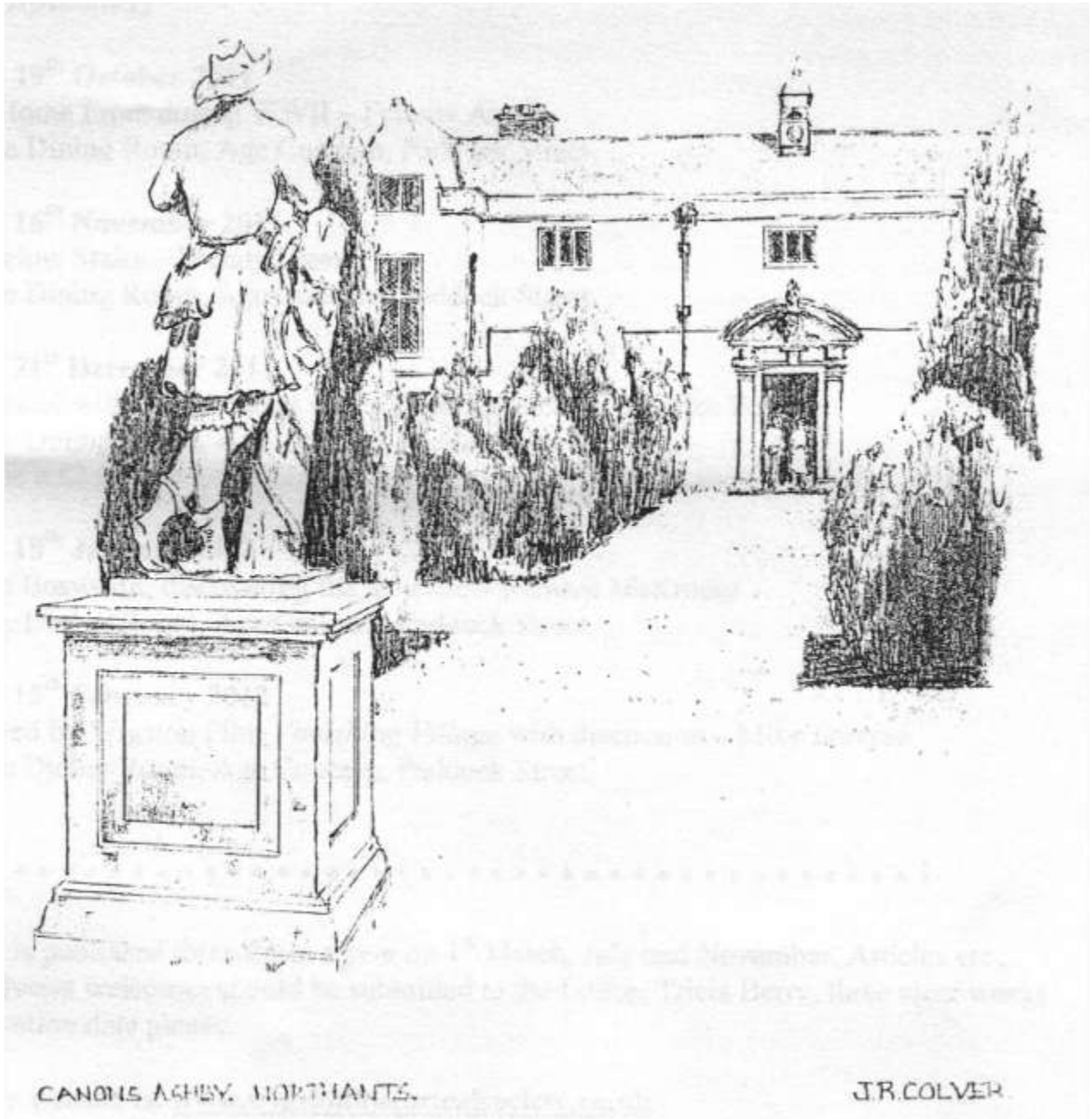




Greater Wigston Historical Society
White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna Leicestershire

BULLETIN 90



PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS – JULY 2011 TO FEBRUARY 2012

Wednesday 20th July 2011 (Please note – this is extra to the published programme)

Guided walk (approx. one hour) around Wigston – Bill Boulter

7.00p.m. Meet at the Council Offices, parking on site, but note the gates will be locked at 9.00p.m.

No need to book for this, a contribution of £2.00 per person will be collected on the night for the Framework Knitters Museum.

Wednesday 17th August 2011

Topographical Studies: Leicester & County via the paintings of John Flower – Neil Finn

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

Wednesday 21st September 2011

The Slums of Leicester – Ned Newitt

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

(Please note - this is a change to the previously published programme. Wendy Freer's talk will now be given in November)

Wednesday 19th October 2011

Life on the Home Front during WWII – Felicity Austin

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

Wednesday 16th November 2011

Goings on below Stairs – Wendy Freer

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

Wednesday 21st December 2011

Christmas Social with quiz & street views (Bull Head Street) – Mike Forryan

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

(There will be a £2 00 charge payable on the evening, to cover the cost of refreshments).

Wednesday 18th January 2012

The Battle of Bosworth, discovering the new site – Richard McKinder

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

Wednesday 15th February 2012

AGM followed by Wigston Film *Vanishing Village* with discussion – Mike Forryan

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

The Bulletin is published three times a year on 1st March, July and November. Articles etc., (which are always welcome) should be submitted to the Editor, Tricia Berry, three clear weeks before publication date please.

The Society's website is: www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk

Chairman Mike Forryan's e-mail is: chairman@wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk

FRONT COVER

Jim Colver's drawing on the cover this time features Canons Ashby House, Canons Ashby, Nr. Daventry, Northamptonshire. It is a view of the rear of the house seen from the formal garden and shows a prominent feature, the 18th century lead statue of a shepherd boy attributed to the Flemish born sculptor Jan Van Nost, or his son of the same name.

The property belonged in the 12th century to an Augustinian Priory of Black Canons from whom

the village and house took its name. The ruins of the priory Church of St. Mary can still be seen in the grounds.

The present house is an Elizabethan Manor and was built by John Dryden who inherited through his wife an 'L' shaped farmhouse which he gradually extended. In the 1590s his son Sir Erasmus Dryden, first Baronet, completed the final north range of the house, which enclosed the pebble courtyard. The interior is noted for its Elizabethan wall paintings and Jacobean plasterwork.

The garden is a particular feature created by Edward Dryden between 1708 and 1717. It is arranged in descending terraces linked by stone steps. The first and second are lawn and topiary, the third is orchard and the last is a wild flower meadow with long grasses. Within the garden are timber gates and seats, rose gardens and herbaceous borders, a fine Cedar of Lebanon, fruit trees from the 16th century and of course the statue. The whole is enclosed in 70 acres of parkland.

It has been the home of the Dryden family for 400 years. Notable members are John Dryden, Poet Laureate, (1631-1700) and Sir Henry Dryden an eminent Victorian.

Louis Osman (1914 -1996) an architect and goldsmith occupied Canons Ashby between 1969 -1979 and while there, made with the help of his enamelist wife, the crown used at the Investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1969.

The property has been in the care of the National Trust since 1981.

MARCH MEETING

This month Mike Forryan and Tony Lawrance showed two newsreels from a collection from the 1940/50s which proved extremely popular. All of us were familiar with the events covered but a lot were children at the time, so did not listen to the news and hadn't heard how things were officially reported.

Starting with events in 1949 we watched the somewhat grainy black and white film of such events as the Civil War in China, which the communists won and then posed a threat to Hong Kong, the last outpost of the West in the East. The formation of NATO and the Council of Europe, the Berlin Blockade and check point, the launch of the Lockheed Constitution double decker aircraft. Israel joining the UN, Prince Rainier aged 26 coming to power in Monaco, the progress of refurbishing the newly nationalised rail network following neglect and damage due to the war, the Welfare State newly launched even though Britain was very short of money and had received an £8,000,000 gift from Australia. Tommy Handley died, there was an epidemic of horse flu, no more coupons, floods in Norfolk, lights on in London, sweets off ration, there was a May Day communist rally, a flying boat landed on the Thames for the first time in 21 years, a dock strike, the De Havilland Comet one of the world's first pressurised aircraft was unveiled, a very hot summer, Britain devalued the currency, Russia tested its first nuclear weapon and St. Paul's was repaired having suffered destruction of Wren's original chancel, and some stained glass windows, in the bombing. There was charming footage of baby Prince Charles with his parents and of Donald Campbell, the introduction of nylons and some new Christmas toys.

There was just time to take a look at 1940 when the first woman doctor was appointed to the Navy, scrap metal was collected, the Duke and Duchess of Windsor left for Bermuda following his appointment as Governor General. The USA sent clothes and other essentials, and the King and Queen inspected bomb damage, the city of Coventry suffered terrible destruction and Christmas treats were organised for those serving overseas.

Thanks to Mike and Tony for a really interesting evening.

APRIL MEETING

In April we welcomed Mary Matts who came in costume to talk about the lives of canal people.

She outlined the introduction of canals a little over 200 years ago by industrialists who needed a better transport system for distributing their goods. The Duke of Bridgewater's was the first and he pumped water from his coal mines to fill his new canal. Compulsory purchase was enabled by Act of Parliament and very soon a network of 4,000 miles was established which virtually created

the Industrial Revolution. They proved more constant than rivers which were liable to dry in summer, could carry far more than packhorses, and enabled the efficient movement of goods from supplier to customer both inland and to ports for export.

Tolls were paid to use the canals and plenty of employment was created with boatmen, toll collectors and wharf men being required. Often children were employed to lead the horses and stables were provided along the towpath for overnight stops. But by 1830 they had become dated by the introduction of railways. This competition led to reduced wages and the boatmen could no longer afford cottages and took to living with their families on the boats. It would have been very crowded but they did adapt. Cooking equipment consisted of only basics, a cooking pot, water pot, scoop, plates and mugs. These were hung on the wall or stored outside on the top. As demonstrated by Mary, the women wore boots, a white apron, full skirted dress or skirt and blouse with tucks for easy movement, leather belt for hanging small items, shawl and fancy tucked and roused bonnet with a 'skirt' at the back to protect from the sun.

Boats were first made of wood; oak with an elm base, but later iron and then steel. Companies mostly owned the boats, though some boat people owned their own. Boat people are known for their attractive crochet items and for decorating their boats and equipment with painted motifs, often castles or stylised flowers. Mary finished by making a beautiful job of painting a pail in this way, completely freehand and while continuing with her talk.

After WWI 2,000 miles of canals were abandoned. Gradually a new use was found in leisure which started in the 1930s with the first boating rally being held in 1948. Currently there are more boats on the waterways than when it was commercial. A new canal from Bedford to Milton Keynes is under construction which will connect to the Fens and Norfolk Broads. A glass aqueduct will carry it over the M1.

Our Chairman, Mike Forryan, thanked Mary for a really most interesting evening.

MAY MEETING

Following Michael Wood's fascinating TV series on Kibworth we visited the village for this summer outing. The programme got villagers digging trial pits in their gardens, even one in the Coach and Horses car park, altogether 55 were dug, with finds examined by experts and evidence identified of Roman and Anglo-Saxon occupation. This together with dating beams in some of the houses to 14th Century, the discovery of old deeds relating to Kibworth Grammar School and the survival of many early documents at Merton College Library, Oxford, meant much more is now known of the village's past.

We met our guide, James Carpenter, outside the church and learned a little of this background history. Kibworth is really two separate villages, Kibworth Harcourt the more agricultural and largely owned by Merton College, and Kibworth Beauchamp which has more industry. Both, together with Smeeton Westerby are all in the same parish of St. Wilfred's. Our walk concentrated on Kibworth Harcourt on this occasion.

Being situated on the main route from Leicester to London, Kibworth had much traffic. A Turnpike Trust, (one of the earliest) was therefore set up in 1725. There were about 1,000 such Turnpike Roads established throughout the country linking all the main towns. Tolls were charged to travel on them, the proceeds used to keep the roads in good repair. Kibworth's Turnpike road handled 24 passenger coaches a day, plus any number of goods wagons and the mail coaches at its peak. The original route through the village had several sharp bends resulting in serious, sometimes fatal accidents, so in 1810 a bypass (the present route) was created. There were fourteen coaching inns to cater for the needs of passengers and horses.

Our walking route went down Main Street, the old road, now a quiet backwater. There are some splendid houses, some still thatched, some bearing original fire insurance plaques, and a number which were once coaching inns, with high, arched side entrances where horses and carriages would once have clattered through to the stables behind.

A footpath led to 'The Munt' a round, believed 12th century earthwork, which appears to be a small motte and bailey fortress, but no-one is sure of its origins. Excavations have revealed traces of a paved floor, possibly a cist (burial chamber), bone bodkin, burnt wood, teeth and bones, and a lamp of the Roman period. Back on Main Street is the Manor Farmhouse, which has medieval origins, an unusually placed letterbox, a Sun Insurance fire plaque, and three more plaques with dates on them; 1475 indicates the first stone building on the site, 1695 when the building was faced in brick and 1860 when further additions were built together with the garden wall. A little further on is The Old House, a Grade II* Renaissance house built in 1678, considered the best of its kind in the Midlands. Constructed in brick with stone dressings, ironstone plinth and a substantial hipped roof with hipped dormers. It was built by William Parker who died in 1699. Above the front door is a shield of arms believed to be his. It is remembered in the 1920s as the home of General Jack, a very keen huntsman and WWI soldier.

The area has links to Rev. John Wesley who stayed there, Rev. Philip Dodderidge, a noted hymn writer and minister at the Congregational Church and Thomas Cook, who is thought to have had his original idea of hiring a train for an excursion to Loughborough while walking through Kibworth en-route from Harborough to Leicester.

The evening concluded with a really enjoyable meal at the Coach & Horses. Our chairman, Mike Forryan, then thanked the landlord, Andrew Southerden, for organising the evening, his wife Beverley for the food, and James for leading the walk. Following the TV programme locals have launched the Kibworth Improvement Team (KIT), to promote and improve the area. They have recently won a generous Lottery Grant, and intend to create village trail leaflets, and arrange more guided walks with refreshments etc. Ours was the first one, we were the 'guinea pig group', it was very enjoyable and we wish them well.

JUNE MEETING

Our second visit of the season was to the Bell Foundry at Loughborough, where we were shown round the workshop and had time to look at the fascinating museum. John Taylor Bellfounders Ltd., is the largest bellfoundry in the world, and one of only two in Britain, the other being at Whitechapel. It has been in business for over 200 years and can produce anything from tiny cow bells right up to the huge church bells. They have customers worldwide.

The Taylor family who started the company over 200 years ago, came originally from Risely, Bedfordshire. Robert Taylor 1759-1830 the first bellfounder, served an apprenticeship at St. Neots, Huntingdonshire. In due course he was in charge of the foundry. In 1821 the firm which then included his sons William and John moved to Oxford. John started another foundry in Devon before returning to Oxford. In 1838 the bells at All Saints' Loughborough needed recasting and John won the contract. Because the churchwardens insisted they must be cast in Loughborough, he moved to the town, and decided to remain. His son John William entered the business and took over when his father died in 1858. John William died in 1909 and was succeeded by his son also John William, who died in 1919. John William II's sons Pryce 1891-1927 and Paul Lea 1914-1981 also carried on the tradition. Nowadays the firm is a limited company though still retains the family name.

The foundry's first premises in Pack Horse Lane, Loughborough were rented. In 1859 a purpose built bellfoundry was completed on the present site. In 1891 after a serious fire part was rebuilt and enlarged. The attached tower contains ten bells which experienced ringers may try. The Carillon Tower once housed 46 bells and was constructed for demonstration purposes. The Loughborough War Memorial carillon of 1915 was the first major commission.

Church bells were first cast in this country by monks from about 800AD. They are usually made of bronze, an alloy of 77% copper and 23% tin. The clapper is generally of iron or steel. The bell is mounted on a horizontal beam known as a headstock, which is pivoted on the supporting bellframe.

Bells are made using traditional casting methods. The core of the mould is prepared on a baseplate formed around a core of coke and shaped brick. It is then coated in loam which is shaped by a crook (pattern) of the correct size, rotated on a spindle, then dried in the oven and finally painted with a 'non-stick' graphite. The case of the outer mould (made of cast iron punctured with holes), is turned upside down and coated (on the inside this time) with more loam shaped by a corresponding spindle.

A small hole is left in the top for pouring in the molten metal. The case is dried, inscribed and coated with graphite. The outer case is then fitted over the inner, and carefully clamped to the base plate, the thus assembled mould is buried in a sand pit and fitted with a pouring box placed over the hole. The bell metal is heated to 1200°C, poured into a ladle (lipped container) hanging from the overhead crane, positioned over the sandpit and poured into the mould through the pouring box.

After it has cooled in 3/4 days it is lifted from the pit and the mould removed. The resulting bell is then positioned upside down, and tuned by removing metal from the interior as required using a vertical borer.

The largest bell ever produced was 'Great Paul' in 1881, for St. Paul's Cathedral. This weighed over 16½ tons and stood above 9 feet tall. It was transported to London on a special low, flat trailer drawn by a traction engine. It was accompanied by another engine towing a van full of tools and jacks, in case the trailer needed repair. This van doubled as sleeping accommodation. Attached behind was another vehicle carrying boiler plates, to be laid down if the heavy load got stuck. Last of all was a cask shaped tank, to supply the two engines with water if none was available when needed. The procession was on the road 11 days, and attracted great curiosity, sometimes being accompanied for a while by local bands.

When it reached St. Paul's the door to the tower proved 2½ feet too narrow and the solid stone walls had to be cut away. Inside the building an elaborate timber slope had been constructed from an outside doorway to inside the tower, and lubricated with tallow and black lead. The bell, roped to a circular wooden disc, was then hauled along this using ropes and 'crabs' or windlasses. Two further 'crabs' from Woolwich Dockyard, each worked by four men using 2½ inch rope, with a series of blocks and pulleys, levered it 125 feet up the tower to its position beside the clock. The mould for this iconic bell was kept and has recently been on display in the town centre.

This was a fascinating visit, a trip into history as many of the processes, tried and tested, have remained unchanged for hundreds of years. Mike Forryan thanked our guides for a really interesting experience.



Our party being led into the workshop.



An embossing die. All bells are embossed with company stamp, date cast, order number and pattern number.



A testing frame, the rope is controlled .
by the large wheel to the right.



Collection of bells, one 700 years old, used to
demonstrate different ringing tones.

GUIDED WALK

Please note an extra item has been added to the programme. On 20th July Bill Boulter is leading a guided walk around Wigston. Starting at 7.00p.m. from the Council Offices, it will last approx. one hour. We can park on site, but the gates will be locked at 9.00p.m. No need to book but £2.00 per person will be collected on the night for the Framework Knitters Museum.

DISCLAIMER

The Officers and Committee of the Society take every care when arranging presentations and visits for members, guests and visitors but would like to make it clear that attendance at these is at your own risk, and they will not be held responsible for any accidents, mishaps, damage to property owned by others or losses of any kind which might occur.

RECORDING EQUIPMENT

At the committee meeting in April a final choice was made on the type of digital audio recording equipment to buy. This will be purchased shortly, and we hope members will come forward with suggestions of suitable people to interview and also to do some recording themselves. It is easy to operate, just an on and off button!!

PHOTOGRAPHY PROJECT

For a bit of fun but with a serious purpose we are inviting members to get out and about with their cameras during the summer. We would like photos of any feature of historical interest within the boundaries of Wigston and South Wigston. They should be outside and assessable to the public.

Most of the notable buildings have already been recorded so perhaps concentrate on smaller properties or architectural features, street furniture, advertising signs, memorials or landscape such as an ancient tree, hedge, some ridge and furrow or aspects of the canal or railway. Anything really that is old and interesting.

Please hand your contributions, prints or on disc, to Mike or Tricia by 30th September with your name, location and date taken. A modest prize will be awarded for the photograph judged to be the best, taking into account subject choice and quality of image. It is hoped to put the pictures together to form a booklet either in paper or electronic format.

LOCAL AUTHORITY CUTS

As everyone is aware libraries, museums and the Record Office are all having to make savings due to the economic situation. People are being encouraged to use their services, as it is believed the more they are visited the more they will appear to be valued by the community, and therefore subject to less severe cuts.

NEW BOOK

Mike Smith of Fleckney has written an account of his childhood in Wigston 1948-1964. The title is *Twas All Fields* and it is available online from www.Lulu.com or www.amazon.com. He has submitted the following excerpt.

“.....Mam and Dad’s habit on a Saturday night when Dad was on ‘leave’, to go out dancing together or for her to accompany him to one of his semi-pro dance band gigs. When they’d left, around 7.30 say, Gran would take me up to the front bedroom and settle me into the double bed weighed down with sheets, blankets galore, a bedspread and counterpane. The room consisted of a small box, ‘banal but tasteful’ beige wallpaper, a single-dark brown bedside cabinet topped by a Victorian water set, and two small windows overlooking the street. I soon learned that a ‘treat’ was in the offing, and that on hearing the front door closing behind her, if I looked out of the window she could be seen making her way across the road to the beer-off of G W Brown’s, with a purse clutched in her left hand, and a quart sized and tapered blue and white enamel jug in her right. On her return, and while playing ‘possum’, I could hear her bringing the ‘treat’ up the stairs. The excitement was tremendous, and the following few sips of Northampton Brown Ale from a teacup were enough to ensure I slept through the night, and that Gran got a few hours of peace and quiet.

“.....teacher was a Mr. Widdowson, who I remember as a benign and sympathetic man, who maintained discipline by using the philosophy of ‘speak quietly, but carry a big stick’. Beside his desk he kept a trunk/chest that contained the ultimate deterrent – ‘Timothy’ – consisting of a single black plimsoll to be used only for serious misdemeanours. The procedure was that of being called in front of the class, told to bend over, and being whacked a couple of times on the backside by this fearsome weapon. Although used sparingly, I seem to remember being the victim of this humiliation on several occasions. It was from this place later, having managed to pass the 11 plus, that I eventually moved to Guthlaxton Grammar School.

“In the long school holidays, Jim Rixon and I began to plan an aquatic safari from Wigston to Foxton via the Grand Union Canal. Somehow we managed to enlist the help of a Mr. Bob Hatton, who was Wigston’s Youth Officer at the time, and who provided us with access to a two-man canoe for free! The planning had been meticulous. Flasks of Tizer/Dandelion and Burdock. Spuds that we hoped would sustain us throughout this marathon. Sandwiches, torches, medicines that would protect us from tsetse flies, tropical diseases, attacks from boa-constrictors, crocodiles, and any other similar perils that we might encounter during this epic voyage. We knew exactly what we were getting ourselves into, and as true Englishmen have always done, the decision was made to go for it.”

PAST TRANSACTIONS OF THE SOCIETY

A list of our transactions has been included in a previous Bulletin but as we now have a number of new members we are repeating this. All the transactions are being transferred to the Society web site and any spare paper copies are available free to members who would like them. Mike Forryan brings them to each meeting. Any not taken will eventually be destroyed. A complete paper set has been deposited at the Record Office and at least two members also have complete sets.

No:	Title	Pages
1	Court Case – Boulter v Noone 1637 (evidence)	9
2	Wigston & District Free Churchman 1908/15 (adverts from)	11
3	History of Wigston by W J R Pochin (lecture in 1911)	9
4	Leic. Chronicle & Mercury 1888/89 (Wigston extracts by Colver/Wignall)	12
5	Do 1867/68 do	20
6	Do 1869 do	20
7	Do 1870 do	13
8	Do 1871 do	13
9	Do 1884/1887 do	10
10	Do 1890 do	10
11	Do 1891 do	10
12	Do 1892 do	11
13	Do 1893 do	12
14	Do 1894 do	11
15	Wigston Magna Official Guide 1923	9
16	The Fields of Wigston Magna by W G Hoskins	23
17	Wigston Town Cricket Club by J Colver	40
18	Wigston U D C Engineer's Notebook (extracts)	8
19	Wigston Junction Brickworks Mystery by H A Gamble	6
20	Murder/Sudden Death in Medieval Wigston by W G Hoskins (8 studies)	9
21	Wyggeston Hospital Records Pt 1 (Wigston extracts by Colver/Wignall)	46
21	Do Pt 2 do	47
22	Notes on Wigston's History by Colver & Wignall (various sources)	17
23	Footpath Changes in Great Wigston in 19 th century by R Essinger	52
24	Building of St. Thomas's Church (Parish Magazine extracts)	22
25	All Saints' Parish Magazine 1914/18 (extracts)	34
26	Do 1924/28 do	34
27	Minutes Wigston Magna Vestry Minutes 1821/30 & extracts 1831/1842	44
28	Study of Established Church in Wigston Magna by Doreen Burton	36
29	Minutes of Gt. Wigston Board School 1872/73 & extracts 1873/75	38
30	Account of a voyage round the world in 1920 by A T A Lee	39
31	Origins of road names at Wigston Harcourt by B Ward & D Lucas	23
32	Phenomenal Occurrences at Wigston Magna by D Lucas	19
33	The Name of Wigston Magna – How & Why? by D Lucas	5
34	Leics. Place Names by A C Wood (meanings of, written 1917/20)	8
35	History of the hamlet of Kilby Bridge by I Varey	8
36	Bell Street 100 years ago by I Varey (based on 1881 census)	13
37	Wiggy's Child 1926/39 by Doreen Boulter (childhood memories)	54
38	Wigston Board Schools 1872/1904 by R Wignall (records of)	45
39	Some Research of Oadby by E Baker & W Coleman	64
40	Wigston Gas-Light & Coke Company (minutes & Act of Parliament)	19
41	Tythorn Farm 1806/65 (plans & copy documents)	31
42	Bulls Head Street 100 years ago by J Colver (based on 1881 census)	14
43	Wigston & District Free Churchman 1905/12 (extracts)	27
44	Midland Railway & its Influence on Development of Wigston by S Elsham	53
45	Notes on Tythorn Hill by D Lucas	6
46	George Davenport, Highwayman by W Moore (written 1797)	17
47	Diary of Edwin Smart, Fleckney Lodge (1875 farmer)	15
48	M A Biddles Receipt [Recipe] Book 1886	38
49	South Wigston War Memorial 1923 (programme of unveiling)	5
50	Stage Productions in Wigston Magna & South 1918/39 (programmes)	17
51	A History of South Wigston by F Noble	15
52	Urban Contrasts in South Wigston by M McNeil	29
53	Wiggy's War 1938/45 by Doreen Boulter (memories of life at home)	32
54	Wigston Magna a Local History project by J Rayfield (school project)	12
55	Bushloe End 100 years ago by J Colver (based on 1881 census)	8

56	Brass Bands in Wigston by Doreen Boulter	11
57	Moat Street 100 years ago by J Colver (based on 1881 census)	13
58	Some notes on the Bulls Head Inn by J Colver	17
59	Illustrated Leic. Chronicle 18/8/1961 with Wigston supplement	25
60	Do 1961 (adverts from)	16
61	Picture Post 1941 (national adverts from)	12
62	Urban Contrasts in South Wigston by C Crocker (GCSE course work)	104
63	Recollections of South Wigston by F Noble	10
64	Transportation of James Marlow of Wigston in 1838 by J L Marlow	18
65	Study of the Minor Place Names of Wigston by V Holyoak	41
66	Life of J J Hill (with recollections of South Wigston 1920/30s)	17
67	Long Street 100 years ago by J Colver (based on 1881 census)	11
68	Long Street, 10 years of change by Colver/Whyment (1881/1891 census)	9
69	Wigston's Two Churches by E S Boulter (from 1903 Parish Magazines)	27
70	Restoration of St. Wolstan's Church 1873/7 by Colver (plans/letters/accts)	31
71	A E Morrison & Son, Electric Vehicle manuf. (history from brochures)	26
72	School Cookery & Household Management Book 1914/15 by S Lewin	15
73	Wigston Bowling Club 1922/95 by D Chandler	24
74	Wigston Prisoner of War Fund 1918 (committee proceedings)	7
75	Conditions of Framework Knitters 1820/54 by Colver (enquiry evidence)	23
76	Infirmary Parades 1932/46 (programmes)	10
77	Government Evacuation Scheme 1937 by J Colver (Wigston's preparations for)	9
78	Case for Embezzlement & Neglect of Work by a stockinger (evidence etc)	6
79	Wigston Parish Allotment Committee Minutes 1848/65 (extracts)	7
80	History of Wigston U R Church (various sources)	17
81	Accounts of T W Clarke, Huit Farm, Earl Shilton 1878 & extracts 1879/87	11
82	Recollections of Magna Sunbeams by R Kirby (dance troupe)	7
83	Grand Hotel, Leicester by P Tarrant	9
84	D Lucas's scrapbook, Wigston newspaper cuttings 1950/60s	53
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86	D Lucas's scrapbook, do 1960s	40

FRAMEWORK KNITTERS MUSEUM – 42/44 BUSHLOE END

A HISTORY FROM THE DEEDS

The earliest date mentioned in the deeds is 10/11 February 1764 when the property is described as “a Messuage, Cottage or Tenement with the appurtenances situate standing and being in Great Wigstontogether with all outhouses etc”. It had been “sometime since in the occupation of William Taylby, since then in the tenure of John Hackett, but then in the tenure or occupation of Thomas Johnson his assignee or assigns and formerly belonged to one Sampson Davenport, clerk, and Mary his wife and was sometime since purchased by Samuel Davenport of Great Wigston of and from John and Joseph Davenport.” (It is very likely that John and Joseph Davenport were Sampson's executors and arranged the sale to their kinsman Samuel). The Davenports were a very notable landed family in Wigston in the 17th/18th centuries and built a family home, The Elms now the British Legion Club, opposite 42/44 Bushloe End.

In February 1764 the above mentioned Thomas Johnson of Great Wigston, framework knitter, sold the property to Joseph Neale the younger, of Castle View, Leicester, a tailor, and his wife Elizabeth for £85. 00. It was to be held in tail for the lifetime of Joseph and Elizabeth his wife and all of their children, the eldest son first, then other sons in birth order, and then daughters in the same way, to be followed by sons and then daughters of their eldest son etc. In default of such issue to the right heirs and assigns of said Elizabeth Neale wife of Joseph Neale. This latter clause must mean that Elizabeth was a widow with children prior to her marriage to Joseph. However, in spite of this family arrangement Joseph and Elizabeth changed their minds and on 13/14 October 1768 sold the property to Richard Spencer, of Kilby, yeoman, for £80. 00.

Richard and his wife Ann lived there with their three children John Earl, Hannah and Elizabeth. By 10/11 June 1784 Richard had become ill and the property, which was mortgaged to James Page, of Leicester, scrivener, for £50. 00, was placed in the hands of trustees, Thomas Clarke of Leicester, woolcomber, and John Wood of Great Wigston, framesmith. The premises were confirmed to be “as described and comprised in the before abstracted indenture of Feb 1764” and then repeated as that “Messuage, Cottage or Tenement, yard, garden, outhouses, orchard or homestead, hereditaments and premises”. Richard died on 26/7/1784 and the following year on 11/12 May, Ann Spencer, widow, and the Trustees sold the property to John Clarson, of Great Wigston, farmer, for £83. 00, this being reduced to £33. 00 because John also took over the £50. 00 mortgage. The Spencers had a very sad life losing all three of their known children while young. John Earl died aged one month in 1771, Hannah aged 13 years in 1779 and the other daughter Elizabeth in 1786 not long after the death of her father and the sale of their home. All four are buried at All Saints’ Church.

John Clarson died in May 1798, and his wife Mary died in May 1812 both intestate. By 18/11/1818 their only surviving child William Clarson, butcher, had inherited the property. William Clarson arranged for the £50. 00 mortgage to be assigned from Abraham Seward of Bull Head Court, Newgate Street, London, a merchant (who was executor of the will of Elizabeth Page, the widow of James), to Thomas Siddans of Great Wigston, schoolmaster.

As well as his house and premises William Clarson owned a small close (field), and as both are included together within the same documents at this time both have been included here.

AS TO THE CLOSE

In 1769 William Sutton of Great Wigston, farmer, and his wife Ann borrowed money, and put up as security Ann’s one third share of a 9 acre close called Fifth Fare or Farr Close, in Wigston. Ann nee Johnson had been left this land by her brother William Johnson, then late of Great Wigston, yeoman, by his will dated 23/4/1768. Following Ann’s death William Sutton married again to Mary Ward. When William himself died he left in his will dated 13/7/1779 the 3 acres which had belonged to his first wife Ann, to his second wife Mary Sutton. Mary subsequently married secondly John Clarson, the above mentioned, and became the mother of William Clarson, the butcher.

AS TO THE HOUSE AND CLOSE

On 5/7/1823 William transferred the outstanding mortgage loans for both 42/44 Bushloe End and the three acre close to Ann Hunt of Huncote. His wife Elizabeth Clarson nee Wilson died in July 1827 and was buried at Wigston. William subsequently married again to another lady named Elizabeth. When he died on 15/11/1845 the executors of his will were named as Richard Seddon of Great Wigston, Gent, who then lived at The Elms, (the old Davenport house opposite) and Joseph Rose of Great Wigston gardener. Joseph could more accurately be described as a market gardener, he cultivated acres of fruit trees and the like on ground which became known as The Orchards (Cherry Street etc.) between Bushloe House and the station. These two executors sold both the field, by then measured as being 3½ acres, and the house where Elizabeth Clarson was still living, by auction in May 1846. William Franklin of Leicester, framework knitter, was the successful bidder paying £339. 1s. 0d. for both. William Clarson left his wife money to buy furniture for a new house and a sixth share in the remains of his estate. The other five beneficiaries were his daughters Elizabeth Ward, Ann, Louisa, Emma Isabella and Rebecca Sarah.

AS TO THE HOUSE ONLY

William Franklin the latest purchaser died only three years later on 24/8/1849, and his will directed that his executors should collect the rents and profits from his estate for the benefit of his wife Ann. Following the death of Ann Franklin on 25/1/1889, the property was sold by Thomas Thornton, the current Trustee of the will of William Franklin to Joseph Truman, hosiery manufacturer, of Great Wigston for £285. 00. It seems likely that William Franklin bought the house as an investment,

Perhaps more for his wife, who may have been much younger as she lived another 40 years after his death. This is born out by the 1881 census which records Joseph Truman and his family as living in Bushloe End next to The Plough Inn, eight years before he took the opportunity to buy the property. (In the 1871 census they were living in Moat Street).

Joseph raised a mortgage to help with the purchase from the Wigston Magna Conservative Benefit Building Society, but repaid it after two years suggesting he was an established business man at the time. He died on 11/2/1904 and his wife Amelia the following year on 23/12/1905. The property was left to their daughter Annie Truman Carter whose husband Edgar Carter continued the business until 1948/9. Following the deaths of Edgar in 1951 and Annie in 1956 two of the couple's daughters, Grace Truman Carter and Helena Carter continued to occupy the house. The workshop was closed with the contents covered over and left intact which is why we have such a wonderful museum today. Following the death of Helena Carter on 16/5/1962 and of Grace T. Carter on 10/4/1986 the property was acquired by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, because of its historical importance. It was later placed in the hands of the Oadby and Wigston Buildings Preservation Trust.

AS TO THE CLOSE ONLY

Following the death of Ann Franklin the close was purchased by Ambrose Lee on 4/5/1889. The deeds for this and subsequent transactions are elsewhere but there is a note on the house deeds to the effect that Ambrose Lee had the right to production of the ones relating to the earlier history of his purchase should it be necessary. Ambrose was the founder of what became Two Steeples Ltd. He built a house 'Holmfield' in Aylestone Lane and probably bought the close for this purpose. The house has sadly now been demolished but stood on the site of the present residential home, Curtis Weston House.

Tricia Berry



42/44 Bushloe End, Wigston



Yarn winder as found c.1986



Knitting frame as found c.1986



Holmfield, Aylestone Lane,
once the home of Ambrose Lee