

## 2012 Welcome home – Woodlief Family



Nearly 400 years ago, in 1619, John Woodlief was the Captain of the ship Margaret which left Bristol with 39 settlers bound for America. He eventually settled there and on 10<sup>th</sup> June this year 14 of his descendants came to a service in Dinton to tell us how they were getting on. John was baptised at Dinton church 27<sup>th</sup> December 1584, the son of Drewe Woodlief (b. Peterley Manor, 1562-1627) and Katherine Duncombe (-1592) who were married at Aylesbury on Nov 30, 1581. She was the daughter of John Duncombe of Moreton. He was buried at Great Missenden and she at Dinton. John and his

settlers got to American before the Pilgrim Fathers and had an earlier thanksgiving ceremony than the more famous one. John was instructed “That the day of the ship’s arrival at the place assigned for plantation in the land of Virginia shall be yearly and perpetually kept holy as a day of thanksgiving to Almighty God.” The first thanksgiving in America was thus celebrated by a man from this parish.



John’s descendants were gathered from different parts of the United States including Oklahoma, Alabama and Virginia. Before joining us they had stayed at Aylesbury and were going on to Gloucester and Stratford on Avon.

10<sup>th</sup> June was a matins service following the Book of Common Prayer which did not come out until 1662, but the bible readings were from the King James’ version which the settlers would have taken with them. One of the party is a minister and read a lesson. Hymns included The Battle Hymn of the Republic, Who would true Valour Find? and Shall we Gather at the River? Our guests saw the font where John would have been baptised, and the doorway which he would have thought ancient. They climbed the tower to see the bells and the view from the top.



The leader, Irv, is professor of trombone and jammed with Chris our organist.



Although hundreds of years and thousands of miles have separated us we have much in common with our cousins, whom we were honoured to welcome home.