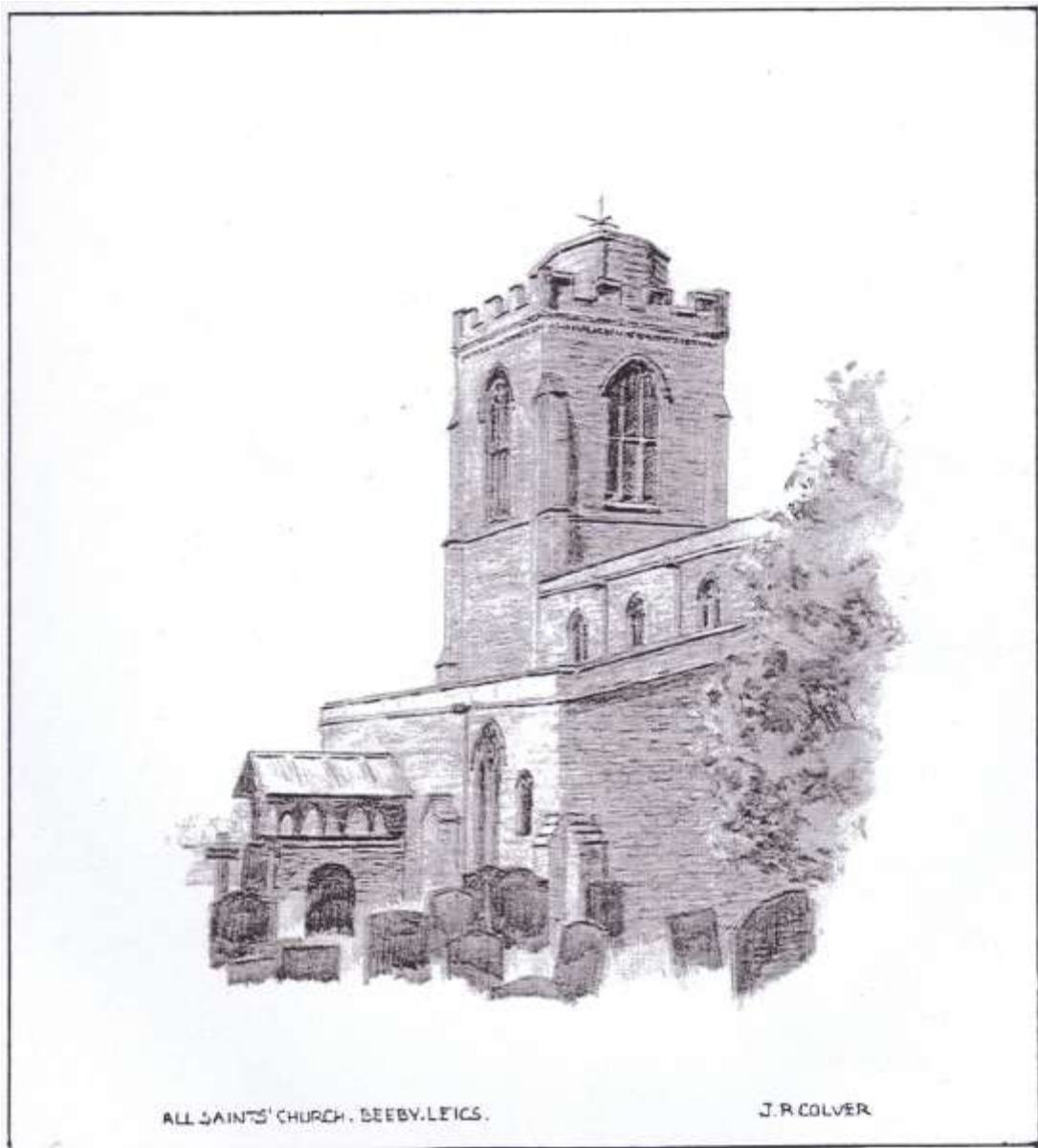


Greater Wigston Historical Society



White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna
Leicestershire

BULLETIN 59



ALL SAINTS' CHURCH, BEEBY, LEICS.

J. R. COLVER

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS - FEBRUARY TO SEPTEMBER 2001

Wednesday 21st February 2001

A.G.M. followed by Oral History tape - Anne Brown
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

Wednesday 21st March 2001

History of Leicester's Cinemas to include Oadby, Wigston & South - Brian Johnson
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

Wednesday 18th April 2001

Constructing a Medieval Cathedral - Dr. Jennifer Alexander
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

Wednesday 16th May 2001

Visit to Deene Park, Nr. Corby
Coach from Paddock Street 6.30p.m.
Please notify the Secretary by 30th April to reserve a place.

Wednesday 20th June 2001

Visit to Donington Manor House with finger buffet & tea/coffee included
Licensed bar will also be open (not included in price)
Coach from Paddock Street 6.30p.m.
Please notify the Secretary by 31st May to reserve a place.

Wednesday 15th August 2001

Visit to St. Margaret's Church with cup of tea afterwards
Meet at Paddock Street 7.15p.m. to share transport
Parking permitted in churchyard, approach via Burleys Way/Grafton Place/Canning Place/St. Margarets Street. (Sadly we have been advised to lock cars well & not to leave anything visible inside).

Wednesday 19th September 2001

Crime and Punishment in Leicester before 1914 - R.J.Gregory
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

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The Bulletin is published three times a year on 1 st February, June and October.
Articles etc. (which are always welcome) should be submitted to either of the Joint Editors three clear weeks before the publication date please.

Joint Editors: Mrs. Chris Smart, 197 Queens Road, Leicester.
Mrs. Tricia Berry, 7 Wensleydale Road, Wigston.

OCTOBER MEETING

Society meetings are usually fairly serious affairs with speakers only introducing the odd bit of humour if their subject allows. The October meeting however turned out to be one big laugh. David Bell's subject, 'Down the Garden Path - Tales of Leicestershire Privies', based on his book of the same title, made this pretty well inevitable. Even the Chairman, Edna Taylor, got in on the act by inviting him to start his talk at 'his convenience'!

David became an author by accident, previously a primary school teacher, he looked after a bookshop for a friend and while perusing the stock came to realise he could write as well, if not better. He has written several books, some for children, the one on privies is part of a series by different authors covering various counties. The Leicestershire one is of special interest here in Wigston because with the collaboration of curator, Peter Clowes, it features the Framework Knitters Museum privy.

Early toilet arrangements were the guardrobes built into the walls of castles with a chute which discharged into the moat or better still a fast flowing river if available. In smaller places the privy at the bottom of the garden was the thing. These were often arranged with two or more wooden seats side by side, very matey! In rural areas the contents of the container would have to be dealt with by the inhabitants usually by burying in the garden. Town dwellers had a visit from the night soil men, or lavender men. Their late visits giving rise to the expression the 'twelve o'clock horses will get you' a useful threat for getting boisterous children to bed.

The first flushing toilet was invented by John Harrington a God son of Queen Elizabeth I. Thomas Crapper came much later with his invention of the graded flush. He is much better remembered because his name appeared on much sanitary ware of the time and the Americans are believed to be responsible for corrupting his name for we all know what!

Two stories stick in the mind. A London lady came to buy a country cottage and complained the privy had no door. The owner answered that he had never had the bucket stolen once in 40 years! A couple went to view a cottage and when they returned home realised they had not noticed where the W.C. was. They wrote to ask the local vicar who thought they were referring to the Wesleyan Chapel. He replied the nearest one was seven miles away and he only visited it about once a month which caused him much pain etc. etc!!

We were left to contemplate that our ancestors ate in their houses and used a toilet up the garden. Now we often eat outside and have our sanitary arrangements within the house. Is this progress or not?

Edna Taylor thanked David for a most entertaining evening and after some announcements and a presentation by Richard Carter on council proposals to allow cycling in the Lanes the meeting closed at approx. 9.30p.m.

NOVEMBER MEETING

On Wednesday the 15th of November 40 members of the Society met to hear Angela Cutting from the Living History Unit speak to the Traditions of Christmas. Many of our Christmas traditions originate from Pagan festivals which were recycled by the early Christians. Why is Christmas celebrated on December 25th? Current historical thinking is that it is almost certainly not the day on which Christ was born, but a date fixed by the Church in the 5th century. Their decision may have been influenced by the fact that there are three earlier festivals around this time. Saturnalia, which was the Roman festival of the God Saturn celebrated on December 19th., when Romans would decorate their homes, exchange presents and enjoy merrymaking. Secondly, the Winter solstice was on December 22nd. and thirdly, Yuletide which was the Pagan festival of the Sun or solstice. Christmas time as we know it today was a Victorian concept, some of the ideas being imported by Prince Albert from his German homeland. During the Victorian era Christmas became more commercialised and even then people complained that it all started too early! Christmas decorations too had their origins in earlier times. In the Roman festival of Saturnalia winter greenery such as holly, mistletoe, and laurel was brought in for decoration. Ivy and its berries were associated with the Roman festival of Bacchanalia, ivy berries were supposed to stop inebriation, for Christians ivy symbolises eternal life. The ancient Druids held mistletoe in great veneration. In the Middle Ages a kissing bough that would be decorated with ribbons and sprigs of mistletoe. Decorations came down on Twelfth Night because it was believed that the elves and sprites of the forest came in with the greenery and the truce between them and ordinary people was for the twelve days of Christmas. The Christmas tree was a German custom. Prince Albert did a lot to make it popular in this country, but it was already a custom here that had its origins in Scandinavian mythology. Santa Claus is a corruption of Saint Nicholas who was the Bishop of Myra in Turkey and the patron saint of German children. Santa Claus and his sleigh pulled by reindeer were introduced by Prince Albert in about 1840. Father Christmas and his distinctive costume originated from someone assuming the costume of a Bishop and distributing gifts to "good children." The red colour of Santa's coat originated from an illustration by an U.S. artist. Rudolf the red-nosed reindeer originated much later in the form of a poem about Santa Claus written by a man in Chicago. Christmas stockings and presents down the chimney is said to originate from the same Bishop helping an old man by dropping a bag of gold coins down his chimney where the bag fell into one of the man's stockings hung up by the fireplace to dry. Boxing Day is the day after Christmas when a gratuity was given to servants. From the 1830s it was traditional to write to friends at Christmas. The introduction of postal services and printed Christmas cards in the 1840s ensured their popularity. Finally, this led us to food which is an important part of our Christmas celebrations. Traditional fare would have been goose, swan, peacock or boar's head. Turkeys were introduced from the United States. Mince pies were popular from the 16th. Century when they were actually mutton with spices in pastry. The spices chosen cinnamon, nutmeg and cloves represented frankincense, gold and myrrh. What else? - plum porridge was traditionally the first course of the Christmas meal - the Christmas pudding made on "Stir-up Sunday" the fifth Sunday before Christmas - Christmas cake - and the Leicestershire favourite of pork pie on Christmas morning. And so our evening ended having had a rich and refreshing look at Christmas and its traditions and origins. After questions Edna thanked Angela for a most enjoyable and interesting talk.

DECEMBER MEETING

Christmas Party

On Wednesday the 20th. of December the Society met for its annual Christmas party. Once again we were intellectually challenged by Edna's picture quiz which started out deceptively easy and ended deviously difficult. This was followed by a team quiz where we settled down into groups of four, just to be told that one member had to jump up and fetch the questions, all done to the music of Abba. Just like "Who wants to be a millionaire" if you know the answer it's easy, unfortunately phone a friend or ask the audience were not available to us. This quiz was won by the team who knew the name of the chicken in "Big Brother" (see below for the answer*)! Otherwise most of the questions had an historical or local theme and some tricky anagrams too. After the quizzes we had supper which was a magnificent spread of sandwiches, savouries and salad, with mince pies and trifle to follow and a selection of wines and fruit juices to drink. Peter's raffle was drawn and prizes distributed. Once again we had a large turn out of members for this popular event. The evening was a success and enjoyed by all. Many thanks to those people, who organised the food, the party and the raffle, devised and delivered the quizzes and the prizes.* Margery

JANUARY MEETING

This month saw us meeting on a cold frosty evening to listen to Joe David, Wigston's Official Town Crier, give his most fascinating talk with slides on the Tower of London and the life of a Yeoman Warder.

The warders are always recruited from ex-service personnel and are invited to join rather than apply. They are initially appointed for a 3 month trial period at the end of which they have to take the Governor on a conducted tour. If they pass this to his satisfaction their employment is made permanent. Their duties are ceremonial (it was nice to hear him speak with such high regard for the Royal Family), guiding visitors (in parties of up to 500!) and of course security.

The Tower has had many uses over the 1000 years of its existence, such as Royal Palace, garrison and soldiers' drill area, armoury museum, record repository, Treasury and Royal Mint, Royal Observatory, storage for Crown Jewels and other Royal Regalia, menagerie (until transferred to Regents Park) and perhaps most famous of all, prison and execution site of some of the most famous people in British history.

The familiar White Tower, the focal point of the whole complex, was built for his own security by William the Conquerer on the site of a previous wooden fortress. Constructed with Norman expertise and in pale stone specially ferried over in rafts from Caen, Normandy, its 90' height and 15' thick walls at the base, tapering to 12' at the upper storeys, made it a building unlike anything previously seen in this country. It was completed by his son William Rufus in 1097. Successive monarchs constructed other buildings on the site and enclosed them with an inner wall containing 13 towers. An outer wall was then built with a series of carefully sited towers which integrated the whole into a tight defensive unit which was then surrounded by a 120' wide moat fed from the Thames. Each opening in the wall was guarded by gatehouses and equipped with portcullises some of which can still be seen including the infamous

Trailers' Gate. Three English Queens were to be among many unfortunates to make their final journey through that gate, Ann Boleyn, Catharine Howard & Lady Jane Grey and a fourth, Princess Elizabeth before she became Queen, was one of the few to pass through but survive her imprisonment.

Notable buildings are the church of St. Peter ad Vincula (in chains) where many of the victims are buried and the Queen's House, a 16th century half⁰ timbered building which once housed Lady Jane when a prisoner and in more recent times Rudolph Hess. It is now the Governor's residence. The Beauchamp Tower is used for staff accommodation and is where Joe and his family lived during their 22 years of duty.

The Ravens are thought to have arrived during the Fire of London and it is said that the Tower would collapse if they should ever leave. Consequently they are well looked after enjoying meat as part of their diet, making them the true beefeaters of the Tower.

In 1974 the IRA managed to infiltrate the Tower leaving a bomb which killed one person and injured 35.

Joe had brought along many tourist guides and holiday brochures featuring him on the front cover wearing the famous red and gold uniform making his very much the face of London. He also showed us two of his costumes, one immensely heavy, the other a lighter more practical version.

After some questions and discussion he was thanked by Edna Taylor who remarked there was no problem at all in hearing this speaker anywhere in the building or possibly outside as well!

* * * * *

FRONT COVER

Jim Colver's drawing for this bulletin features All Saints' Church, Beeby, Leics. He describes it as "remarkable for its handsome tower with unfinished truncated steeple, this church in the 13th century belonged to the rich Croyland Abbey and it still keeps its elaborate font from those days. It also has a few fragments of ancient glass and a 14th century screen". The steeple has given rise to various legends, mentioned in W.G. Hoskins' *Shell Guide to Leics*. One that the builders were two brothers who quarrelled, one throwing the other off the scaffold and then in remorse following him. Another that the builder despaired of rivalling the beautiful spire of nearby Queniborough and threw himself from the battlements. Or it might simply be that the money ran out.

A CURIOUS TALE WITH LOCAL CONNECTIONS

On October 30th 1999 the Daily Telegraph carried a story about a pair of George IV silver wine coolers engraved with the initials 'H St A' which were estimated to fetch £60,000 when they went on sale at Christie's the following month. It explained that the initials were those of Harriet, Duchess of St. Albans.

The report continued that she had been born in 1777 as Harriet Mellon, and was the actress daughter of an Irish born theatre assistant and a Lieutenant in the Madras Cavalry. Her mother claimed to have married Matthew Mellon in 1777 but he deserted her shortly afterwards and has never been traced. She later dropped hints that this was a pseudonym for a person of high rank. Harriet however became rich almost overnight after her marriage in 1815 at the age of 38 to 83 year old Thomas Coutts of the famous banking family. He died shortly afterwards leaving her £600,000, a house in Stratton Place, London and silverware said to be the most valuable in England.

Three years later, at the age of 41, she was courted by 21 year old William Aubrey de Vere Beauclerk, the heir to the Duke of St. Albans, which prompted Sir Walter Scott to write "if he marries a woman 20 years older than himself, she marries a man younger in wit by 20 degrees!" They married in 1827, after Beauclerk had succeeded to his title (as ninth Duke in 1825). It was apparently a happy union, even though the Duchess kept the pillow on which Thomas Coutts died with her at all times, encased in a wooden box!

The Duchess died without issue in 1837, leaving most of her estate to her step-daughter Angela Burdett-Coutts. The bulk of the silver including the wine coolers remained in storage until 1914 when it was sold by Christie's in a series of sales lasting until 1920. Her husband later remarried and did produce an heir to inherit the title.

All this is interesting, but becomes more so when we remember that succeeding Dukes of St. Albans were major land owners in Wigston. The first Duke, Charles, was the natural son of Charles II and Eleanor (Nell) Gwynn. It is said the family surname was chosen by King Charles during a visit to Nell when she called to her son "come hither you little bastard and speak to your father" to which the king said "Nay Nellie do not give the child such a name." She replied "Your Majesty has given me no other name to call him." Upon this the king gave him the name of Beauclerk (pronounced Bowclew) and created him Earl of Burford. This story is considered likely to be true because the boy was created Baron Heddington and Earl of Burford on 27/12/1676 when he was 6 years old. He was made Duke of St. Albans in 1684.

It was this first Duke of St. Albans' grandson George, the third Duke, who had land interests in Wigston. He had through his wife's family become Improrietor of the great tithes of corn, grain and hay and when the open fields were enclosed in 1766 he was awarded land in lieu of these. His holding was considerable, consisting of 291 2 25 in lieu of the tithes, 213 16 of meadow in lieu of meadow previously held and 73 3 8 in lieu of Glebe land which he possessed in the open fields as proprietor of the rectory of Wigston. In total some 387 acres being 13.4% of the whole parish. This came to be known as the Rectory Estate.

The land and title passed together through at least two further generations, there being records of the fourth Duke, George, being Improrietor in 1787 and the fifth Duke, Aubrey, being so in 1802. Sometime after this date the title and ownership of the land descended to different branches of the family. Because of this uncertainty of date it is not possible to be sure whether the colourful ninth Duke, William, and his wife Harriet ever owned the Wigston land. The first Duke had had a family of 8 sons and the title naturally passed to the first born son of each succeeding generation. When the line failed the title moved to the descendants of the second son, and later still for the same reason to the descendants of the third son where it remains into modern times. The fourteenth Duke succeeding in 1988.

The ownership of the land however took a different path. In 1835 Charles George Beauclerk who was descended from the fourth son was the owner. In 1846 Major Beauclerk, who can be identified as CGB's son, Aubrey William de Vere Beauclerk, was owner. His home was Ardglass Castle, Co. Down. In the 1851 Census for Wigston Aubrey de Vere Beauclerk then aged 13 and born at the above castle, son of AWdVB was in Wigston staying at the Vicarage as guest of the vicar Rev. William Barber. This shows that although the Beauclerks were absentee landlords they did have close links with the area.

The connection was however broken on 8th September 1859 when the Rectory Estate was put up for auction at The Mart in Leicester. It is described in newspaper sale advertisements as: "Close to the church, a comfortable farmhouse, yard & buildings plus a small farmhouse & buildings close to Crow Mills & numerous closes of land the whole 376 acres." The difference of 11 acres compared with the total at enclosure is probably accounted for by land sold for railway construction. The property was offered for sale as follows:-

| | | <u>Acres P P</u> | <u>Occupied by</u> |
|-------|---|------------------|--------------------|
| Lot 1 | Ingram's Fm with f/hse & bigs close to church | 213 3 35 | Jas G Pochin |
| Lot 2 | Pt of Blockley's Fm bounded by high turnpike | 69 1 24 | |
| Lot 3 | Another" " " " " " | 60 2 15 | John Pochin |
| Lot 4 | " " " " " " | 14 1 35 | |
| Lot 5 | Freehold rental of premises let to Railway | £25 | |
| Lot 6 | Allotments | 12 0 00 | |
| Lot 7 | | 5 0 25 | |

The names Ingram's & Blockley's Farms probably relate to earlier tenants. The main farm would be what was later known as The Rectory Farm, its farmhouse indeed standing next to All Saints Church and its land stretching down the south side of Station Road to include what is now the school bases. The smaller farm with house close to Crow Mills was divided by Station Road and much of its land was in what is now South Wigston. The allotments were situated somewhere in the region of the present swimming baths.

At the sale some at least of this land was probably bought by Edward Holyoak who was recorded as being a large landowner and Improrietor by 1863. He was one of the

earlier masters of the hosiery trade and a very prominent resident in Wigston at the time.

The Beauclerks as might be expected have always been a distinguished family. Various members having studied at Cambridge, held senior positions in the army and navy, been ordained, served their monarch at court and acted as lord lieutenants of their counties.

Tricia Berry

Sources: *Dictionary of Peerage & Baronetage 1895*, *Debrett's Illustrated Peerage*, *White's Directory 1846*, *Land Tax Assessments 1832*, *The Midland Peasant* by W.G. Hoskins, *Daily Telegraph 30/10/1999*, *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Leicester Advertiser 20/8/1859*, *History of Leics* by John Nichols.

WHO'S WHO SERIES

Not one in this Bulletin I'm afraid due to my mother's serious illness and subsequent death which left insufficient time to complete it by the publishing date. However hopefully John Clarke of Wigston Hall will feature in the next issue and then his brother in law Captain Charles Holland Baddeley in the following one.

They will probably be the last ones as I have run out of ideas for suitable subjects. Thereafter I plan to run a similar series but featuring interesting families rather than individuals.

Tricia Berry

OLD FASHIONED EXPRESSIONS

Here are a few more for our occasional series. We might:

- 1) Describe an untidy mess as a 'Shambles'.
- 2) Achieve our goal by 'Hook or by Crook'.
- 3) Improve our position in a competitive situation by 'Turning the Tables'.
- 4) Refer to someones impending disaster as 'the Writing on the Wall'.
- 5) Describe an unflattering picture as 'Warts and All'.

Origins:

- 1) Butchers premises were usually located in the same area of a town which was known as the Shambles. This came to be associated with the inevitable mess generated by preparation.
- 2) Shepherds used a hook and a crook in their work and if one tool failed to catch a sheep they would use the other.

- 3) Until the mid 18th century, 'tables' was the name for backgammon. Often the board would be turned around so that the player had to play what had previously been their opponent's position.
- 4) In the Bible, Daniel relates the story of King Belshazzar's feast at which a disembodied hand wrote a message on the wall, foretelling the fall of the Babylonian kingdom to Medes and the Persians.
- 5) Said to originate from a comment made by Oliver Cromwell to his portrait painter Peter Lely: "Remake all these roughnesses, pimples, warts and everything as you see me." At the time, portraits generally glossed over less flattering features.

OUR SENSE OF PLACE

Three of our recent Bulletins were submitted by Duncan Lucas as a Heritage Award entry in June 2000. As a result of this Clarie Browne, Leicestershire County Council Community Museums Officer, has suggested we might like to register them as a Millennium "Our Sense of Place" project.

This project is designed to establish a record (to be held in archival conditions by the Museums Service) of activities undertaken by groups across Leicestershire during the year 2000. We were pleased to agree to this - it is a nice idea that the Society's existence will be recorded for posterity and who knows what future generations will make of our efforts!

EXTRACTS FROM CONTEMPORARY NEWSPAPERS

HARRISON'S DERBY & NOTTINGHAM JOURNAL - MAY 1778

We hear from Leicester that a Mr. De Soulis, a Frenchman lately settled at that place as a fencing master, lost six or seven shillings at a Billiard table to one Fenton, a publican at that place: The publican asked him for the money but being unable to pay it, he vowed vengeance against Fenton for insulting his -----, and accordingly on Saturday morning last went, with a brace of pistols to a shop and bought some powder, and also enquired where he could procure some ball, but we suppose he did not declare his intention. He then loitered about Fenton's house, and Fenton's brother [fearing] he intended to do some mischief, went out to him and threatened to beat him. Upon which De Soulis presented a pistol at him, which Fenton instantly wrenched from him. De Soulis immediately drew another from his pocket and shot him through the neck. The villain then fled, but being closely pursued was taken in a room at the Three Crowns and the same evening was committed to Leicester.

The unfortunate man died of the wound and has left a wife and three children.

LRO P128/15.

Update - For some reason the Frenchman was acquitted of the crime and the victim's family were so angered by this on top of the loss already sustained that they had carved on his headstone a positive tirade on the shortcomings of the English Justice System. It survives today in the Cathedral churchyard and is often pointed out to visitors on 'Blue Badge' guided walks.

THE DERBY MERCURY - JAN 1785

The following is a fact;- On Thursday, the 6th instant, one Michael Robinson, a shoemaker and a Parishioner of St. Margaret's in Leicester, about 2 o'clock in the middle of the day, placed himself upon a stone near to the door of a Gentleman in Leicester. He was apparently very ill, and a number of people got about him. Upon enquiry it was soon found that he was really ill, and the Gentleman whose house he was near, with great humanity ordered him a glass of Gin, which he drank with difficulty; and afterwards some warm ale. In attempting to drink the last, he bit a piece out of the mug in which it was brought to him.

A Workhouse Master who was sent for to take care of him pronounced him drunk, to which he replied that being destitute of employ, and unwilling to ask relief of a Parish, for the last fortnight he had lived upon the hedges, without victuals or drink of any sort, but what they afforded in Hops and Haws, till finding himself ready to perish he had crawled into the Town, that he might die there.

A consultation soon arose amongst the Parishioners whether he should be permitted to die in their Parish, which was determined in the negative, and the poor man was immediately hoickt [sic] away in a chair for St. Margaret's, and we learn that he died as they were conveying him to the workhouse.

This is the second person this winter who has died of absolute want within the limits of that Borough. And yet it remains urged as a reason, that because the Hosiery trade is good, there was no real distress during the late severe season, and of course, no necessity even to seem to look at the wants of others.

LRO. PI28

DREWRY'S DERBY MERCURY - APRIL 1785

On Monday, about 11 o'clock of the day, a dreadful fire broke out at Thrussington, in the County of Leicester, at the house of Mr. Glover, a respectable farmer, who at that time was absent from Home. The whole of his dwelling house, out-houses, stacks of corn, hay etc., to a very great amount, together with his waggons, carts and implements in husbandry were destroyed. Fourteen other houses were also burned down to the ground and the inhabitants, to the number of twenty families or upwards, were left without a covering; the buildings being all thatch and the weather remarkably dry, the conflagration spread with surprising rapidity and scarcely gave time for the unfortunate owners to save anything from the Flames. Two Engines were sent from hence to their assistance and one from Melton, notwithstanding which, if the wind had not happily changed, the whole village must have been destroyed.

We have however, the Pleasure to learn, that Means are taken to give relief to the sufferers in this dreadful calamity. The Rev. Mr. Woodcock, with a promptitude that does honour to his feelings as a Man, on the next morning, collected 14 Guineas in the

Parish of Barky [Barkby], for their immediate relief, and to Mr. Cleaver and Mr. Adcock in a like manner made a collection of £15. 8. 0. in the Parish of Syston.

LRO. PI28

Thanks to Jim Colver for kindly transcribing the three newspaper articles for us. The last two were selected for publication particularly to illustrate the contrasting experiences people might encounter when serious misfortune struck in the latter part of the 18th century.

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A LOCAL CHARITY

Students leaving Guthlaxton College and heading for higher education are advised they may be eligible for a modest grant to help with the purchase of books etc. This comes courtesy a charity known as the Norton, Salisbury & Brailsford Educational Foundation which is administered by trustees from the council offices at Bushloe House. The three names belong to Sarah Norton, Mary Salisbury and John & Alice Brailsford all of whom have now long since passed into history but must once have been very well known in Wigston.

Sarah Norton was born Sarah Freer and baptised at All Saints Church on 16/1/1728, the daughter of Henry Freer and Catherine nee Davenport. Both the Freers and Davenports were noted, prosperous families in Wigston and Sarah who was her father's sole heir owned 122.5 acres of land in the parish at enclosure. She married Cornelius Norton, a Leicester grocer, in 1749 and the couple had at least four children - Cornelius, William and two Josephs. Sadly these all died young and when Sarah herself died, a widow, she bequeathed in her Will (proved 28/2/1778) to "the churchwardens and overseers of Great Wigston £230, the interest thereof to be applied as follows: the interest of £100 for schooling twelve poor girls, the interest of £20 to purchase bibles for the said poor girls, the interest of £50 for distribution of bread on Easter Monday and the interest of £50 for distribution of coals among the poor on St. Thomas's Day." These figures seem to add up to £220 so there is an error in the transcribing somewhere!

Mary Salisbury was the wife of Edward Salisbury an apothecary. In 1738 the couple moved with their family from St. Martins parish in Leicester to take up residence in Wigston. Their settlement certificate deposited in Wigston parish records survives, from this time. The couple also appear to have lost their children at a young age, two of them, a Mary and a William, are commemorated on a large horizontal gravestone on the left of the path which passes through the churchyard of All Saints just past the North entrance. Edward himself died on 12/4/1776 age 69 and Mary on 20/12/1786 aged 82. They were both buried under a floor slab (inscription now illegible) in the North aisle of the church. In her will Mary left £60 for schooling poor children and £10 to be vested in repairing the tombstones of Edward and William Salisbury and the surplus for the poor.

Alice Brailsford was born Alice Clarke in c!733, the youngest child of John Walton Clarke and Ann nee Symons. The Clarkes were an old landowning Wigston family who lived at Wigston Hall (though probably a smaller 'core' property rather than the large mansion which was demolished in 1960's). Alice married John Brailsford also of Wigston at All Saints Church on 15/9/1774. Prior to this John had been allotted 24.75

acres of land at enclosure and Alice, jointly with John Paine who was probably her trustee, 19 acres. John and Alice who married late in life had no children and in c 1788 left £50 for the poor of Wigston.

These three capital sums amounting to £350 were combined and on 30/3/1800 lent to Samuel Ringrose on the security of a close in Wigston. Later the same year the charity is described as having laid out the money to purchase 8036 of land which was let for £12 per annum. This can be identified from Ordnance Survey maps as situated on the North side of Aylestone Lane a short distance before the bridge. It was quite probably the same close Samuel Ringrose had owned which was subsequently purchased by the charity by mutual agreement, (a common practice in early times before the general availability of banks.) It was let as a whole for some years but later turned into allotments. In 1877 it brought in £16 per annum and in 1888 through to 1941 it was making £90. By the latter date it was being administered by the U.D.C. It was eventually sold for building and the name Brailsford Road is a reminder of its early connections.

Tricia Berry

Sources: *History of Leics.* by John Nichols, *The Midland Peasant* by W.G. Hoskins, LRO DE/384/12, DE384/83/1-121, DE384/72/1-6, Wigston & St. Martin's parish registers, *White's Directory* 1846.