

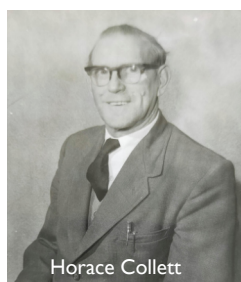
Wolvercote – a place to settle?

Wolvercote
Commoners'
NEWSLETTER
September 2021

Wolvercote is the kind of place where it's easy to feel at home very quickly and, before you know it, you feel like a long-term resident. However, there are families in the village whose roots go back many generations, one such family being the Colletts. Thomas Collett (1784-1860) moved here in about 1800 and the family has lived here ever since. If you walk the Common regularly, you will probably have seen the boundary marker, which marked the Common and Meadow boundary after the infamous battle of Wolvercote (1892). Daniel Augustus Collett, the then chairman of the Parish Council, was just one of the many Colletts in the village.



Mr & Mrs Daniel Collett



Horace Collett



Another family member who saw many changes in his life was Horace James Collett (1904-1975). Horace, started work at the Wolvercote Paper Mill (now the Cala Homes site) in 1917 and, luckily for us, he recorded a memoir* of his time there. He started work aged only 13, staying 51 years until his retirement in 1968. When he started he worked a 12-hour day for 5 shillings (25 pence) a week. In those days the Mill was a dark and dismal place, lit by gas light. He related stories about when a house martin swooped in for a drink causing a hole in the sheet. On another occasion a fish got sucked into the water intake stopping the machines working (in those days they took untreated water straight from the river for the beaters). At 14 he began

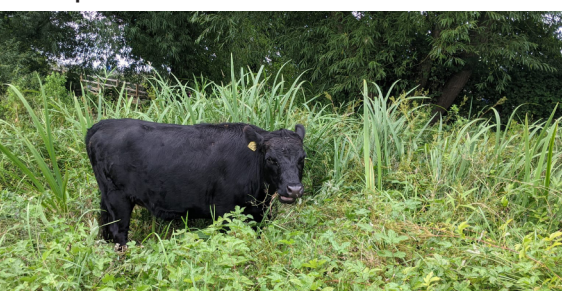
working the night shift on the paper cutter – how different from the lives of 14-year-olds today! Friday night at the Mill was bath night – very few homes in Wolvercote had baths, and the men on night shift took it in turns to bath in an iron box on the site.

Over the years Horace worked his way up, eventually becoming personnel manager, and retiring after 51 years at the Mill. He witnessed many changes, from the water wheel to computerised electronics, but would probably be amazed by the more recent transformation from Victorian paper mill to modern housing, which even has a Collett Drive! Horace's family have remained in Wolvercote and provide an important link to the village of previous eras, via passed-down memories and documents. Long may that last!

* For those who would like to read the complete Memoir it can be found at www.wolvercotecommoners.co.uk

The changing face of Wolvercote Green

The year's cycle goes full circle as Wolvercote Green gets its new residents. In a previous edition of the newsletter we wrote about the regimen of 'aftermath grazing' which helps the natural balance of the area to be maintained. So it's great to see the cattle out there doing their work. It was difficult this year to keep to the normal cutting routine because of the rain.



However, the farmer who cuts our hay for us had his hands full this year having to make more than the usual visits to turn the hay to prevent it rotting. It worked out in the end as the hay dried in time and was baled ready for winter feeding.



Missing Newsletters!

If the person who keeps removing the newsletters from our notice boards, would like their own copy, we can happily send you one. All you have to do is send an email request to the Commoners' email address (see below). We will add you to our mailing list ensuring that a copy will reach you each month.

If you would like this Newsletter emailed to you please email wolvercote.commoners@yahoo.co.uk

Don't forget Village Work Mornings second Saturday of every month

Meet outside the Village Hall at 10am (bring garden gloves, wellies and any gardening tools you have). Children welcome



www.wolvercotecommoners.co.uk – wolvercote.commoners@yahoo.co.uk

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