

In the footprints of Mary Hardy

A village trail to accompany Open Churches Week

Whissonett, Norfolk NR20 5AP

5–11 August 2013

This trail enables visitors to take a self-guided tour around Whissonett village centre.

A map (back page) gives ten numbered sites associated with the Norfolk diarist Mary Hardy, whose Whissonett connections are being celebrated in an exhibition in the church every day in Open Churches Week 10 am–4 pm.

Posters and leaflets on display in the church give details of the special events. These include a talk (on 7 August at 2 pm) by Margaret Bird, whose edition of the complete 500,000-word text of the diary was published in April 2013; also an organ recital (on 10 August at 2 pm) by Margaret Vincent, with music of the diarist's period.

These websites give more details:

www.whissonett.com/events

maryhardysdiary.co.uk/news-events

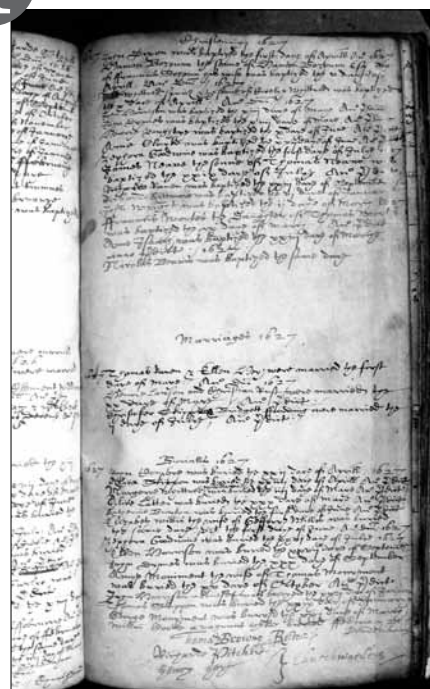
(right) The diarist and brewer's wife Mary Hardy in 1785, aged 51. She was born Mary Raven at Whissonett in 1733, was baptised and married in this church, and died at Letheringsett, near Holt, in 1809. [Cozens-Hardy Collection]



- 1 The trail begins in the heart of the village at the parish church of St Mary the Virgin.



1



(far left) Whissonett Church from the south. There was no village rectory in Mary Hardy's time.

At the top of the tower, just under the parapet, a date stone records its repair by Mary Hardy's father Robert Raven and his fellow churchwarden William Skinner in 1748.

(left) The earliest parish register, showing the first Raven recorded in the village: Thomas Raven married Ellen Heye here on 1 May 1627.

Some of the early parish registers are on display in the church, on loan from the Norfolk Record Office.



2

2 After seeing the exhibition in the church you can explore the churchyard. In the south-east corner, near the yew trees, lie many of Mary Hardy's close relatives: her father Robert Raven, whose death and burial the diarist describes in 1778; her mother Mary Fox, who died in 1751, with a long poem on the headstone addressed to her grieving husband; and Mary Hardy's brothers, sisters-in-law, nieces, nephews and cousins.

(left) The ornate headstone to Mary Hardy's brother Nathaniel Raven (d.1799) and his wife Ann Fox (d.1827). Like all the Whissonsett relations they feature prominently in the diary.

He was the village grocer, and Mary Hardy was always at ease in shopkeeping circles.

His wife was also his first cousin, from a shopkeeping family at Brisley, a village east of Whissonsett. Her mother and brother Margery and Thomas Fox ran the grocery there.

(left) The leafy Church Lanes run along the west and north sides of the church.

Leave the churchyard and head east along the northern of the Church Lanes into New Road. Turn right for Nathaniel and Ann Raven's home.



2

3 On the east side of New Road, facing a belt of trees, is Church Farm. This was the home of Mary Hardy's grandparents Henry and Rose Raven, and of her uncle, brother and nephew all named Nathaniel Raven.

4 Against the road, to the left of the front door, stood their village grocery, drapery and chandlery.

(right) The house now called Church Farm, but known to Mary Hardy as 'The Shop'. She often stayed here; also with her father and other brother at Whissonsett Hall (no. 8) and with her sister Phillis Goggs and her family at their Hamrow farm (no. 10).

In the diary Mary Hardy calls her old home 'The Malthouse' (no. 6 on the map).

3



5 Head south, and turn right into the High Street. Walk past the church (on your right) and past the former Swan—one of three public houses in Mary Hardy's time.

6 At the corner by London Street is the long house known in the 18th century as Gurneys, where Mary Hardy spent her childhood. One of its pantiles bears her father's initials and the date 1766. He was a maltster here, later moving to the Hall to join his son Robert.



7 Across the road is the site of the windmill owned briefly by Mary Hardy's father.

8 We pause at the start of the private drive to the Hall, where the Ravens were farmers. Mary Hardy's brother Robert, who died in 1783, lived here. His son Henry (born in 1777) became the Hardys' brewery apprentice at Letheringsett, and his diary is published in full with his aunt's.

If you have time, you can make a detour north to the Goggs family's farm in the hamlet of Hamrow. Otherwise the tour ends here at the crossroads.

(below) The farm of Mary Hardy's sister Phillis Goggs at Hamrow (no. 10 on the map), north of the stream (**9**). From here, after staying with her nephew Henry Goggs in 1807, Mary Hardy had her last sight of her beloved village.



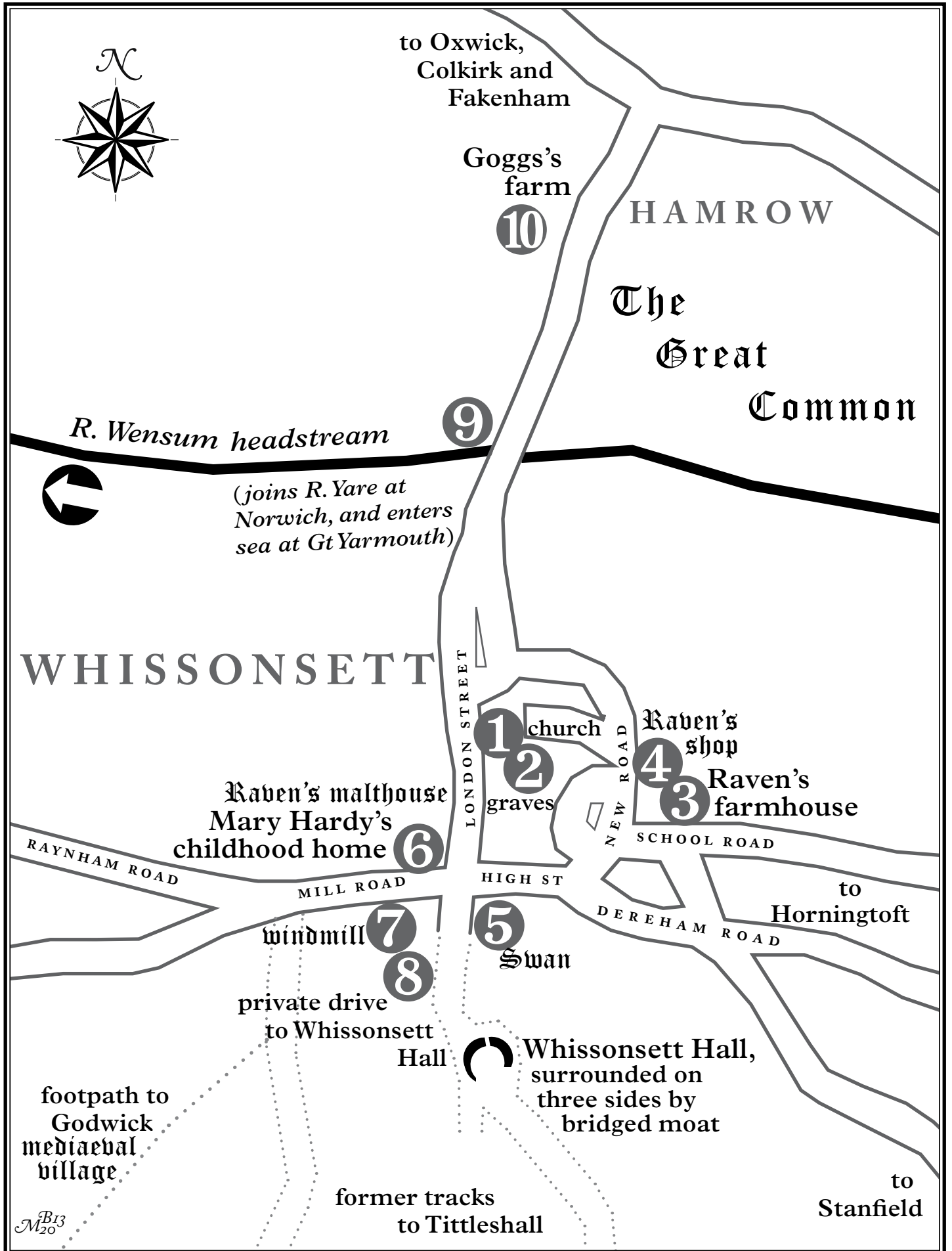
(below) The moat bridge at the Hall. (A working farm, its drive and grounds are private. It is pictured to show the barn built by Mary Hardy's father in 1773, north of the bridge.)



Whissonsett village trail devised 13 June 2013 by
MARGARET BIRD, Kingston upon Thames
Honorary Research Fellow
Royal Holloway, University of London
tel. 020 8541 1081
e-mail mbirdkingston@hotmail.com

[text and map © Margaret Bird 2013;
all photographs © Margaret Bird 1995–2011]

For further information, see *The Changing Face of Whissonsett* (Lesley Pegg and Whissonsett Arts, 2003)



KEY TO LETTERING

farmhouse *still standing, or rebuilt*
malthouse *former site*

SCALE IN MILES

