



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

BULLETIN 29



PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS FEBRUARY TO AUGUST 1991

Wednesday 20th February 1991.

A.G.M. & Members Evening. Your chance to show slides or talk for 10 minutes or so.
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

***Wednesday 27th March 1991.**

Talk on the 'New' St. Pauls Cathedral, London. Sequel to last years talk on 'Old' St. Pauls - Brian Bilson. 7.30.p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

Wednesday 17th April 1991.

Talk on Genealogy with the aid of a computer. Member, Mike Forryan, uses his own one name study of the Forryan surname to illustrate this.
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

Wednesday 15th May 1991.

Visit to Market Harborough Museum. Film & conducted tour by the Curator, Mr. S. Mastoris.
Transport arrangements to be advised,

Wednesday 19th June 1991.

Visit to Gaddesby. Conducted walk of village & church with supper afterwards.
Coach from Wigston Liberal Club Carpark, 6.45p.m.

Wednesday 21st August 1991.

Visit to Kibworth. Conducted walk - led by Ian Varey. Transport arrangements to be advised.

*Please note - this meeting is on the 4th Wednesday of the month instead of the 3rd. This is due to the Liberal Club room not being available to us on our usual evening.

The Bulletin is published three times a year. 1st February, June and October. Articles etc. to either of the joint Editors three clear weeks before publication please.

Joint Editors Mrs. Chris Smart, Firtree House, Broad Lane, Markfield. Mrs. Tricia Berry, 7 Wensleydale Road, Wigston.

October Meeting

A record 39 people, including several new members, assembled to enjoy Bill Ward's slide show on Bygone Wigston. Most of the photographs shown were taken by Bill himself, some of the earlier ones with a box Brownie Camera. These had been copied onto slides and together with more recent material taken with more sophisticated equipment made a really interesting window into the past.

The detailed commentary greatly added to the interest and various other contributions from the audience all helped to jog memories of well remembered scenes.

Bill mentioned that this presentation was the 104th he has given to various groups around the district.

Unfortunately we ran out of time before all the views could be shown and when Edna Taylor thanked Bill she asked him to come back next year with another selection.

November Meeting ...

On Wednesday the 21st of November approximately 30 members of the Society met to hear Mr. Robert Cooper of Great Glen speak on the Battle of Waterloo and other related topics.

Mr. Cooper gave his talk dressed in the uniform of a soldier of one of the regiments that took part in the Battle. He began by giving a brief biography of the two leaders, Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington. He then went on to tell how events lead up to the main battle; how the troupes were assembled, (either in square or line formation); and the subsequent final outcome.

He then gave some interesting insights of the 96th Foot Regiment and showed us some weapons of the period and the medals awarded.

The evening closed at about 9.30 after a vote of thanks by the Chairman.

December Meeting

Forty five members enjoyed a special party on 19th December. As 1990 marked the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Society the annual Christmas Party was turned into a double celebration.

The evening began with a competition set by Edna Taylor. The trick was to identify various locations and buildings from photographs pinned on the wall. This was won by a huge majority by Duncan Lucas, who really does know his Wigston.

The company were then divided into 4 groups for an 'Any Questions' type of game set by Ian Varey. As Ian was not able to be present, Jim Colver took over and made a good and amusing M.C., with Shirley Clowes keeping score. The groups then had to identify a selection of bygones from Duncan's Museum collection. Teams 2 and 3 tied for 1st place so a tie break question settled Team 2 as the winners.

A raffle for a signed copy of the book written on the Battle of Waterloo by previous speaker Bob Cooper was won by Grace Hammond.

Mavis & Maureen served a really special buffet & there was wine & a handsome Birthday Cake. Photographs were taken of the cutting ceremony with members of the committee in the background.

After supper Edna read out a letter written by Duncan Lucas to Brian Bilson in 1980 inviting him & other interested people to an inaugural meeting of the yet to be formed

G.W.H.S. This followed a display in the Library aimed at attracting people who might be interested in starting a local history group. From this modest beginning the Society now has a membership of approx. 60 people. Duncan made a short speech outlining the achievements of the last 10 years and mentioning some of the main contributors. He then called for a toast to the next 10 years & beyond.

The party ended at approx. 10.30p.m.

January Meeting

Approx. 35 members enjoyed an evening of nostalgia. Mr. Rob. Foxon showed some of his collection of old films from the 1930's to 1950's. Some of these were originally shot by local amateurs. Others by cinema owners who recorded events with lots of people present, such as parades, in the hope that everyone would come to see themselves on the big screen!

Film of Leicester included De Montfort Hall, Fire Station, Lewis's Store (newly opened), a parade in Churchgate, Newarke Gateway & the Magazine, Spinney Hill Park, The Old Pavilion, Victoria Park & excavations at Jewry Wall. There was elaborate decorations of the Town Hall & trams for the silver jubilee of King George V & Queen Mary. The interior & exterior scenes at London Road Railway Station in c. 1948 showed some trains still with their L.M.S.R, title, others newly changed to British Railways. There was special footage of the trams including a farewell excursion trip & the very last tram sporting a R.I.P. label, making its final journey on 9/11/49.

Another subject was farming in 1930's, taken by Mr. Attfield on his Manor Farm, Ashby Magna. Horse drawn ploughing, harrowing & mowing without a tractor in sight. It showed a peaceful more natural, though harder, way of life. The farming contractors, Allsops of Fleckney, were featured ploughing with the aid of two traction engines. These fascinating giants were also used by Joe Chapman of Narborough to power his threshing machine.

There was coverage of Home Guard parades in the Lutterworth area during the war, a Salvation Army parade in Loughborough in 1947 & the pack-horse bridge & river side at Aylestone.

We also slipped across the Channel to France & Spain with the pupils of Rushey Mead School in 1950. Their enterprising Spanish teacher bought an old corporation double decker bus, christened it Spirit of Leicester & funded the journey by selling advertising space on it to local companies. This very early school trip attracted national news coverage & was a great success covering 2,700 miles in 6 weeks with only one breakdown.

The show ended with a most amusing film showing how one should not go about presenting an amateur film show.

Edna Taylor thanked Rob, & his son who acted as projectionist, for a really splendid evening. Local man, Mr. Pearman, who produced Rob's Tram Video which was on sale during the evening, also attended.

NEWCOMERS TO WIGSTON MAGNA.

People who were born in Leicester who came to live in Wigston.

Between 1871 and 1881 Wigston's population increased from 2,638 to 4,299, a rise of 63%. In these years, Leicester's population also increased, but not to the extent of Wigston's. In 1871, Leicester's population stood at 95,220 and by 1881 it had increased to 122,376, a rise of nearly 30%. Many people indeed came from Leicester to live in Wigston Magna and many Wigston men sought their wives in Leicester.

The coming of the railway to Wigston led, as one might expect, to a fair number of railway workers leaving Leicester to seek employment in Wigston. Among them were several engine drivers, one of whom was Alfred Biddies, whose wife, Martha and elder daughter, Sarah, were also born in Leicester, but the younger daughter, Alice, had been born in Wigston. The Biddies family lived in Frederick Street. Another engine driver from Leicester was Charles Penny, who though only 30 years of age was a widower. His two eldest children had been born in Leicester, but the three youngest children, including William who was only nine months old, had been born in Wigston.

William Branson, aged 39, was another engine driver from Leicester. His wife, Ann, had also been born in Leicester and so had their eldest daughter, Clara, now aged 17 who was a dressmaker. But - two daughters, Sarah and Margaret, had been born while William was stationed in Kentish Town in Middlesex. The two youngest daughters Nellie and Ann, had been born in Wigston and the Branson family lived in Manor Road.

Edwin Stableford, aged 40, was another engine driver who had been born in Leicester. His wife, Frances, came from Leamington and their two eldest children had been born in Kentish Town while Edwin was working there. But c. 1875 Edwin had come to live in Manor Road, Wigston, where four more children, William, Nellie, Edwin and Harry, were born to them.

Another engine driver who had come to Wigston from Leicester was Thomas Carr, aged 34, who with his wife Charlotte and their three children lived in Cherry Street. Their eldest child, Arthur, had been born in Leicester, while the two younger children, Rose and Thomas, had been born in Wigston,

Another engine driver who had come from Leicester and now lived in Cherry Street was Robert Babbington, whose wife Barbara also came from Leicester. A visitor to the home on census Sunday was Gertrude Wale, aged 12 years from London, who may have been an adopted daughter.

Not far from Babbington in a nearby street, Clarke's Road, lived another engine driver, Isaac Jelly, who was born in Leicester.. His wife, Jane, came from Cossington and their two young sons, William 9 and John 7, had been born in Peterborough, which suggests that Isaac had been employed there before coming to Wigston.

In Clarke's Road lived yet another engine driver, who had been born in Leicester, George Potter. He, his wife, Mary, and their four eldest children had also been born in Leicester ,but their two youngest children, John and Albert, had been born in Wigston. It would seem that the Potter family had now been living in Clarke's Road for almost four years.

In the cottages by the side of the main line from Leicester to London which the Midland Railway Company had built for their employees lived another engine driver, Alfred Barnet. His wife, Mary came from Arnesby, but their two daughters, Anne and Florence, like their father, had been born in Leicester. As well as the drivers mentioned above a few stokers had also come to Wigston from Leicester. One such stoker was Joseph Townsend, whose wife, Lucy, came from Gretton in Northamptonshire, but their eldest daughter, Catherine, had been born in Leicester, while their son, Walter, aged 4 years, had been born in Wigston. Another stoker who left Leicester to work in Wigston was Joseph Moore, who seems to have been unmarried.

Besides drivers and stokers, there were other railway workers who had come to live in Wigston from Leicester. One or two worked in the wagon shop as, for example, Zena Kirby, who was a wagon repairer. His wife, Sarah, came from Countesthorpe and on the day of the census Maria Hubbard aged six from Countesthorpe was staying with them at their house in Welford Road.

Another man from Leicester who worked in the wagon shop was Ralph Pateman. His wife Mary came from Rearsby and their three eldest children were born in Leicester. But about three years ago, Ralph came to live in Manor Road, Wigston where another daughter ,Alice, was born.

In the railway Cottages, lived two brothers, Joseph and George Jessop, who had been born in Leicester and were now engine fitters. Joseph's wife, Elizabeth, had also been born in Leicester as had their two eldest children, Joseph and Elizabeth. But some five years ago Joseph had left Leicester to work in Wigston and there another son Harry was born. George's wife, Lucy, had also been born in Leicester, and so had their three children, William, George and Polly. William was an engine cleaner, but George had followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a fitter.

Another railway employee who had come from Leicester to live in Wigston was Alfred Coble. He was a railway guard and his wife, Jane, and their two eldest daughters, Ada 8 and Lizzie 4, had all been born in Leicester. But about four years ago, Alfred had left Leicester to live in Victoria Street, Wigston, and there two more daughters Jane and Harriett were born to Alfred and his wife.

William Taylor aged 42, was a railway wheel turner who had been born in Leicester. His wife came from Harningham in Lincolnshire and they had a large family of four sons and three daughters, all of whom had been born in Leicester. But recently

William had left Leicester to live in Cherry Street, Wigston where their eighth child, Robert, was born.

In the Railway Cottages lived another railway worker who had been born in Leicester. He was Edward Ford, aged 55, who was a foreman in the engine sheds. Two of his sons also born in Leicester were James aged 22 and Edwin aged 14 and they also worked on the railway, James as an engine fitter and Edwin as a railway clerk.

Other people besides railway workers came to live in Wigston from Leicester, as, for example people connected with the hosiery industry. Three hosiery manufacturers left Leicester to establish factories in Wigston. One was John Wignall who had 24 men working for him in his factory in Bell Street. His wife, Mary, came from Fleckney and John and Mary had a large family, four sons and three daughters, all of whom were born in Wigston and the youngest daughter, Mary, was only one year old in 1881. Another manufacturer who specialised in socks, whose factory was also in Bell Street, was William Abbott. His wife, Elizabeth, came from Sapcote and they had three sons and one daughter, all of whom were born in Wigston. The third manufacturer was George Packard, whose house and factory were in Blaby Lane. His wife, Lucy, was also born in Leicester, as were his two eldest children William 14 and Lucy 9. But it looks as if George moved about somewhat before settling in Wigston, for his third child, Constance, was born in Humberstone and his fourth child, George, was born in Oadby. About two years ago George and his family came to Wigston, where twin daughters, Eleanor and Margaret, to them.

Several other hosiery workers were born in Leicester and found employment in Wigston. Such a person was Alfred Wheat, a framework knitter whose wife, Harriet, came from Enderby, but their three children Eliza, Amy and William were all born in Wigston. Another framework knitter, who was born in Leicester, but came to live in Wigston was Thomas Vann. His wife, Rachel, was a native of Wigston, but the couple, who had no children, lived in Church Nook. Another Leicester born person who had connection with the hosiery industry was and settled in Wigston was Charles Henry Snowden. He was a needle-maker and his wife, Mary, was also born in Leicester. Snowden came to Oadby Road, Wigston, about one year ago and they now had a son who was seven months old, who had been born in Wigston.

Another worker connected with the hosiery industry was William Ashton. Aged 39, he was a dyer and like his wife, Mary, had been born in Leicester, as had been their two daughters, Alice and Lizzie. The family lived in Aylestone Lane.

One or two persons connected with the boot and shoe trade were born in Leicester and settled in Wigston. One such person was Robert Day, whose factory was in Granville Road in Wigston Fields. There he employed 31 men, 3 boys, 13 women and 3 girls. His niece, Emma Middleton, aged 14, also assisted him in his office and she was also born in Leicester. George Fitch, a shoe hand, was also born in Leicester. His young wife, Mary, aged 18, was born in Bruntingthorpe and at the time of the census they lived in Wigston and had no children. Many houses were now being built in Wigston and a few people in the building trade had left Leicester for Wigston. Thomas Southam, a bricklayer, was born in Leicester but had recently left Leicester to settle in Oadby Road, Wigston. His wife, Sarah, who worked in a hosiery factory on a circular hand machine had been born in Bramcote, Nottinghamshire, and next door to the Southams

lived Samuel Loach, also from Bramcote, who was a general labourer. So it looks as if Samuel had helped the Southams to find a house in Oadby Road .

One of several builders in Wigston was Thomas Brown. Aged 36, he had been born in Leicester, but several years ago he had left Leicester to marry a Wigston girl. They lived in Long Street, where their four children had been born. In 1885, Brown built the new Wesleyan Chapel in Frederick Street. We find several grocers in Wigston, who had left Leicester to set up business in Wigston. In Junction Road, Thomas Hartopp was a grocer and beer seller and, like his wife, Elizabeth, had been born in Leicester. Their five children had also been born in Leicester. The two eldest, Mary and John, helped their father to run his business, while the other three children, Sarah, Alice and Thomas were still at school.

Another grocer was Martin Warner, aged 33, who had also been born in Leicester. He was unmarried and had two lodgers living with him, Joseph Bond and Fred Holland, both of whom worked on the railway. Next to Hartopp's in Junction Road George Pawley had a greengrocer's business. Aged 40, he had been born in Leicester, but some years ago had left Leicester to marry a Wigston girl and to settle with her in Wigston. They had six children, all of whom had been born in Wigston, and the eldest boy, Arthur, now 16, helped his father in the shop.

Though Wigston was now fast becoming an industrial town, farming still occupied an important part in its economy and one or two farm labourers had come to live in Wigston from Leicester. Such a person was Thomas Tebbut. Aged 38, he had left Leicester some years ago to work on a farm in Wigston as an agricultural labourer. Then he met a Wigston girl and married her and now they had two sons, Josiah 5 and John 4. Another person connected with farming in Wigston was John Yates. Aged 31, he had been born in Leicester, but left the town to become a grazier in Wigston Fields, where he employed two men to work on his farm. One was Reginald Partridge, a cowman who came from Lubbenham and the other was Joseph Clarke, a waggoner from Fleckney. Not far from John Yatteife lived Thomas Yates, who was also born in Leicester. He was a hay and corn dealer and his wife Louisa came from Anstey and they had two daughters, Mary and Margaret. One of the most important farmers, however, in Wigston was Alfred Cooper, who lived in Wigston Hall in Long Street, a small mansion built c. 1833 by Captain Baddeley. Alfred had been born in Leicester and his farm occupied 221 acres on which he employed 8 men and several boys. At the date of the census, he was still unmarried. So, two domestic servants, Elizabeth Gadney and Eleanor Morris looked after the running of the household.

Several other workers who had been born in Leicester had now settled in Wigston. One such worker was William Mee, aged 28, who lived in Gladstone Street. He was a house painter and paper hanger and like his wife, Mary, had been born in Leicester. They had one son, John, who had also been born in Leicester. Another worker who was born in Leicester but now lived in Wigston was Thomas North, a wheelwright. Of all craftsmen, the wheelwright was considered the most important, since transport in the countryside was absolutely dependent upon him. North was 29 years of age and like his wife Alice and their two eldest sons had been born in Leicester. But about four years ago North had moved into Wigston and there the Norths had two more children, Sarah and Edith.

Charles Read lived in Station Street. He was a carpenter and joiner, but at the time of the census he was unemployed and so he earned a living by selling groceries and beer. His wife Elizabeth came from Market Harborough ,but their three children Lizzie 5, Charles 3 and Sarah 1 had all been born in Leicester. So, only recently had Charles left Leicester.

Another Wigston resident who had only recently left Leicester was Jabez Jackson. He was a dispensing chemist whose premises were in Long Street and his wife Clara had also been born in Leicester.

Bernard Elliott

BUSHLOE END. A HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Bushloe End, the oldest existing street name in Wigston Magna, written in 1455 as Bussclowe, was originally one of the two main entrances to Goldhill Field, whose 1279 acres was the largest of the three fields in pre-enclosure days. The other entrance being Newgate End .

As in all place names, various ways of its spelling are recorded, with its origin in Old English, Bysehlow (byse, a bush or thicket and hollow). a low hill, giving the meaning of the hill with the thicket. The ground being generally flat, the reference to a hill may indicate artificiality, i.e. a burial ground or tumulus.

By the time the 1886 census was taken, a great deal of change had occurred. The End no longer led to a track through Goldhill Field towards Blaby, but continued as a road to the new development of South Wigston. Of the inhabitants, only Robert Chambers of Kingswood Lodge who owned 40 acres of land and Joseph Potter, a grazier who kept the Plough Inn, had much to do with the land. The other farmer, William Eggleston being retired.

There was at the time of the census, 169 people living in Bushloe End, 113 of whom were Wigston born. Of the remainder, 23 came from other places in Leicestershire and the high percentage of 33 from beyond the county border. This ratio is in common with the other streets of Wigston researched by the Greater Wigston Historical Society.

Like most of the other village streets, Bushloe End would have been a place of much bustle and noise, particularly from the hand frames, for they were the source of income for 26 people.

The Vicarage at this time was occupied by the Rev. William Romanis, a widower, who lived with his two sisters and had two servants to attend them. Of the proprietors, Eli Bailey and his two sons had their general carters business. In addition there was a provisions dealer, a wines and spirits merchant, and a grocer, plus the afore mentioned farmer and the publican/grazier. Shown at No.7 on the map is the house and framework knitting workshop of Joseph Trueman, who lived there with his wife and four daughters. This is now preserved as a museum.

Of the other workers, 10 were servants, 9 seamstresses, 6 railway employees, 4 labourers, 4 hosiery workers, 3 carpenters, 2 each shoe hands, bricklayers and dressmakers. The youngest worker was Samuel Hill, a 13 year old hosiery winder, one of a family of nine living at No.35, whilst the male servant at the Vicarage, James Cooper, was one year older and coming from London, the furthest travelled. At the other end of the age range, another Joseph Trueman, the oldest inhabitant at 81 years, living at No.36, was still working a frame as was John Buncher, only two years his junior.

Making up the number of inhabitants were 47 children at school and a further 8 under school age.

See GWHS Transaction 55 for map showing location of houses and details of the inhabitants.

J R Colver

GENEALOGY GROUP

The 2nd meeting of this group was held on 28th November at Mike & Linda Forryan's house in Blakesley Road.

Over an informal cup of coffee & biscuits Tricia Berry gave a description of the research she has undertaken into her own family history & also other family names in which she has an interest. She explained how & why she became involved, what sources she has consulted & where these can be found.

The, as yet, small group is happy to help anyone new to genealogy to make a start. It is currently acting on a self help basis, exchanging ideas & pooling knowledge. It is thought likely that members will also save each other time & effort. They have found that, when working with local families, the same records often need to be consulted. They feel that while they are researching their own projects group members may come across detail useful to fellow members.

Later on if more people join, new joint projects might be started. They feel there is so much more information to be unearthed that several people working together might make better use of the limited time each has available.

Tricia Berry

We quote ...

"It is a revered thing to see an ancient castle or building not in decay."

Francis Bacon

We quote ...

"Any movement which is ignorant of its own history is a prisoner of other people's history We can't possibly win the future unless we keep our hands on the past."

Gwyn Williams

We quote ...

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations".
Deuteronomy, ch,32 v.7