

Wherwell

Anthology VIII



(Courtesy Andover Advertiser)

Mr. Lawrie McMenemy at the opening of the Brecknock Sports Area.

Wherwell Playing Field Sports & Fete Programme

August 31st, 1981

Admission Free

Field Opens 1.45 p.m.



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OPENING OF THE BRECKNOCK SPORTS AREA

The evening of the 10th February, 1981 was a memorable one for the Wherwell Playing Field Committee. It marked the opening of "The Brecknock Sports Area" by Laurie McMenemy, manager of Southampton Football Club.

The hard surface, floodlit playing area was the result of years of hard work from dedicated committee members and is a facility without equal for any village of similar size. It is named after Marjorie, Countess of Brecknock, D.B.E., who, with typical generosity, gave the land, and who braved a bitterly cold night to be present at the opening.

The photograph on the cover of this anthology shows Laurie McMenemy shaking hands with Ian Ransom, mascot of Wherwell Football Club before the 'kick off' for the "Ernie Rowles five-a-side Invitation Trophy". The trophy was named after Mr. Rowles for the tremendous contribution that he made to the scheme and he had the added bonus of seeing it won by the Wherwell 1st Team.

The opening was attended by many well known personalities from the 'Football World' including Ted Bates, Laurie's predecessor at 'The Dell', Nigel Bird, assistant secretary to Ted Croker, The Football Association, Lancaster Gate, London and Jack Barter, President, Hampshire Football Association. All attended a celebration supper held in the village hall, where, after the meal, Laurie McMenemy presented the trophies.

Finance for the area, which is now in constant use for football and tennis, was raised by the Playing Field Committee. The major part of which, came from the Football Ground Improvement Trust.

Wherwell can be justifiably proud of its Sports Area.

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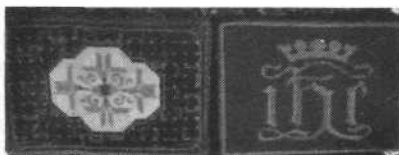
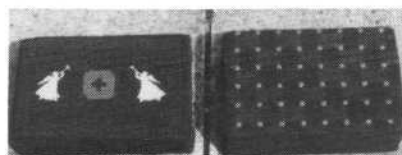
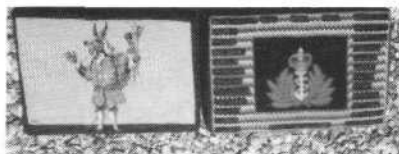
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WHERWELL CHURCH EMBROIDERIES

I think it was in 1968 that Mr. & Mrs. Rowley Taitt embarked on the working of kneelers for the Communion Rail. She was the artist and I imagine the colours were her choice: the background blue and other colours all taken from the Victorian chancel windows. But it was he who planned the variety of stitches and was the architect of the designs in the "Winchester" tradition. He was also, even after his illness, the best embroiderer of the group they asked to join them in the work: Lady Orde, Mrs. Thrupp, Mrs. Vaughan and Mrs. Makin.

Because of the enthusiasm by the success of this work a small committee was formed after Rowley's death in 1969 to organise the working of new kneelers for all the centre of the Nave. Lady Orde and Mrs. Makin visited several churches such as Meonstoke and Corhampton, Ellingham and Abbots Ann, and decided that a simple basic lattice pattern would be a suitable overall design to suggest for work which we very much hoped would be shared by everyone in the village. Mrs. Vaughan volunteered to embroider the design of Lady Brecknock's kneelers which she wished to be the St John's Cross on a blue ground. Mrs. Vaughan was also given by her cousin the collection of designs for the tops of kneelers that had been used in Marlborough Parish Church.

A meeting was called — the first of many happy working parties at Mrs. Vaughan's Old Rectory of almost all the ladies in the village who were prepared to take a canvas and try their hand. And the decision was taken that kneelers for the Nave should be basically dark red to match the chancel curtains and create a warmth of welcome to the Church. People chose one of the designs prepared, and worked with either fine crewel wool or coarser Wilton carpet wools, supplied by The Committee.

We completed 100 Nave kneelers by 1976 when they were dedicated and blessed by The Bishop of Winchester, The Rt. Rev. Faulkner Alison. Special mention should be made not only of Lady Brecknock's pew but of the work of Lady Tuke for her father-in-law's pew when he was Warden of Winchester College. Lady Orde worked a special kneeler for the Sanctuary; Mrs. Prince a beautiful small pad for the Bishop's pri-dieu, and Mrs. Hopkins a special naval kneeler for her husband's pew with the names of all the ships on which he had served worked round the naval crest.

But while the slow workers were still struggling to finish their first piece of work, others were finding the work relaxing and rewarding and were launching into bigger and more ambitious projects. Some started on seats for the nave pews, again of two different designs, but basically red; while choir members turned to the choir children's kneelers and cushions which it was decided should be on a dark gold ground brightened again by the primary colours.

The design for the kneelers was taken from a Roman mosaic pavement and the seat cushions from an old stole pattern suggested by a visit to St. David's Cathedral in Pembrokeshire (Powys) and their beautiful embroideries. These use church symbols of great significance besides the various forms of the Cross, we had already used: The Circle symbolising Eternity and three interesting circles which represent the Trinity. Symbols used in the Nave designs were, The Cup and Bread, The Fish (especially suitable in the Test Valley), the keys of St. Peter and also the ship. The Church is dedicated to St. Peter and Holy Cross.

Just at this time, we heard of a much grander enterprise of the same sort at Hexham Abbey, Northumberland, and were kindly lent one of their designs which immediately appealed to us for use with the Wilton wool and courser canvas.

And Mr. Percy Thomas had joined the band of enthusiastic Nave workers and outworked us all by completing nine seats, including the long seat behind the Font, as well as ten kneelers.

Lady Orde, who had become keeper and supplier of canvases and wools, found she was also left with the unenviable work of stretching and making up canvases, except when she enlisted the invaluable work of Mr. Brown of Andover. He was a most important and understanding professional assistant in all our 'finishing' and we hope that as we complete our final undertaking of backs for the choir seats, alternating heraldic and floral, based on Winchester Cathedral designs, he will continue to mount them with his professional skill.

Many thanks to everyone who has continued with one skill or another to furnish and beautify our Church.

Mary Makin.

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CORNFIELD

In the still, cool grey mist, of a summer's early morn
Droplets collect, upon silken threads, between the stems of corn.
Poppies still slumber, enfolded in their emerald gowns.
Bumble bees stir from their sleep upon the cornflower crowns.
Convolvulus, white and pink entwined, awaiting the warm sun.
Nearer the earth tiny wild pansy and scarlet pimpernel run.
The whispering breeze stirs, to gently nudge the sleepers awake.
The first ray catches the dew, shimmering diamonds to make.
Kissed by the sun the flowers unfold and hold their heads high,
The golden corn crackles, stretches and climbs for the blue sky.

Jeffrey Rowles.



Church St. early 20th century.

THE ABBEY AND CHURCH STREET

Before the Abbey was built in 983 a.d. Werwell probably consisted of a few agricultural settlements, not as we know the village to-day. When building started the craftsmen and labourers employed by Queen Elfrida would have settled as near their work as possible. The area, now known as Church Street would be where they made their homes. Throughout the years that the Nuns dwelt in the Abbey there would be maintenance work to do and no doubt some tradesmen made a good living by supplying the Nuns and the villagers with some of their needs.

The Superior of the Benedictine Nunnery was Lady of the Manor, she owned the whole village and social life was centred around and largely depended upon the Abbey.

By the time the present Priory was built in the eighteenth century there was virtually nothing left of Elfrida's original buildings, though a few pieces of masonry have been found in the gardens and some of the stonework is believed to have been used to repair the old Saxon Church which was destroyed by fire in the middle of the 19th century.

There is still plenty of evidence of those who lived and died in the Abbey as the Nuns' graveyard occupied part of the present gardens, and when the ground is disturbed by digging, human bones are frequently revealed and some whole skeletons have also been found; pieces of tessellated tiles and a number of oyster shells add to the discoveries. Even more interesting is a large bronze key, seven inches long and as thick as a man's finger. As it was found about three feet down in a meadow near the present Priory, it is possible that it once belonged to the Abbey.

In Church street, when the excavations were made for main drainage, it was necessary to dig down eight feet under the river and large blocks of masonry, some decorated with scrolls, had to be drilled out.

These stones were found four to five feet down all the way from the river to the churchyard, perhaps they could once have been part of the Abbey. Subsequently it seems that they were used to ford the river and to make a hard foundation for the road beyond.

By the water the peat layer was at least six feet deep, exposing iris plants and seeds all the way down to the bottom of the trench; it must have taken centuries to reach to-day's level.

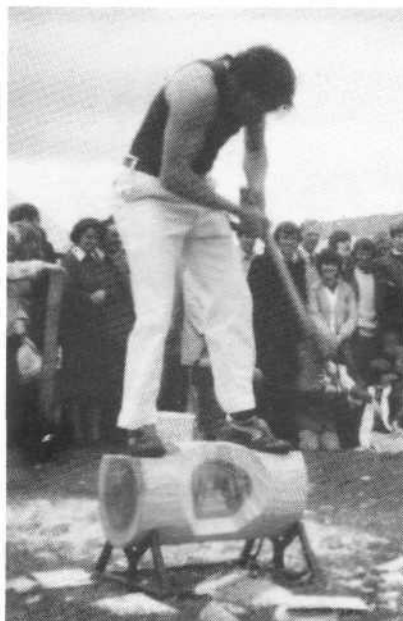
During the same excavation a number of post-holes, some with the actual posts still in place, were revealed about six feet down and were thought to be the remains of mediaeval houses. More recently other cottages have been pulled down but the Ordnance Survey Map of 1871 shows them still standing, occupying the whole length of Church street.

There is a wide gap between numbers 27 and 28 on the west side and I have been told it used to be a footpath to a barn behind the Mill, down which the villagers carried their tithes.

Other interesting objects found during the digging included a Roman anvil, of the type carried by Roman legions during their military exploits in Britain. A small bronze plaque inscribed in latin, possibly belonging to a bracelet, two skulls and a rusty sword were all thought to be Roman, though this is not confirmed. An eighteenth century pewter measure was also found and is now in the County Museum at Chilworth.

There must be much more history under Church Street for future generations to discover.

Jeanne M. Nolder.



Mid-Wales Axe Racing Team

PROGRAMME OF SPORTS TO BE HELD ON THE SUMMER BANK HOLIDAY, MONDAY, AUGUST 31st 1981

Field Opens 1.45 p.m.

1. Men, 14 and over: 100 metres	2.00
2. Boys and Girls, 5, 6, 7: 60 metres	2.05
3. Toddlers, 1, 2, 3, 4: 25 metres	2.10
4. Boys and Girls, 8, 9, 10: 60 metres Sack Race	2.15
5. Ladies 15 and over: 25 metres Egg and Spoon	2.21
6. Super Sports Star 100 metres (on running track)	2.26
7. Boys and Girls, 11, 12, 13, 14: 60 metres Sack Race	2.30
8. Boys and Girls, 5, 6, 7: 60 metres Sack Race	2.36
9. Boys and Girls, 8, 9, 10: 60 metres 3 Legged	2.42
10. Boys and Girls, 11, 12, 13, 14: 200 metres	2.48
11. Super Sports Star Penalty Competition (at goal near end)	2.53
12. Men, 15 and over: Sack Race, 100 metres	2.53
13. Ladies, 15 and over: Flower Pot Race, 25 metres	2.58
14. Boys and Girls up to 15: Pick-a-back, 60 metres	3.03
15. Toddlers Boys and Girls, 1, 2, 3, 4: 25 metres	3.08
16. Boys and Girls, 5, 6, 7: 3 legged, 60 metres	3.13

17. Super Sports Star, Running Ball (on running track)	3.19
18. Mid-Wales Axe Racing Team Demonstration	3.25
19. Boys and Girls, 8, 9, 10: 100 metres	4.00
20. Super Sports Star, Longest Throw (at goal near end)	4.00
21. Men 15 and over: 200 metres	4.05
22. Ladies 15 and over: Sack Race, 60 metres	4.10
23. Boys and Girls, 5, 6, 7: Obstacle Race, 100 metres	4.15
24. Boys and Girls, 8, 9, 10: Obstacle Race, 100 metres	4.22
25. Boys and Girls, 11, 12, 13, 14: Obstacle Race, 100 metres	4.29
26. Men, 15 and over: Obstacle Race, 100 metres	4.35
27. Ladies, 15 and over: Obstacle Race, 100 metres	4.41
28. Men over 40: 100 metres	4.47
29. Ladies over 40: 60 metres	4.52
30. Super Sports Star, Target Shooting	4.52
31. Boys and Girls up to 15: (Handicap) 100 metres	4.57
32. Boys and Girls, 11, 12, 13, 14: 3 legged, 100 metres	5.02
33. Final Axe Racing Demonstration	5.06
34. Super Sports Star: 1 mile, (on running track)	5.36
35. Penalty King Finals	5.45
36. Tug of War, Presentation of Prizes, Grand Draw	

GRAND DRAW

Sideshow — Skittles — Tombola — Trampolines — etc.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wherwell Playing Field Committee wish to thank all who have contributed to this Anthology.

Mrs. Jeanne Nolder Mrs. Mary Makin Mr. Jeffrey Rowles
Mrs. Sally Chetwyn Mrs. Joan Morgan

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TOLLGATE COTTAGE

WHERWELL TOLL ROAD

The Romans, who built such splendid roads in this country, had no form of toll charges on their roads, but raised the necessary money by general and what we would term, county rates, so nothing changes! After they left the country deterioration soon began and by the 17th Century the roads were in a very bad state with enormous pot holes in them, large enough, it was said, to swallow an ox! They had become just muddy cart tracks, virtually impassable in winter.

Road making with good solid foundations as we know it today, did not come into existence until the early 1800's, when the work of Telford's and McAdam's improvements was put into operation, they worked on exactly the same principle as the Roman road builders.

During the time of the great lords of the manor, he was responsible for the upkeep of the roads in his area, this included the costs and the labour from his own workforce, but this duty later fell on the parish as the power of the manor declined, but the work was still carried out by local people who had no real knowledge of road maintenance.

As traffic increased, Parliament decided that something must be done to raise more money and introduced the system of turnpike roads to assist the various parishes maintain their local roads and so Turnpike Trusts were set up by Act of Parliament, whereby Investors were invited to lend money on interest usually 4 or 5%.

The very first tollgate was at Wades Mill in 1665, to raise the necessary money for repairs to the very heavily travelled Great North Road.

The Trustees themselves, fixed the rate of charges on their particular road and appointed a surveyor, usually a local man, to keep his eye on the repair work. They were also responsible for hiring the necessary labour, although local people were expected to give four days labour a year and local landowners were expected to provide materials such as stones, gravel, sand, free of charge for the upkeep of the road.

One duty the surveyor had to carry out was to see that people living beside the road did not steal the materials collected for repairs, or dump rubbish on the road!

The Tollgate Keepers were also elected by the Trustees and lived in the houses provided alongside the Gate, they were expected to keep full records of all the tolls paid, so must have been men able to read and write in an age when many could not.

By 1750, most main roads out of London had been turnpiked and by about 1830 the country, as a whole, had a very extensive network of turnpike roads covering over 20,000 miles controlled by over one thousand trusts and raising about £1½ million of toll receipts each year. A very substantial sum of money. The County of Hampshire raised £25,813 in the year 1837.

After 1850 the revenue from tolls began to decline owing to the coming of the Railway network, which took on a great deal of the goods traffic, previously handled by road transport and the gates were gradually abolished, the last one being in 1895 in North Wales.

The turnpike from Andover to Winchester was governed by the 'Andover, Winchester and Andover District Trust' and opened in 1762. It reached from Andover to the present roundabout at the top of Three Maids Hill, where it joined the Winchester to Newbury turnpike road. It covered a distance of 14 miles which included a branch road from Winchester Corner (Beech trees) to the Mayfly public house at Fullerton, where it joined the Chilbolton to Stockbridge road, which was never turnpiked.

There were three gates or bars on the road, the chief one of them being at Wherwell, where the house known as Tollgate Cottage was built for the purpose of accommodating the Keeper. Many Toll Houses had a set of steps beside the gate to enable the keeper to mount up on a level with the cart drivers and horse riders for the easier acceptance of the toll fee and it would appear that Wherwell toll house was built up on the bank purposely, for this same reason as the road is rather narrow at that point and falls sharply away to the river on the other side, allowing room for only the gate itself.

Further along the road in the Winchester direction at Butchers Corner, are the remains of a gravel pit, now very overgrown, obviously used to provide gravel for the maintenance of the road across the low lying marshy land between the corner and Wherwell, which must have been very boggy at all times of the year.

The local Trustees raised the sum of £594 at 4½% interest but the returns from the tolls were rather poor and it seems that it never really paid its way throughout its hundred years of existence up to 1850.

Unfortunately the Trust Records appear to be lost and so it is not possible to list the Trustees but they would have been the local landowners living along the route of the road in all probability. Also the date of closure is not certain but it was still in operation in the 1850s.

On the Romsey to Stockbridge road the toll charges were 4½d. old money, per horse or other beast, presumably oxen, drawing any carriage or cart and 1½d not drawing, in other words, riders. No toll was levied on dog carts or goat carts and persons were allowed to return toll free, so obviously toll users must have been issued with a ticket which would have to be shown on the return journey. No doubt the tolls at Wherwell were much the same as those above.

A John Smith was the Gate Keeper in 1844 and he was required to pay half a crown church tithe fee for the cottage and garden, as his name appears on the Tithe Map record for that year, which covers all the houses in Wherwell and surrounding district.

There are still tolls on two public roads in Hampshire, one on the new Itchen Bridge over the river at Woolston and the other at Eling Causeway, Southampton, a very old one still in use for the upkeep of the causeway damming back the Bartley Creek Water to provide power for the Eling Tide Mill which has been restored to full working order.

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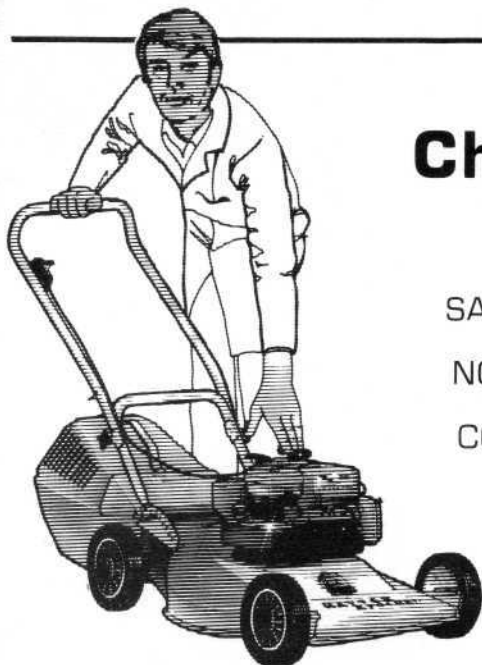
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