

WHITLOCK ITINERARY

Over the past couple of years I have been asked on several occasions to put together an itinerary for persons from America visiting England and wishing to visit some of the places connected with the Whitlock family. As there is a good chance the huge Virginia families are likely descended from the Whitlocks of Wokingham I had suggested a route taking in several of the places around London where this family lived.

When Susan and I were in England this summer we decided to try our own itinerary. We visited several places on the list and added a couple more. Sara Smith from Oxford, Mississippi was also in London and Marianne Whitlock of Essex joined us as well.

We also experienced driving in and out of London four times that day!! We met Sara & Marianne at Sara's apartment near Victoria Station and headed for the area surrounding Henley, Oxfordshire. We made our way to Fawley in Buckinghamshire about 4 miles from Henley. We had arranged to meet with two of the Churchwardens at Fawley. They were there when we arrived and kindly conducted an extremely interesting tour of the church.

They brought us up to date on the state of the Whitlock memorial and the fund raising activities that we had contributed towards. The tour was very informative and we really appreciated the efforts the parish council has gone to restore and repair this church that has such significance to the Whitlock family. The fund raising continues and the Whitlock Memorial is second on the list following the Freeman Memorial. With the repairs to the roof the Whitlock memorial is stable and despite its 363 years will easily withstand the wait until the repairs can commence. It was interesting to note that sometime in the past the centre alabaster statue had been removed and replaced with the huge plaster coat of arms. A point we had not noticed previously. On a sad note we were advised the wooden falcon that was on the wall next to the memorial has been stolen. A very interesting tour.

From Fawley we backtracked to Henley and had lunch at the Bell Inn. This 600 year old inn mentioned in Bulstrode Whitelocke's Diaries and was part of his estate when he died in 1675. At the local tourist information centre we discovered Fawley Court was open to the public that day. We first went to Phyllis Court which had been the home of Bulstrode's son William. Phyllis Court is now a private club with building dating from the late 1700's. All that remains of the old moated Tudor house that William Whitelocke lived in is the bricks. When the house was dismantled the bricks were used to make a wall along the Thames river. The location is directly opposite the finishing line of the Royal Henley Regatta. So if you see the race, the bricks you can see on the opposite bank are Whitlock bricks!!

The weather was sunny and very warm and we headed back to the car along a shaded walkway bordering part of what was likely part of the original moat. We then headed for Fawley Court, a few hundred yards along the Thames. You enter the property along a long sweeping tree lined driveway emerging into a green park-like setting. Fawley Court is beautifully proportioned mansion, red brick with white stone trim. We were met in the foyer by a guide. We were the only visitors at that time so started right into the tour. As with Phyllis Court the original moated Tudor house was gone but in this case it had been replaced in the 1680's with a new Manor House designed by Sir Christopher Wren. The ceilings and decorations are by Grinling Gibbons and James Wyatt and are some of the finest examples of these two artists' work. The Manor is now a Polish Museum so each room was packed with items of significance to the history of Poland. The Wren house had been terraced so the original ground floor of the old Tudor House now appears as the basement. There are several rooms on this floor and we were interested to learn that while the previous house was Tudor this part of the house was much older and reflected the

Norman origins of the first Manor. We felt the stone and brick floors in this part of the house would have been recognised by Sir James Whitlock (1570-1632) had he returned to his home. We learned a great deal about the Polish cause but discovering the original ground floor rooms of Fawley Court remain unchanged had to be the highlight of the visit.

We were able to give our tour guide an additional Polish connection to add to his repertoire as Sir James Whitlock's brother Richard Whitlock (1565-1624) had gone to Poland in 1580 and had sent his son James Whitlock (b.1601) to this house to live with his Uncle and be educated in England.

We headed back to London somewhat exhausted but I think each of us took away some new understanding of our connection to these places and this family.