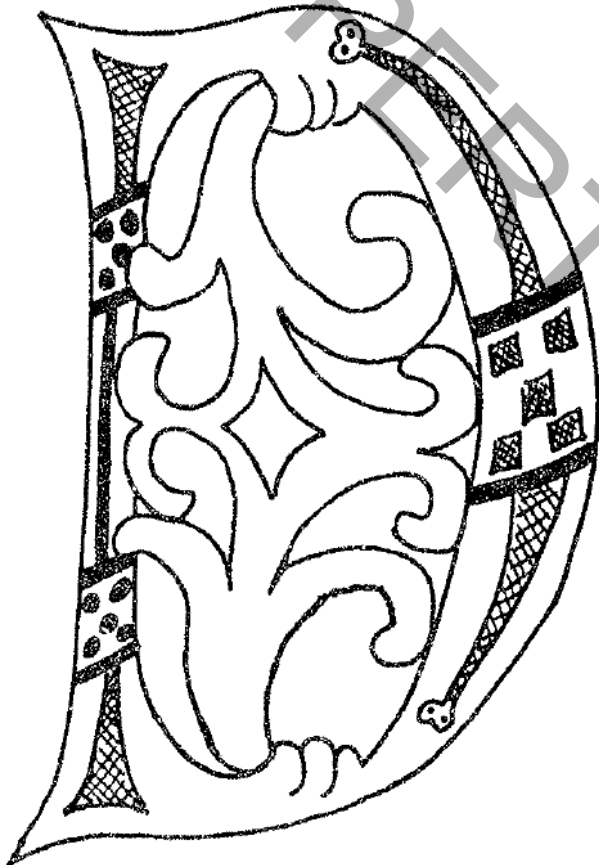




Greater Wigston Historical Society
White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna Leicestershire

Bulletin 20

FEB '88



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in
WIGSTON.
- 1086 -**

NOTICES ... NOTICES ... NOTICES ... NOTICES ... NOTICES

Wednesday February 17th 1988

AGM Plus new set of slides of Bushloe End.

Your help will be needed in writing a commentary to go with the slides.

Wednesday March 16th 1988

Combined Meeting with the Civic Society

Good turn out please for this joint venture.

7.30pm Community Lounge, Guthlaxton C. C. next to the swimming baths.

Wednesday April 20th 1988

To be arranged Liberal Club

Wednesday May 18th 1988

Meet at the Museum at White Gate Farm. Last look at the collection as it is. Another chance to hear the old stories about bits and pieces of Wigston Past. 7.30pm

Wednesday June 15th 1988

To be arranged Outing

Please try to make the AGM in February. Thought needs to be given to how this Society can help raise money for the Bushloe End Appeal... Thinking Caps on please.

Some people from this Society have not yet joined the Friends of Wigston Framework Knitting Society!!!

Here is the most direct way that you can help. Single subscriptions for the year is £5. Family is £8 and OAP £3

An application form is enclosed in this bulletin. If you are already a member please pass the form onto a friend. Thank You

The Bulletin is published three times per year. 1st February, June and October. Articles etc. to the Editor three clear weeks before please.

Editor Ian Varey 2 Paget Court Paget Street Kibworth Leicestershire LE8 0HW

MEETING OCTOBER 21st 1987

About 24 members enjoyed a very interesting talk by Miss Julie Slawson on the history and etiquette of the Fan. From her large collection of fans going back to the early 1700's. Miss Slawson explained the origins and early history of what was for many years an essential item of dress.

She told us of the different techniques and materials used in making fans, from bone to ivory to modern day plastics: from lace to silk to paper: from hugely expensive fans to throw away free gifts from Harrods and the like.

After the talk people were invited to look at and handle the fans. Much comment and many questions were asked during this informal part of the evening.

After a sincere vote of thanks for a most fascinating evening the meeting closed at 9.30pm.

MEETING NOVEMBER 20th 1987

This meeting was on a Friday and not our usual Wednesday. The other difference being that it was an open meeting to show Magic Lantern Slides with the hope of raising some money for the Bushloe End Appeal. Many Society members and some of the old faithful were present but in all a rather low turnout. The result was small profit of some £12 raised for the appeal.

MEETING DECEMBER 16th 1987

This was the fourth Christmas Party and in fact our best turn out, 27 members. The main part of the evening was a Wigston Quiz. Question sheets were given out and then the slides were shown. They were a particularly obscure lot, but then there were a lot of very knowledgeable people present.

Before the answers and the prizes, we all enjoyed a marvellous buffet meal which had been prepared by Mavis and Maureen. Each year they seem to surpass themselves. Grateful thanks to them was expressed by all present.

The slides were then shown again with the answer given to the questions. A clear winner was then found, Mr Simon Carter. I will not embarrass anyone by mentioning other scores which ended with a well deserved Booby prize.

WHO WAS HUGH OF GRANDMESNIL?

Hugh inherited extensive estates in Calvados in 1040 and with his younger brother founded the Abbey of Saint Evroul in 1050, a house he continued to endow thereafter (eg from Leicestershire).

Exiled from Normandy, c. 1059, by Duke William for involvement in conventional baronial feuds, he was none the less recalled c. 1063 to help defend Normandy against Maine and Brittany and then to be made castellan of a Norman frontier castle, Neufmarche-en-Lions. In 1066 he was one of the assembled Norman magnets summoned to counsel William on the advisability of fighting for the English Crown. Hugh obviously voted "yes" and he fought courageously at Hastings. On King

William's brief return to Normandy in 1067, Hugh was given a key post, since by 1068 he was governing the people around and from Winchester at which lay the treasury and regalia of the Anglo/Saxon Kings.

When in 1068 William required help against Eadwine and Morkar, however, Hugh seems instead to have returned briefly to Normandy probably at the behest of the beautiful and – by implied chronicle report – his amorous wife Adeliza, who later appears holding land in Leicestershire, and who bore him ten children.

Unlike others guilty of similar absences, Hugh did not forfeit all his English estates. On the major territorial division of the realm amongst the leading Normans in 1070/71, however he was made Castellan not of Winchester (was this a demotion), but of Leicester and either or later sheriff of the county. Apart from this 'honour' of Leicester, his Domesday estates were scattered over a number of shires.

In 1079/80, he acted as one of the leading conciliators following the estrangement in Normandy of William from his rebellious son Robert. Back in England, by 1088 Hugh is found supporting the rebellion of Bishop Odo of Bayeux at Rochester against William son Rufus, now king of England, by harrying both his own countrymen of Leicestershire (though presumably not his own estates) and neighbouring Northamptonshire. It was a miscalculation: the English themselves widely supported William Rufus: though once again Hugh appears to have been forgiven. Landed Normans like Hugh, however, had to live their lives incessantly on two fronts. By 1090 his duchy estates were being threatened by Robert of Belleme (and eventually by Duke Robert of Normandy) and had therefore to be defended, a stand being taken at the castle of Courcey. Now an old man and no longer fit to fight, he nethertheless negotiated with Duke Robert for the lifting of the siege of the castle which was eventually ended, ironically, with the arrival in Normandy for other reasons, of Duke Robert's brother William Rufus. Widowed, probably in 1091, it was symptomatic of the cross-channel life led by men like Hugh that seven years later he is to be found back in England where, during his last illness he was received as a monk by the prior of Saint Evroul itself.

He died on 22nd February 1098. As in life so in death.... Packed in salt and sewn tightly into an oxhide shroud, his corpse was translated for burial back to the Abbey which he and his brother had founded. Orderic, the chronicler of Evroul, who wrote an epitaph for Hugh's tomb, had good reason to eulogise him as an honourable lord, loyal to his friends, a valorous warrior-

“terrible to the foe”, and as a generous benefactor of Saint Everoul. The views of the inhabitants of Leicester are not recorded,
by Charles Phythian-Adams

The Survey

The most detailed account of the actual form the Domesday inquiry took is that of the Inquest of Ely, written shortly after 1086.

These are the questions that were asked in every Town and Village.

“Were follows the inquiry concerning lands which the king’s barons made according to the oath of the sheriff of the shire and of all the barons and their Frenchmen, and of the whole Hundred Court – The priest, reeve and six villeins from each village

They inquired what the manor was called.

Who held it in the time of King Edward (Tempore Regis Edward II or T R E that is before 1066),

Who holds it now (1086)

How many hides there are,

How many ploughs in Demesne (the land of the Lord of the Manor)

And how many belonged to the men (of the village)

How many villeins

How many Cottars

How many Slaves

How many Freemen

How many Sokemen

How much woodland

How much pasture

How many Mills

How many fisheries

How much had been added to or taken away from (the manor)

What it used to be worth altogether

What is it worth now

And How much each freeman and sackman had and has

All this to be recorded thrice: that is as it was in King Edward’s time, as it was when King William gave (the manor), and as it is now.

And it was also noted whether more could be taken from the manor, than is now being taken.

From these detail comments, the purpose of the 1086 survey becomes clear. It was to provide a reasonable precise record of the assets and taxable wealth of the King’s subjects which could be compared with extant subjects Anglo/Saxon records relating to assessment of liability for danegold.

The king clearly wished to extract as least as much tax as his predecessors had extracted for their Anglo/Danish subjects.

Wigston Domesday

Translation of the Domesday entry for Wigston is followed by a more detailed explanation, phrase by phrase.

In Guthlaxton Wapentake Hugh of Grandmesnil holds Wigston from the King. 1 hide there and third part of 1 hide. Land for 16 poughs.

Of this land one third part of 1 hide in lordship, 4 ploughs 2 male and 1 female slave. 32 villagers with a priest and 12 smallholders have 5 ploughs.

31 Freemen with 1 cleric, 2 men at arms and 4 frenchmen have eight ploughs. Meadow 50 acres. The value was and is £8. Earl Ralph held it.

Hugh of Grandmesnil holds Wigston from the King

One hide there and one third part of a hide

Over most of Leicestershire a Hide (Anglo/Saxon measurement) is equivalent to 18 carucatures and a carucate is approx. 120 acres.

Total land in Wigston ... 2880 acres. This was very close to the size of the modern parish.

N.B.

- a) King's land Wigston belonged to the crown to be given at will
- b) Land measured in A/S measurement even though it was in Danelaw.

Land for 16 ploughs

Carucate is the latinised form of ploughland ... approx 120 acres $16 \times 120 = 1920$ acres. Arable Land

It is not all the land was under the plough. (it was by 1300)

Of this one third part is in Lordship

The Lord's land is called the Demesne. It was worked by slaves and by villeins who were obliged to work "x" days a week on the Lord's Land. One third of the 16 ploughlands is about 640 acres. The Lord also owns the rest of the lands not under the plough, granting rights to other tenants, eg forage, pasture, wood gathering etc. The Lord was by far the biggest land owner.

Four Ploughs

On the Lord's 640 acres there were 4 ploughs. This implies enough oxen to pull them ... at 8 to a team.

Two Male and one Female Slave

The Lord's personnel property. Slavery was not common in Leicestershire or in Danelaw, and slaves are almost exclusively confined to Norman gentry.

32 Villagers

Old Word Villein ... held land from the Lord on certain tight conditions. They were directly under the Lord's jurisdiction and the Lord's reeves saw to it that labour days and other days were complied with ... they were bound to the manor, the lord owned the land. Each of the 32 was head of household.

With a Priest

One can conclude from this that some kind of church existed! The site is where the present AA Saints now stands.

And 12 Smallholders

The old word cottars ... These farmed little more than allotments for their own needs, were obliged to fulfil all manorial duties of villeins. (ie villeins with a lot less land) They had time to hire themselves out as paid (may be in kind) workers. This is another prominent aspect of Midland Peasants life.

Have 5 ploughs

32 villages the priest and the 12 smallholders have 5 ploughs between them and the oxen to pull them.

31 Freemen

They were not actually freemen ... they were SOKEMEN. This class of people are very common in Leicestershire and may well represent the descendants of the original Danish settlers.

Sokemen were freemen in so much as they held their land by right and could buy and sell as they wished, but they still came under the legal and taxable rights of the Lord of the Manor. In the classic manor the lord owned all the land and had jurisdiction over all the people ... rights of 'Sic and Soc'. In practice and especially in the Midlands, these rights were separable and so some men had sic rights .. Sokemen. This large group of families had a soc rights, had a profound effect on the development of Wigston, for they held some 40% of the land and were always strong enough to withstand pressure / change from the absentee ruling classes, right until the 18th century Enclosures Act.

With one cleric

This is a fascinating piece of information ... the cleric is not mentioned with the priest ... he must be connected to the Sokemen who were concentrated in the present Saint Wistan's church area. Two groups each with their own priest. One Village with twin centres almost certainly stemming from the time of the Danish settlement.

Two men at arms and four Frenchmen

These must represent ordinary soldiers / retainers of the new Norman masters who were given vacant holdings, they can not have been of a very high standing, and it is not clear if they were free or Stoke. Another possibility for at least some of them is as minor officials for the absent Lord.

Have 8 ploughs

This group have eight ploughs and the oxen to pull them.

Meadows, 50 ac.

Each holding usually had meadow rights attached to it.

NB This is not a large amount and reflects how few animals were kept over the winter.

The Value was £8

In common with the Domesday in the County not all the questions seem to have been asked or recorded. The value is from the time of King Edward.

Earl Ralph held it

Last Saxon owner in the time of King Edward Ralph actually was a Norman in favour with Edward.

What has not been recorded seem to be 'nil returns'

No Woodland waste areas not under the plough were what?
No MillCrow Mills not yet there
No fisheries
Nothing seems to have been added or taken away.
There is no thrice recording

Another entry for Wigston does exist
Lands of the Countess Judith

Robert holds 2c of land less 2b in Oadby and Wigston from the Countess. There was
One 1 and a half ploughs. Now one smallholder. The value was 2/-.

NOTE

18 carucates = 1 hide
4 virgates = 1 carucate
2 Bovates = 1 virgate

Wigston was a ide and a third ... or 96 ½ virgates.

I.e. half virgate of Countess Judith's land was in Wigston.

“FAIR AND MINI MARKET”

To be held by All Saints Church
In aid of the Wigston FWK Museum Appeal

SATURDAY 19th March 1988 10am to 1 pm

In Church Hall Opposite 42/44 Busloe End
House and Workshop will also be open!

***** PLEASE SUPPORT THIS FUND RAISING VENTURE *****

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