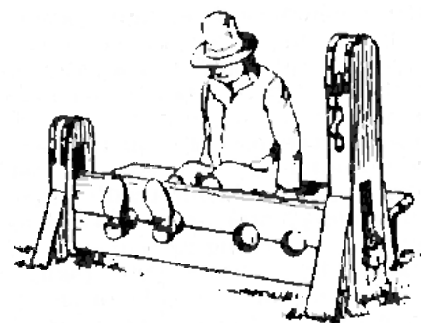
the slippery ice, used to sit patiently at the side waiting for me. Sledges were taken onto the dam, but when this became a bit dodgy, Beech Hill was quite a good sledging venue, but you were so quickly down, and seemed to spend more time running back up to the top.

Gypsies always came to the bottom green, making a camp site near the dam. They had very colourful Caravans, drawn by horses, and the interiors and cooking utensils always seemed to shine. The horses were also well looked after. The Gypsy women used to come around the Village selling clothes pegs, lace, etc., and it was known that if you did not buy anything from them, they would issue curses, a little frightening sometimes.

At this time one or two farmers still took their animals onto the green to graze under their Toftholders rights. Mr Fred Dickinson had his cows on the green, and Albert Riley, who lived at the shop on the Green used to look after them (known as tenting) when he came home from school. I suppose they would perhaps drink from the dam.

Another thing about the dam that I heard from some of my older relations, was how proud cricketers were if they had knocked a ball into the dam. My Uncle Edwin played for Eakring, and was so proud when playing against Wellow, of knocking the ball into the Dam. My Uncle Tom was proud of doing the same thing. I know of quite a few more people did this some years later, one being John Hunt, son of Ray Hunt, and Stuart Morris, son of Ted Morris.

I have been told stories about the Ducking Stone at the Dam, which was for punishing wrongdoers, primarily, it is told, for ducking gossips. Also on the Maypole Green there were Village stocks which were used to deal with wrongdoers.



STOCKS

A lot of children fished in the Dam and had a good time, but with all the farm animals to help with, and all the games we played up in the village, I did not go fishing.”

Did you know.....?

That the Dam had a ducking stool, and that the stone on which it stood remains there. The ducking stool was used to punish wrongdoers, in particular, gossips and dishonest tradesmen; there is no evidence that ours was used for anything more sinister, but, starting around 1550, a “witchcraze” in England saw many hundreds tried as black witches - black witchcraft being an offence punishable by death. One of the tests was by ducking on a stool; if the suspects drowned, they were innocent, if not, guilt had been established, and the death penalty would result - the original no-win situation?

We have no firm evidence that the Dam existed at that time, although it may well have, and no evidence of a ducking stool in place then if it did. But I wonder.....

From Bill Ragsdale;

“As an old resident of Wellow, I have many happy memories of Wellow Dam. Particularly as in my younger days the winter weather seemed to be more severe, and the Dam was frozen over for very long periods. As children we could play there quite safely for weeks - except at the south corner where the inflow of water came in from the spring, which is still a constant supply of fresh water. The spring itself is sixty yards or more to the south going out towards Wellow School, and I can still remember it exactly as it was when I was a boy.

The Council levelled off that stretch back to the highway, and did away with the Bucket Well which used to exist; this was a very strong stone construction built on the side of a hill, with stone pillars and a large slab of stone on the top. The well was made so that a bucket could be dipped and filled with the beautiful clear spring water, and taken away for use; this was before piped water was in the village. Another well lay at the side of the dyke opposite Audrey Laughtons’. The supply of fresh spring water comes into the dam by the roadside, and it can be seen to be running at all times. As children we were told to keep away from that area, as there was a certain amount of water that did not freeze, no matter how hard the winter frosts.

As I say, we spent many happy hours down there as kids, and when I learned how to skate, we could play ice - hockey with stones and sticks. We also had some excellent skaters in the village at that time.

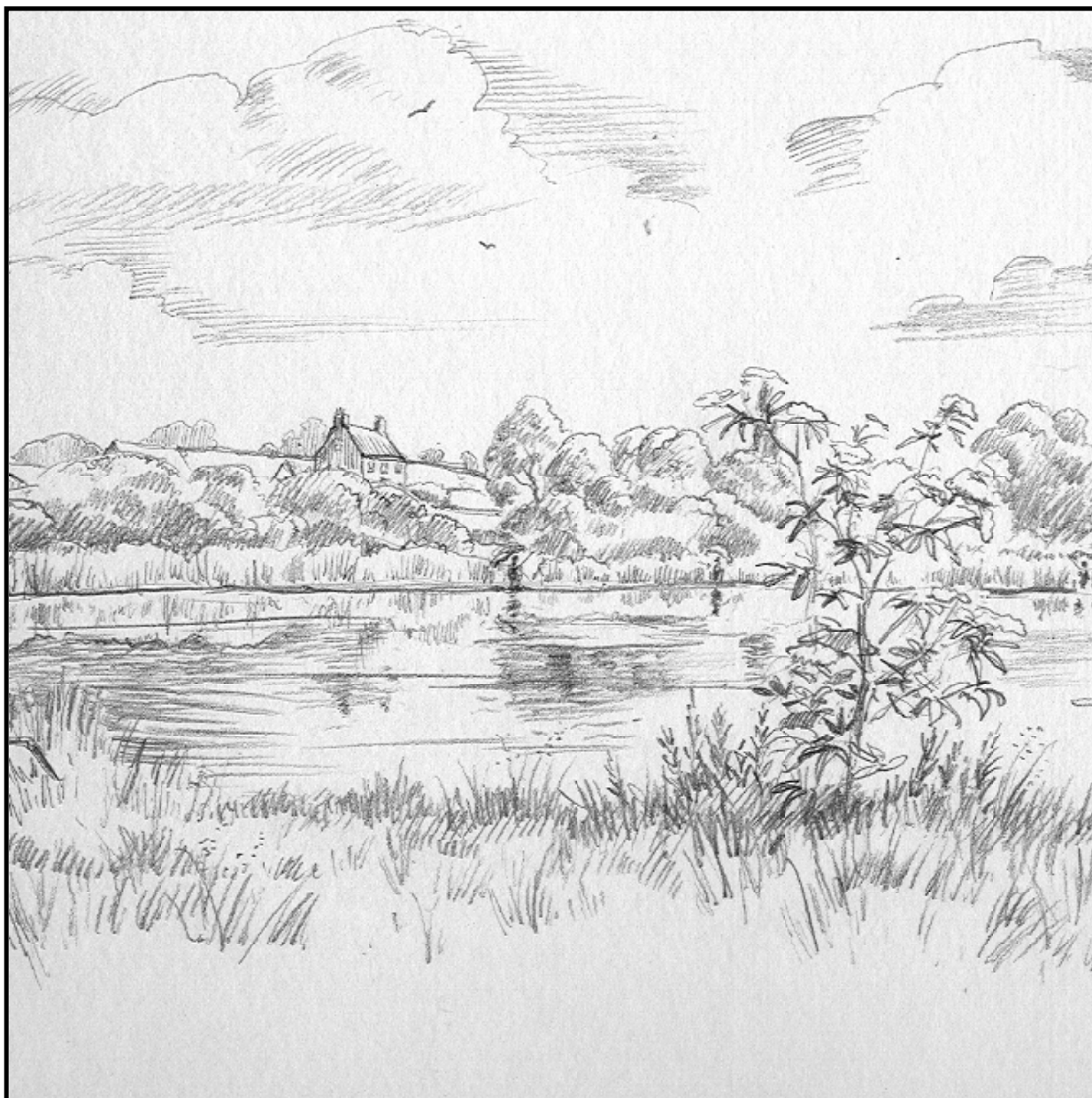
The water is never stagnant, as the outflow runs into the dyke on the east side, where the big stone is. In the summer time before so much road traffic, cattle grazing on the green had a ready-made drinking supply, and also when land work made the heavy clay stick to the horses' legs, we used to take them down for a good splash around.

One old demented lady in my youth committed suicide in the placid waters.

I have always maintained that at some time the Dam area has been excavated to exist on its' present scale. If anyone looks at the large mound to the south- east at the side of the track, it seems to me that one could reasonably imagine that the quantity of soil in that large bank would be the equivalent of the amount which at some time was dug out to provide a constant water supply to the early settlers. The amount of soil to me seems to be about the amount which would be the result of an excavation.

Nowadays the Dam is well - stocked with fish, and a committee do the preservation work."

Ollerton Conservative & Wellow Red Lion A.C.		
N ^o 1759		
PERMIT BEARER TO FISH IN THE CLUB'S WATERS at WELLOW DAM/FLEDBOROUGH		
Date	Name	
Not Tranferable		
WELLOW DAM	Adults 1/-	Juveniles 6d.
FLEDBOROUGH	Adults 2/-	Juveniles 1/-
Please leave no litter. Close gates and avoid crops.		
No fish to be taken away from Wellow Dam.		



Playing Safe!

Barbara Barratt (nee Portsmouth) recalls that when she was a child, and the Dam froze over, skating was only allowed after the village ‘bobby’ had taken his motor bike on to the ice to make sure that it was safe!

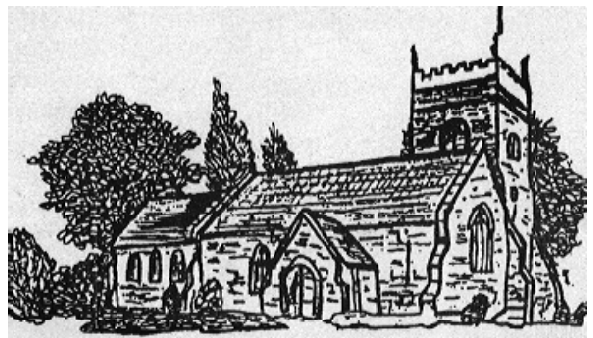
Wellow through the centuries

Beginnings

Wellow is first mentioned in documents in 1207, but was probably settled about fifty years earlier, called ‘Wellhagh’ or ‘Welhag’, and established following the building of Rufford Abbey. The name means ‘place by a spring’.

The Cistercians, or ‘white monks’, who founded the Abbey, chose remote places to establish their orders, and would often break up existing settlements to make sure of seclusion; here their arrival caused the disappearance of three settlements, Rufford, Cratley, and Grimston, and their replacement by Wellow. Records show that the removal of the settlers from Rufford was probably by grudging agreement, and that they were compensated for their loss, but what happened at Cratley, a larger village than Rufford, and believed to have stood about where North Laithes Farm lies now - between Wellow and Eakring - is not so well documented. Cratley probably had the same problem as Rufford, because the monks built a grange there. Wellow lies in the ‘sokeland’ of Grimston, and the free men of Rufford and Cratley were allowed to join the sokemen there. It seems that Grimston just faded away after the establishment of Wellow. Strange to think that but for the monks’ need for religious isolation, Wellow might never have existed!

England was in a turbulent state at this time - more often than not at war, usually with France. And at the time Wellow was probably being settled, there was civil unrest in England, with some of the barons rebelling against the king, Stephen. Taking all this into account, the building of a new community must have been particularly hard. But build it they did, and soon the community had a church, completed towards the end of the twelfth century - you can find more information about the church and its



history, in the booklet “A short history of the parish of Wellow”. Some publications record that the masons who built the Abbey also built Wellow church.

What was it like?

Unusual features of Wellow are the dyke and triangular village green, thought to have been created for the defence of the village. The Gorge Dyke is too large for just cattle control, and the green would have been ideal for holding and defending livestock against an attack. Nottinghamshire, because of the way the land was divided, was a dangerous place to live! Throughout the country the barons had been granted land by the monarch, but were often bitter rivals, and although in theory every baron had to seek permission from the king to build a castle, there were plenty of unauthorised castles; as well as the danger of coming between two warring barons, it also seems that the garrisons of many castles, in theory there to defend their neighbourhoods, were often quite happy to drive the stock off the fields they were supposed to be protecting. There were four “motte and bailey” castles within five miles of Wellow, including Jordan Castle, so the potential for trouble was high. Little wonder then, if the village took its own precautions against attack.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the inhabitants of Wellow were free men, and were regarded as an independent and “disputatious” lot! Whatever the earlier relationship between the monks and the village, during the thirteenth century there was a falling-out about land, which ended in court. The result is not recorded.

There were plenty of established towns by then, but main trading took place at country fairs and markets, and in 1268, permission was given for a market here; the green would have been a ready-made market place. At this time the houses around the green would have been made of mud and clay, with thatched roofs; they would have been poorly furnished, and unkempt outside, but with some gardens and fruit trees. Although conditions would seem primitive to us, England as a whole was doing quite well, with exports of wool and wheat, bringing prosperity, and an increased population. Also inflation, which most of

page 12

us would see as a modern problem. This made life hard for the poor, but some freemen could get on by buying small plots of land. And a village like Wellow should have benefitted from this.

Floods, plague, and pestilence.

If the thirteenth century saw some improvements and advances, the fourteenth century was a terrible time for people living in England. Early in the century, there was a “mini” ice age, when temperatures plummeted. Between 1315 and 1317 there were severe floods, and in 1313 and 1319, sheep and cattle plagues.

Does any of this sound familiar?

The cattle plague also meant that, for the first time, horses had to be used to pull the ploughs in place of oxen.

Adding to the misery came the Black Death in 1348/49, brought in by rats from continental Europe, with more plagues in 1361 and 1368/69. Within a single generation, between one third and one half of the English population was wiped out. Records do not show how all this affected Wellow, so we can only imagine what it must have been like here then, with little medical or financial help. Many villages simply disappeared, wiped out by plague and hardship, but Wellow survived.

Growth and prosperity.

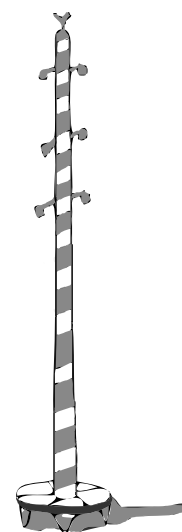
Over the next hundred years, there was a real improvement in living standards for wage labourers, because the Plague had so cut the population that those left could command better wages. Wars still continued, but the fortified castles began to be replaced by country manor houses - and in Wellow the Hall was built, probably some time between 1570 and 1590; (Paul Nuthall, in Wellow News March and April 2000 editions, gave us a potted history of the Hall). By then, Elizabeth 1 was on the throne, and the Hall might have been built as the Spanish Armada sailed against England! Henry VIII, in the first half of that century, had not only seen off five of his six wives but had also dissolved the monasteries - the Abbey at Rufford had been among the first to go in this county, in 1536. So life in and around Wellow had not been dull!

On the land, sheep farming was prospering, and England was exporting cloth, bringing work for the weavers and associated trades. But there was still poverty and want, and because the monks were no longer there to care for the poor, the Poor Laws were introduced.

The reign of Elizabeth 1 brought comparative prosperity, and what passed for peace in those days . It might be reasonable to believe that the Wellow farming community basked in some of the ‘feelgood factor’. And in parts of Nottinghamshire, coal mining, first mentioned in documents of 1282, was really taking off.

Civil War

But within 50 years of Elizabeths’ death in 1603, the Civil War had brought the execution of Charles1, and the country was governed by Parliament, later with Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector. The Civil War affected everyone, and because of divided loyalties between king and Parliament, families were split and friendships broken. Under Cromwell, England was not, it seems, a cheerful place; we don’t know for sure whether our Maypole existed then - but if it did, it would have been chopped down, as the Puritans felt that maypoles were pagan, and ordered them removed . Christmas celebrations were forbidden, alehouses closed, thought to be ‘nests of Satan”, as were race meetings and theatres, and the Sabbath laws strictly enforced. This apparently did not go down too well , and although in the towns and villages, the local ‘bigwigs” tried to propel everyone into church on Sundays, many of the common people preferred to sit at home, as they were forbidden to do anything else.



After Cromwell

For the poor, the return of the monarchy did not improve life - for the rest of the seventeenth century, poverty and want remained. The contrast between rich and poor being so marked, there was, not surprisingly, more than a slight whiff of dissent in the country. To

reduce the possibility of rebellion, many of the activities forbidden under Cromwell were reintroduced, presumably to take the minds of the poor off the fact that they were starving!

The Duke of Newcastle suggested, in a series of notes to the king, that the revival of ‘May games, Morris dances, the Lord of the May, and the Lady of the May, the fool and the Hobby horse, Whitsun Lord and Lady, threshing.....at Shrove Tide, carols and wassails at Christmas, with good plum porridge and pies, would amuse the peoples thoughts and keep them in harmless actions which will free your Majesty from faction and rebellion” Since the above - mentioned Duke of Newcastle actually held land at Wellow, it might be reasonable to assume that we would be somewhere in his field of consideration when these suggestions were put forward - perhaps the freemen of Wellow still had an independent and “disputatious” spirit!

This century also saw, beginning in 1665, the Great Plague, which, like the Black Death of the fourteenth century, took off large numbers of the population, and we know that our area was affected. And at the end of the century too we were still in the throes of yet another war against France.

Towards the present time!

Did you know.....?

That at the end of the seventeenth century, the Government passed a Bill for a £1,000,000.00 (£1million!) National Lottery, with tickets for sale at £10.00 each. Dealers then split the price of the tickets to sell them on.

The eighteenth century onward brings Wellow more within our grasp. Many of the cottages still around the green were built in the 17th and 18th centuries, and the records of that time are more comprehensive, leaving less to the imagination.

Whilst in the rest of Nottinghamshire coal mining, textiles, and ceramics manufacture were industrialising the county, Wellow was still basically a farming community, but with alternative employments

within reach. The village was also very advantageously placed on a main road and about half way between Mansfield and Newark. We know too for certain that by then Wellow Dam existed; this would make the village a convenient watering stop on the way to the livestock markets of Newark and Mansfield - remembering that animals would have to be taken to market on foot, in those days.

Perhaps not only the livestock needed liquid refreshment! Records show that at some point there were five public houses, and a beerhouse in Wellow; two pubs, the Durham Ox, and The Olde Red Lion, (previously The Red Lion Hotel) survive. The other three were the Black Horse, White Horse, and the Live and Let Live, which, sadly, are long gone, with the beerhouse. Perhaps it is worth mentioning that each would be much smaller than pubs today - but still not bad for a village! Whites Directory of 1864 records that in the past, one occupation within the village had been the cultivation of hops, although this had come to an end by the time the entry was made.

Did you know.....?

Both our local pubs are said to be haunted; the Durham Ox by an old lady accidentally run down by a bolting horse, and the Red Lion by the spirits (no pun intended!) of a young lad drowned in the cellar well, and of a former customer.

Religion played a strong part in the life of the village, and during the nineteenth century in addition to St Swithins, the village had two Methodist chapels, one on the green, and one on Billet Lane; these eventually amalgamated, but the remaining chapel on the green became a private home in 1987.

Although farming was the mainstay, other trades grew up in Wellow, and the Census of 1851 gives an interesting insight into the range of occupations here; in particular, there was a thriving chairmaking

industry. Examples of the chairs still survive, but the industry itself had petered out by 1885.

The census also shows that out of a total population of 597, 109 were children. Not surprising then, that the village needed its own school, and this was provided in 1855 by the Duke of Newcastle, who gave the schoolhouse premises, which still exist, to the village. The care and custody of the building was given in trust to the Minister and Churchwardens of St. Swithins, and this arrangement still stands.

Unusually, too, the village had its own hospital for a while, in a part of Wellow Hall; Whites Directory of 1864 records that it was set up in 1842, for the benefit of the sick and lame poor, and included a dispensary for out-patients. The hospital closed for lack of support; the year of closure is not known, but the Directory entry of 1885 states it had been closed ‘for many years’.

Did you know.....?

That the first amputation of a limb under hypnosis is reputed to have been carried out at the Wellow Hall Hospital.

At the end of this article, a list of occupations and the numbers involved gives some idea of the diversity within the village, and it also reflects something of the way life was lived then - look, for instance, at the number of house servants, and similar jobs, indications of wealth within the village. Then look at the number of ‘paupers’, collectors of rags and bones, etc. to view the other end of the social scale! Not to say, of course, that just because all these people lived in Wellow that they all necessarily worked here; but travelling being what it was, it is likely that most did in fact serve their own community and the immediate area. And imagine, with all those children within the village - what occasions the feasts, fairs, and Maypole days must have been. And what games down by the Dam!

The breaking up of the Rufford Estate.

IN THE DUKERIES
Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire Borders.
Between Nottingham and Doncaster, Mansfield, Newark-upon-Trent, Retford and Worksop.

Particulars and Conditions of Sale
OF THE
RUFFORD ABBEY
ESTATE
extending to over
15,500 acres
including the historic
RUFFORD ABBEY
dating from the XIIth Century
RUFFORD PARK, and many FARMS, SMALL HOLDINGS,
RESIDENCES, BUSINESS PREMISES, COTTAGES and
BUILDING SITES
in and about the Villages of
Ollerton, Eakring, Bilsthorpe, Boughton, Wellow,
Ompton, Egmanston and Walesby.

To be offered for Sale by Auction in Lots by
Messrs. KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY
(A. J. Burrows, F.S.I., F.P.A.I.; W. Gibson, D.S.O., F.S.I.; G. M. Cannon; A. J. Baker, F.S.I., F.A.I.; M. Mackenzie (U.S.A.), and E. Fisher.)

At Rufford Abbey as follows:
On Tuesday, the 22nd day of November, 1938, and three following days at 10.30 a.m.
and 2.0 p.m. sharp, each day.
The actual division of the Sessions will be announced later.
(Unless previously disposed of privately).

Solicitors: Messrs. WITHERS & CO., Howard House, 4, Arundel Street, London, W.C.2.
(Tel.: Temple Bar 2965.)
Messrs. J. A. SIMPSON & COULBY, 12, Victoria Street, Nottingham. (Tel.: Nottingham 2811.)
Auctioneers: Messrs. KNIGHT, FRANK & RUTLEY, 20, Hanover Square, London, W.1.
(Tel.: Mayfair 3771.)
And at the Rufford Estate Office, Ollerton, Notts. (Tel.: Edwinstowe 27.)
Refreshments will be available at Rufford Abbey on each day of the Sale.

Until 1938, most property in Wellow belonged to the Rufford Estate, and was let on tenancies, but in November of that year, the whole estate was sold off; the extent of that sale, and its impact on the village can be imagined by looking at the volume of properties on the market. The sale was brought about by death duties levied on the Savile family, but it must have been a difficult experience for long term residents in the village, and several homes were bought by newcomers.

From then to now.

The year after the sale saw the outbreak of the Second World War, and as the Roll of Honour shows, the people of Wellow played their part, as they had in the First War.

In the years between the end of the war and the present, farming has continued to play a part in the life of the village; the other trades prevalent in the previous century have largely gone, though, and Wellow is now mainly a place to live rather than live and work. People who have been here for many years recall a very different lifestyle to that of today - and we are lucky that their memories are still fresh, and are shared with us through, for instance, our village magazine. To get a flavour of how things were, one only has to talk to some of the lifelong residents, or reread Wellow News!

We still celebrate the traditions of the community through the year, especially on Maypole Day; this booklet does not deal in detail with those celebrations, because the Maypole Committee later this year will be producing their own account of the Maypole story.

As a community we saw the arrival of the new Millennium together, with a variety of activities - and, as lasting reminders, have the beautiful church window, and the millennium garden. And who knows what the next thousand years will bring!

Wellow Census 1851 - occupations

Farm/Agricultural labs.	81	Beerhouse Keeper	1
Scholars	109	Victuallers	3
School mistresses	2	Saddler	1
Pupil teacher	1	Saddlers App.	1
Farmers	15	Brickmakers	4
Chairmakers	14	Woodman	1
Chair bottomers	3	Letter Carrier	1
Chair polisher	1	Carriers	2
Chair grainer	1	Paupers	13
Chair lab.	1	Huntsman	1
Cabinet makers	3	Colls. of rags and bones	3
Wood turners	2	Surgeons	2
Joiners	2	Nurse	1
Joiners Lab.	1	Medicine dispenser	1
Carpenter	1	Governess	1
Furniture Broker	1	Basket Maker	1
Furn.Brok. Apprentices	2	Drainer of land	1
Wheelwrights	2	Malsters lab.	1
Wheelwr. Apprentice	1	Visitors	12
Sawyers	2		
Tailors	3		
Drapers	3		
Dressmakers	2	Wellow Green/Crow Lane	
Laundresses	2		
House Servants	18	Agricultural Labs.	8
Gents Servant	1	Scholars	13
Coachmen	2	Brickmakers	2
Gardeners	3	Brickmaker (ret).	1
Valet	1	Road Labourer	1
Grocers	4	Pauper	1
Butchers	5	Blacksmith	1
Cordwainers	5	School Teacher (ret).	1
Cord Apprentice	1	Wood Hearer	1

Common Land and the Toftholders of Wellow

All common land is private property - it can be owned by a Lord of the Manor, a Local Authority, the National Trust, or some other public body - but it is called common land because, regardless of who owns it, some others, (not necessarily everyone in a community), have rights over it which cannot be interfered with.

Wellow, with over forty acres of common land is second only to Southwell as the largest common land acreage north of Watford.

In Wellow, the common land comprises Cocking Moor, Cocking Moor Lane, the Parish Pound, Wellow Green, Grimston Green, Town Green, and some land known as “wast” (usually roadside edges) - and Wellow Dam.

Wellow common rights belong to the toftholders - a toft was a household, usually a cottage with a small piece of land attached to it, and the establishment of the commons dates back to the Feudal System when the landowners (Lords of the Manor) gave their commoners rights over some parts of their land . It has to be said that the land involved tended not to be the best bits!

Although some of the original cottages are gone, replaced by others, the rights remain - which is why, although it is mostly the people in the older properties who retain toft rights, some newer places built later on the same sites also share them. The number of people with toft rights has changed over the years, as large properties were divided into smaller dwellings, or as more than one cottage was put together to make one large one.

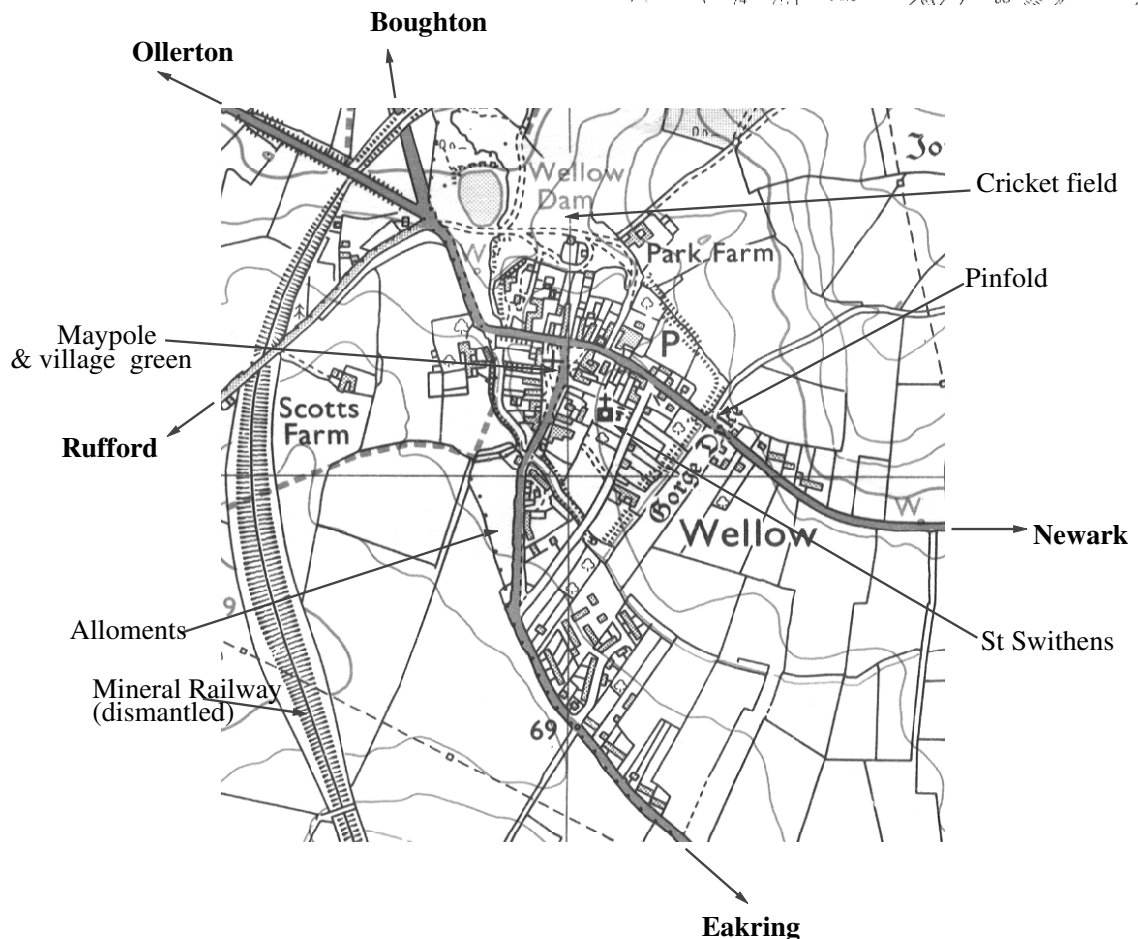
In 1967/68 a national exercise was carried out to get the “rights of common” registered; in Wellow, the toftholders registered their rights, but sadly, nationally, many rightholders did not, resulting in the loss of large areas of land as commons.

The toft rights in Wellow allow for the pasturing of animals by toftholders on the spaces named above - not whole herds, but specific numbers, depending on the type of animal!

Now you may be thinking that its' a long while since you've seen any of the toftholders grazing sheep, cows, or anything else, come to that, on the Green! And you would, of course, be correct! But having the right to do that, rather than actually doing it is one of the things which protects the green space for us all. Whilst these rights are guarded, the open spaces around the village should be safe. And although we accept that we all live in the 21st century not the 18th, we would be the poorer if the common land was lost, or allowed to become derelict.

The toftholders, therefore, do not own the land, but do, through a committee, look after it, and try to keep it well - maintained. The money for this comes mainly from the fees paid by the Fishing Club, and their contribution is used for getting the greens mowed, and for general maintenance. So Wellow Dam is a valuable asset to the community, not just for its own sake, but as a source of income which lets us carry out maintenance work elsewhere in the village.

Maps of 1900 and the present day; these illustrate the effect of the building of the railway in the 1920' s, resulting in some loss of common land.

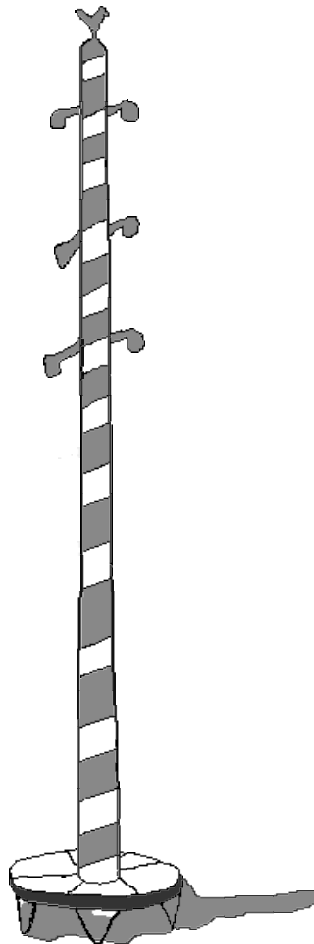




Wellow Dam



St Swithins Church, Wellow



The Durham Ox



The Olde Red Lion

Acknowledgements

Local Sources, written and verbal (alphabetical order)

Mrs B.Barratt
Mr D.Crooks
Mrs M.Lees
Mr G.W.Ragsdale
Red Lion (display folder)
A short history of the Parish of Wellow
Wellow News (March/April 2000)
(articles on Wellow Hall by Paul Nuthall)

Donors of materials to the project

John Parker
Thoresby Colliery Angling Club
John Vann (Maypole Consultancy)
Members of Wellow Toftholders and Owners Committee
(Apologies to anyone who may have donated materials after this
booklet went to print).

Research visits

Nottinghamshire Archaeologist
Nottinghamshire Archives
Nottingham University Library
New Ollerton Library

Bibliography - authors by alphabetical order

Cistercian land clearances in Nottinghamshire - three deserted villages
and their moated successor - M.W.Barley
A social history of England - Asa Briggs
Fishponds - English Heritage
Ghosts and legends of Nottinghamshire - David Haslam
A History of Nottinghamshire - David Kaye
Conservation in Nottinghamshire - Wellow -NCC Planning Dept
Nottinghamshire Curiosities - Geoffrey Oldfield
Book of British villages - Readers Digest
English villages - Shell

Booklet cover

The cover of this booklet was drawn specially for the project by well -
known local artist and
musician Graham Laughton.

Graham has his studio in Patchings Farm Art Centre at Calverton
Nottingham, and can be
contacted on 0115 - 9653479.

