



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

BULLETIN 55



REBECCA AT THE WELL. A FOUNTAIN ERECTED BY THE BATH
TEMPERANCE SOCIETY 1861. BATH. J.R. COLVER.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS - OCTOBER 1999 TO FEBRUARY 2000

Wednesday 20th October 1999

'150 Years of Leicester's Museums' - Cynthia Brown of Museum Service
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

Wednesday 17th November 1999

The Work of the National Trust' - David Freer of National Trust
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

Wednesday 15th December 1999

'Christmas Social' with supper, quizzes, raffle etc.
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

NEW MILLENNIUM - A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

Wednesday 19th January 2000

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

Wednesday 16th February 2000

A.G.M. followed by The Peace Memorial Park Improvements' - David Toseland
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

FRONT COVER DRAWING

The cover shows one of many fountains erected by the Temperance Society. This one is still intact after nearly 140 years at Bath.

Jim Colver

The Bulletin is published three times a year on 1st 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.

JUNE MEETING

On Wednesday the 16th of June the Society met in the Paddock Street car park to share transport to visit Stanford Hall in the south of the county on the Leicestershire/Northamptonshire border.

We were met in the front of the stable block by our two guides and split into two groups. The first group going off to visit the house whilst the second viewed the stable block, other out buildings and rose garden. The two groups were to meet at the end of their respective tours for tea and biscuits in an upper room in one of the outbuildings.

Stanford Hall is probably unique in the fact that it has been in the hands of the same family since 1540. The Cave family first purchased the manor in 1540. In 1697 Sir Roger Cave, the second baronet, commissioned William Smith of Warwick to pull down the old manor house which stood with the church and village on the Northamptonshire side of the river. The new house was built on the Leicestershire bank using some of the old materials on an H-plan. The work, including the stable block, was completed by William's brother Francis Smith some time after 1730.

The entrance staircase on the east front was also altered by Francis about 1735 making this the main entrance to the building. Later work and remodelling of the interior was carried out by Francis and William Smith the Younger. This work included the insertion of a grander interior staircase and the raising of the ceiling of the saloon. The five upper windows on the south front are blind as a result of these alterations, thus preserving the symmetry of the facade. The entrance role of the saloon declined with the new east entrance and in 1880 it became a ballroom.

Also included as part of the tour was the Library, the drawing rooms, dining room and a couple of bedrooms. All of the rooms and passages displayed many portraits of the Cave family, their forebears, descendants and other family members. Because of the continuity of ownership the history of the house is very well documented and some of these documents were on display in the library.

AUGUST MEETING

Our August meeting took place actually in the United Reformed Church rather than the Boys Brigade Rooms and this added atmosphere and relevance to our President, Duncan Lucas's, talk on its history.

Duncan, who has been a member all his life, began by telling us that the Greater Wigston Independents (their original name), who were of the 'Presbyterian Persuasion', were thought to be the fifth oldest such group in the country. They were formed in 1662 by the Rev. Matthew Clarke the former vicar of Narborough, though there had been dissenters in the village even before this who met secretly in barns and private houses. The Rev. Clarke had been removed from office, like many other Established Church ministers, due to his refusal to comply with the Act of Uniformity. He went to live in a remote part of Leicester Forest because of the Five Mile Act which forbade non-conformist ministers from living within five miles of any town.

When Rev. Clarke retired the congregation established links for a time with the Great Meeting in Leicester until the passing of the Toleration Act when they shared a minister with Narborough. Evidence of those early links still exists today in that both Narborough and Wigston churches own land close together in Newton Lane, and have done so continuously since the 1700's, making these areas probably the longest to remain in the same ownership of any in the parish.

In about 1682 the Wigston congregation rented the redundant St. Wolstan's (now known as St. Wistan's) Church for three guineas a year and Dr. Doddridge the notable Kibworth minister and hymn writer preached to them there. After about 50 years the high church party gained ascendancy in the village and persuaded the parish to give the dissenters notice to leave. Under their then minister the Rev. Brogden the congregation bought the present Long Street site from Mr. Darker of Stoughton for £36. 10. 0. and created a church incorporating existing buildings. By 1841 these had become damp and unsuitable and the present building was erected. The foundation stone being laid on 3/8/1841 by Mr. George Davenport of Oxford, grandson of Samuel who had been the main benefactor in the building of the old chapel.

Over the years the church became Congregational and in more recent times part of the United Reformed Church. They have always provided plenty of activities for young people through the choir, Sunday School, bible classes, Girls' and Boys' Brigade and the annual sermons and outings. The buildings have been considerably extended as funds allowed and a Manse built for the minister, let at a peppercorn rent of I/- per year. They had their own burial ground until the opening of the cemetery.

Duncan pointed out some of the monuments and memorial windows commemorating past ministers and prominent church members. We then took a tour round the various ante-rooms to see photographs of past ministers, a display of old photographs of Wigston, and some deeds and ledgers kindly lent by the Record Office.

Edna Taylor thanked Duncan for a most interesting talk and also his sister Marion Daetwyler for her help during the evening and the most welcome tea and biscuits afterwards. She also made various announcements one being that former secretary Doris Chandler was suffering from breathing difficulties and had been admitted to hospital. We all wish her a very speedy recovery

SEPTEMBER MEETING

In September the society welcomed Mr. Dolby who travelled all the way from Scrooby, Nr. Sheffield to share his extensive knowledge of the Pilgrim Fathers. He began by drawing a distinction between early Puritans during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, who wanted to rid the Church of England of remaining Catholic practices, and the later ones who were Separatists and wanted the freedom to establish their own churches. These latter ones wished to use their own prayers rather than follow the Book of Common Prayer and wanted their minister to be independent, not part of the hierarchy of the established church.

These Separatists were concentrated in the north Notts, and south Yorks. area and nearly all were Cambridge educated, Oxford having a more Catholic tradition. The

movement is thought to have started at Babworth church with the arrival of a new vicar, Richard Clifton, whose father-in-law was a non-conformist. A group formed around him and when he moved to Scrooby it enlarged to encompass that area too. The members wore bright colourful clothes, not the dull, austere costumes associated with some other sects.

When James I learned of their activities he decided to harry them out, and so various families fled secretly in groups from isolated spots on the East Coast between Grimsby and Hull, settling in Leiden, Holland in 1607-8. After about 12 years as their children grew up they decided to make a completely fresh start in the new country of America. Because of the expense it was arranged they travel in a cargo ship named Mayflower which was due to sail from Southampton. 130 Pilgrims returned to England and boarded the ship there but the journey was interrupted when they had to turn back and put into Plymouth for repair. It was thus from Plymouth that they finally set sail, on a stormy 64 day voyage, arriving on 10/11/1620 and settling initially outside Virginia, Cape Codd. Later they moved round the bay to Plymouth, a village which was actually so named before their arrival.

Life was very hard and about half died in the first winter. The remainder survived by self sufficiency and trading furs etc. with the Indians. There was some dis-harmony within their ranks and the more ambitious broke away to establish their own estates by themselves. It is due to the industry of William Bradford, the only member without a university degree, that information has survived of the names of the Pilgrims, details of their courageous journey, and how they fared in their new land. He wrote a diary of their activities up to 1646. This together with other relics our speaker has been able to study in USA and photograph a full scale re-creation of their first settlement.

After a number of questions and some discussion Edna Taylor thanked Mr. Dolby very much for a most interesting talk and wished him a safe journey home.

SUMMER VISITS

The Society has been on some very pleasant outside visits this summer which were (hopefully!?) enjoyed by all. As we settle down to the new winter programme the committee will in October be deciding on the outings for summer 2000. With this in mind it is hoped to avoid some mis-understanding over attendance which has occurred over the last two seasons. The problem is mainly over whether members need to notify the organisers of their wish to attend or can just turn up as at an ordinary 'home' meeting. Unfortunately there is no set answer to this. If we are travelling by coach it is obvious a place must be reserved but if we go in private cars it depends on the venue. Some are quite happy to accept all comers so long as an estimate of numbers is supplied and a donation from funds given. Others require an entrance fee per head paid in advance which we collect from members. It is intended to insert this information in the bulletins and programme in future but as these are often prepared well in advance it might not always be possible.

Please would members therefore note the following guidelines.

- 1) The Chairman will announce at the two meetings prior to a visit the details including whether a list and pre-payment is required.
- 2) If you will not be at these meetings please assume you need to book (unless the programme says otherwise) and contact the Secretary (2880156) to do so.
- 3) The list for booked visits will be closed and money forwarded to the venue on the last day of the preceding month. The 'cut off date'.
- 4) Cancellation with refund prior to 'cut off date' can be arranged, please contact the Secretary.
- 5) Cancellation after 'cut off date', please contact the Secretary who will make every effort to find a substitute.
- 6) Decide after 'cut off date' you are able to go, contact the Secretary who may well be able to match you with someone from number 5.
- 7) Would all drivers on listed visits, even if they have a full car, please call at Paddock Street so the Chairman can note passengers. This saves unnecessary waiting.

It is hoped that the above will be helpful to members and avoid the isolated problems recently encountered.

CHRISTOPHER DRESSER POST-SCRIPT

The Christopher Dresser article in the last Bulletin aroused a certain amount of interest, and information was forthcoming that members might like to know about.

In May, while looking through Warner Auctions sale list in the 'Mercury', Tricia noted that one of the items was 'a late 19th century ebonised mahogany side table, attributed to Dr. Christopher Dresser'. She later enquired what it was sold for and was amazed to learn it went for £16,000! The small table, pictured below, doesn't look particularly elegant, but evidently seemed a worth-while investment for somebody.

The Victoria and Albert Museum had taken photos and notes, but did not buy it. Tricia gathered that some of the Bushloe House furniture had gone to the V & A, but not all, and she wonders if the other part of the furniture had recently been sold, such as the little table, perhaps by a descendant of Hiram Abiff Owston.

Another article in Warner's sale was 'a Dresser style oil lamp base'. We don't know anything about that, but the wording suggests that Dresser was well regarded in his day and worth copying. Warners said that his work has been attracting high prices lately, sometimes as much as £100,000 for his metal work. The side table they considered ordinary, and the price of £16,000 was good for that particular piece.

Richard Carter's family bought a piece of furniture at the auction of the Bushloe House contents when the house was sold to the Wigston Urban District Council, but he is fairly sure it is not by Christopher Dresser. It now stands in a bedroom at the Framework Knitters' Museum. Perhaps pay a visit there to inspect it. He also has the auction list somewhere but it has not come to light as yet. Now that would be interesting.

Someone else, and I'm sorry not to be able to remember who, told me they had to go to Bushloe House for some reason, and had seen the heavy beds, with frogs carved on them. This would certainly fit in with Dr. Dresser's interest in the natural sciences at the stage when he designed the Bushloe House furniture.

Mavis Pote, of Evington now, but formerly a Wigston girl, tells me she went round Bushloe House at the auction sale preview. What sticks in her mind was the colourfulness of the bedrooms, one blue, one gold and so on, and the colour co-ordination between curtains, carpets and furnishings. We take this for granted now, but it was during the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th century that this harmony of colour and pattern became fashionable, for even quite small houses.

Bushloe House casts a long shadow over Wigston, so that there is great interest in what was there and what went on there in the past.

Edna Taylor

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WHO'S WHO NO: 24

JAMES HODGES

James Hodges was born c!827 the fourth child in a family of six, to parents John, a cordwainer or shoe maker, and Elizabeth nee Cooper. They lived in one of the small parish houses in Church Nook. His three elder siblings. Elizabeth, James and Hannah had all died when tiny children during March, April and May 1826, so this new child also named James, to be followed by a brother John and another sister named Hannah, must have gone some way to soften such a terrible blow for the parents. James received some education, sufficient to be able to sign his name, though in a hesitant and unformed style. He trained as a sawyer probably with the Goodin family who it is believed operated a saw mills in Northampton Street, Leicester.

By the spring of 1851 James had moved from Wigston and was lodging in the home of George Bread a railway porter and his family in Stoke Prior, Nr. Bromsgrove, Worcs. Also lodging there was another young Leics. sawyer named Henry Goodin. Later the same year on 24th August James returned to Wigston to marry Betsy Phipps at All Saints Church. Betsy was the daughter of George Phipps a tailor and paperhanger who lived in Bull Head Street near the Bank about 5 doors up from Mr. Laundon the saddler. She was one of a large family but most interesting is the fact she had a twin sister Martha. It is known they were twins because the vicar made a note in the parish register to that effect when he baptised them, suggesting perhaps that the birth of twins who both survived was unusual at the time. Martha was already married to John Goodin a brother of the Henry lodging with James in Worcs. The newly married couple returned to Stoke Prior and the following year baptised a son John there. He was to be followed 5 years later by a daughter Sarah Elizabeth who was baptised back at All Saints, though the family still lived in Worcs.

It was two years later that the big adventure was to start. Dissatisfied with prospects in England James and Betsy decided to emigrate to South Africa. They left Worcester bound for Claremont on a ship named 'Bride I' in June 1859. Two year old Sarah accompanied them but not their son John who had presumably died. They were assigned to a Mr. Brounger who would help them settle in and probably provide employment.

South Africa was a very undeveloped country at this time and the British Government ran an Aided Immigration programme to encourage people with the right skills to move there and assist with modernisation. Travelling conditions would have been harsh on a crowded sailing ship with an average journey time of two months. However, the passengers fared much better than some who emigrated to other parts of the New World. Great care was taken with diet and hygiene and each ship carried its own surgeon who was paid *II-* for every immigrant landed alive!

Life in South Africa suited James and Betsy for the following year they sent for her twin sister Martha and husband John Goodin. They sailed accompanied by their 11 year old son Thomas in August 1860 aboard the ship 'Royal Charlie', also bound for Claremont, where they were assigned to James Hodges confirming that he was by then recognised as a settled resident.

The two families made a great success of life in South Africa, living mainly in Cape Town, then Pietermaritzburg, Natal. James started his own sawmills and carpentry business employing many native Kaffirs who "earned a considerable share of his tender heart". He never worked for less than £1 per day and in addition built his own wooden house in the first nine months. He contracted to supply timber for railway bridges and approaches and produced the first telegraph poles used in the country. It was while living in Pietermaritzburg in 1877 that word reached them of the discovery of diamonds at Kimberley, an undeveloped area some 400 miles inland. Without delay they moved over there initially living under canvas. There were 32 miners already on site descending perilously down below ground by ropes. James's first task was to construct a proper wooden ladder, the first to descend the great Kimberley Mine. Hardly surprisingly they remained in Kimberley which developed very quickly as more people flooded in. They even had their photographs taken at the Kimberley Studio, whose address was New Rush, Diamond Fields!

Whether the Goodins and Hodges always planned to return home one day is not known but after 20 years in Africa, two of them as "diamond getters" they arrived safely back in Wigston c!879. John and Martha accompanied by Thomas, then aged 30, and two other children born in Cape Town, 15 year old Betsy Keturah and 12 year old Alfred. James and Betsy appear to have come without any family. There is no evidence of Sarah Elizabeth's presence in Wigston and no mention of any children later on when her parents made their Wills. It would seem she had perhaps died or even married and remained behind.

John Goodin bought Mowsley House and 25 acres of land off Mowsley End which he farmed for a while. They discovered natural springs and Thomas utilised these to start a most successful aerated water and ginger beer plant. When he married they built the appropriately named Kimberley House which still stands in Spa Lane. John also built a row of dwellings named Natal Cottages in Cherry Street and contributed to the building in 1885 of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Frederick Street where one of the wall stones bears his name.

James Hodges took over a grocery business previously run by a member of the Phipps family. He built new premises for it on the Newton Lane/Welford Road corner and also the adjoining row of houses, named Colesberg Cottages, another reminder of South Africa, but now sadly demolished. This business survived for many years, later becoming Ludlam's, and in more recent times Freckingham's. James contributed substantially to the Primitive Methodist Church when that was built in Cross Street in 1886. He and Betsy have named stones built into the wall of the building.

James was made a Steward at the Primitive Methodist chapel and it was while leading a prayer meeting one Wednesday evening that he suffered a fit of apoplexy (which we would now call a stroke). He died a few days later on 19th January 1889 aged 62. The Methodists gave him a big funeral with the choir singing at the service and then walking in procession to the cemetery where they sang more hymns.

Betsy lived on for another 20 years, latterly "keeping to her room" above the shop before she died aged 84 on 15/3/1909. Her Will gives some idea of the souvenirs brought back from Africa. Pairs of horns, skin rugs, two diamond rings, and photographs of their house at Kimberley and of the Diamond Field were left to various relatives.

Sources: Wigston and Stoke Prior parish records. Wills at LRO, Rp73/1889 and Rp383/1909. Obituary in *Leicester Advertiser*, 26/1/1889. *Aided Immigration from Britain to South Africa 1857-1867* by Esme Bull, Human Science Research Council, Pretoria 1991. *Midland Free Press*, 5/12/1908, Particular thanks are due to Mr. John Green of Gloucestershire, a descendant of the Goodin family for sharing his photographs and press cutting of the voyage to South Africa.

Tricia Berry

LEICESTER IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY : A DAY OF HISTORY

On Saturday the 5th June I attended a day of local history at Vaughan College. This is an annual event and this was the second one that I had attended. The overall theme for the day was Leicester in the twentieth century. I would thoroughly recommend the day to members of the GWHS. It is reasonable priced with concessions and includes lunch, tea and coffee. The speakers are all highly respected in their fields. The first speaker was Richard Whitmore of De Montfort University who spoke to 'Burglars on the brain, social deviancy in Leicester in 1907'. "30 years ago, I could leave my back door unlocked." This is a quote from the Leicester Mercury in 1907. Today there is thought to be degenerating morals within the nation's youth that leads to crime, but in Leicester in 1907, the debate was just as fierce. The speaker expanded on this, in particular, the differing views expressed by two local newspapers, the Leicester Mercury and the Pioneer, a local socialist newspaper. The second speaker was John Hopkins of the Department of History, University of Leicester. His theme was 'Leicester's Great War hospital'. From the very earliest days of the War, the site on which the University of Leicester now stands was occupied by the 5th Northern General Military Hospital. It was eventually expanded to provide 2760 beds, and the hospital treated more than 74,000 casualties. I found this to be a most interesting talk. It covered the period between the closure of the County Asylum in 1907 and the opening of the University College in 1921 in what is now known as the Fielding Johnson Building. John Hopkins presented Astley Clarke as a "conspirator", and suggested that his initial suggestion that the building be used as a military hospital, rather than one recommended by the War Office, was part of a larger plan that eventually came to fruition.

The third speaker was Shirley Aucott of the University's Department of Adult Education who spoke to 'The birth control campaigns of Leicester 1902-1952'. She illustrated her talk with a selection of postcards that she has collected. Her main theme was the life of Dr. Charles Killick Millard who was Leicester's Medical Officer of Health for about 30 years at the beginning of this century. His ideas were radical for the time, and he worked with Marie Slopes to promote the use of birth control. The City of Leicester saw one of the first birth control clinics to be opened in the country. Unfortunately for Shirley time ran out and she was unable to complete her talk which

was to have been about the work of Dr. Bill Kind and the establishment of a Family Planning Association Clinic in Leicester.

The first speaker after lunch was Tristram Hooley from the Department of English. His theme was, '1939-1945 was Leicester a battleground?'. He examined how Leicester got through the Second World War, Leicester's Blitz, the military importance of Leicester, the home guard and the civil defence. He developing his argument using oral history and the cultural history of the period. I found this lecture to be exciting, he introduced new ideas particularly around the use of British government propaganda during the war.

The next speaker was Dr. Clive Harrison of the Department of Adult Education who spoke to 'Health and welfare provision in Leicester 1900 -1950 : change and transition'. This lecture discussed the declining role of the Victorian charitable/voluntary and statutory bodies and the growth and ascendancy of the local authority in the provision of health and welfare in Leicester. This lecture linked well with Shirley Aucott's talk of earlier in the day. Many of the changes had taken place during the period of office of Dr. Macdonald who was Killick Millard's successor as Medical Officer for Health. Unfortunately time constraints meant that the slides accompanying this talk were not shown.

Our final lecture was given by Richard Gill of the Department of Adult Education on 'The visual character of twentieth century Leicester'. Leicester's twentieth century architecture is a story of the expansion of the town. The main themes were the contribution of the local authority, changes in architecture as a result of changing transport demands and the re-development of parts of the city centre. This talk was amply illustrated with slides. Richard spoke enthusiastically and knowledgeably about the modern architecture of the city. Many of his slides were of industrial buildings, ordinary dwelling houses, buildings that we may take for granted until by some act of corporate vandalism they are demolished (e.g. Lewis's building in Humberstone Gate) and interesting views of familiar buildings. I found this talk to be most refreshing because it did not dwell on the Victorian aspects of the city but on pre and post war buildings which I admire.

Chris Smart

MIDLAND BANK, WIGSTON MAGNA AND SOUTH

Back in February at the AGM Colin Towell suggested that in view of the recent news from the Midland Bank that they are to change their name to HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) it would be a good idea to write a piece on the history of the local branches before their origins were quite lost in the new global identity. He also suggested I might like to undertake this task! Motivated no doubt by the knowledge that I once worked at Wigston Magna branch. He being at the time one of the customers, banking on behalf of the Leicester Temperance Building Society, where he then worked.

The Midland Bank first opened for business under the name Birmingham and Midland Bank on 22nd August 1836 at 30, Union Street, Birmingham. Steady expansion followed, by take over, amalgamation, and the opening of new branches, first of all within the Midlands area, (a branch was opened in Leicester in 1889), and then spreading throughout Great Britain. By 1936, the centenary year, 114 other UK banks had been directly or indirectly absorbed into the Midland Bank and its affiliations. Some of these changes were reflected in alterations to the company name. In 1891 the Birmingham and Midland first entered London and became the London and Midland Bank. In 1898 following its absorption of the City Bank it became London City and Midland Bank and in 1918 the amalgamation with London Joint Stock Bank produced the name London Joint City and Midland Bank. In 1923 this was shortened to Midland Bank, and remained so until this decade, when following the HSBC buying an interest in 1987, the Midland became a member of that group in 1992, making it one of the largest financial institutions of its kind in the world with 5000 offices in 79 countries. To reflect this change

and be more readily identifiable in a global market the decision was made in 1999 to drop the name Midland.

The HSBC had first opened as the HongkongBank with branches in Hong Kong and Shanghai on 3rd March 1865. Thomas Sutherland who was at the time the Hong Kong Superintendent of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company was the founder, producing a prospectus for a bank which was to be operated on sound 'Scottish banking principles'. He, together with other business leaders in the area, found they had a need for specialist locally based and managed banking services which up to then they had had to provide among themselves.

The first presence in the Wigston area of the Midland Bank was actually in South Wigston when the Leicestershire Banking Company (one of the 114 banks later absorbed by Midland) established a sub-branch there in 1890 which opened between 10am-1pm each day. This choice of South Wigston, rather than the larger longer established Wigston Magna, reflected the greater degree of commercial activity there. Private individuals at that time, except for the very wealthy, having no need of banks.

The Leicestershire Banking Company had opened for business in Friar Lane, Leicester on 1st September 1829 (actually earlier than the Birmingham and Midland). By a series of amalgamations and takeovers of its own it grew substantially and a site was purchased in Granby Street, on the corner of Bishop Street, for a new head office. This prestigious building still in use today as the Granby Street, Leicester branch of the

Midland Bank was designed by the architects Goddards and built by Henry Herbert & Sons in 1872/4. The Leicestershire Banking Company amalgamated with the Midland in 1900.

The South Wigston branch was situated in Blaby Road, probably at number 115, its address in later years. In 1900 following the amalgamation it became a sub-branch of the Granby Street, Leicester branch of the Midland Bank and continued so until 1923 when it became a sub-branch of Wigston Magna, but still supervised by Granby Street until 1938, when Wigston Magna was made into a full independent branch. South Wigston was promoted to a full independent branch under its own management in 1960's, but became a sub-branch of Wigston Magna again in 1985 until it was closed on 22nd July 1988.

The first presence of the Midland Bank in Wigston Magna was in 1919 when a sub-branch of Granby Street was established somewhere in Long Street. This opened between 10.30am-12.30pm on Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday and Friday and 10.30am-11.30am on Thursday. The exact address is uncertain, but it was not at number 57, the well remembered property on the corner of Paddock Street, as this was at the time occupied by J W N Hassell & Sons a painters and decorators business. By 1923, showing the rapid success of the venture, Wigston Magna had become a full branch, moving into the specially converted number 57, and opening 10am-3pm each day and 10am-noon on Saturday. It was still however under the supervision of Granby Street until 1938, when it became completely independent.

Over time the managers have not all been of the same degree of seniority. Like any other business the bank tried new ideas and in the 1980's operated area offices to which more than very basic lending proposals were submitted. This had the advantage of more specialist staff being involved in decision making and advice but the disadvantage of remoteness and lack of local knowledge and customer contact. Presumably the latter argument in the end prevailed because this method of working was reversed after about 15 years, local managers again enjoying the fuller responsibilities of their predecessors.

In addition to the control Wigston Magna had for South Wigston at various times it also had similar control over another small sub-branch in Countesthorpe. This branch had only very limited opening

hours (twice a week I believe) and business was conducted in a partitioned-off portion of the village hall. Often to the accompaniment and associated noise of activities in the remainder! It was opened in 1949 as a sub-

1

branch of Wigston Magna but became a sub of South Wigston when that branch gained full independence. When South Wigston again became a sub of Wigston Magna, Countesthorpe became a sub of Blaby before closing 5th August 1988.

Apart from the comings and goings of its sub-branches there have been some other important milestones along the way for Wigston Magna. The most noticeable being the move to its present premises in Leicester Road on 23th November 1968. The address firstly being known as number 1G, and later number 9. Other major events but affecting the whole company would be the change to decimal currency in February 1971, the introduction of computers, cash machines, debit and credit cards, and electronic and telephone banking. Corporate identity changes have also occurred. The blue coat of arms giving way to a black Griffin logo in 1966. This was changed to yellow in 1982 and gave way to the present red and white hexagon logo in 1997. The design is taken from the Hong Kong Bank's traditional house flag, and is based on the cross of St. Andrew.

During the time I worked there (1960-1968) the Midland held a particularly important role because it was the only foil branch of any bank in Wigston Magna. Barclays operated a sub-branch but none of the other banks were represented at all. This resulted in Midland having a high proportion of the local business and an extremely busy counter providing a service to many customers of other banks as well as its own. In those days there were no computers, no security screens (nor did it ever seem there should be!), no part-time working. Deposit pass-books were written up by hand and interest calculated manually using tables. Statements were hand fed into a Burroughs Sensimatic, correspondence typed on a manual typewriter and figures totalled on an electric adding machine. And nearly everyone smoked, especially the menfolk.

Personal recollections largely have to remain just that because of customer confidentiality but some memories can be shared. An amusing incident occurred concerning my late father's account. In the days before the PIN and cash machines customers going away from home could make an arrangement to withdraw- money from another branch. If no arrangement existed the visited branch would telephone the customer's own branch for permission to cash a cheque. While returning from holiday my father's car was damaged by a careless lorry driver making an unscheduled overnight stop necessary. He sought the local Midland Bank to replenish his wallet and they duly telephoned Wigston Magna, and guess who answered the call! Thankfully my father maintained a healthy account otherwise great would have been my dilemma. Sanction the transaction and incur the wrath of the manager or refuse it and incur the wrath of my father!

Managers in charge of South Wigston 1890-1988

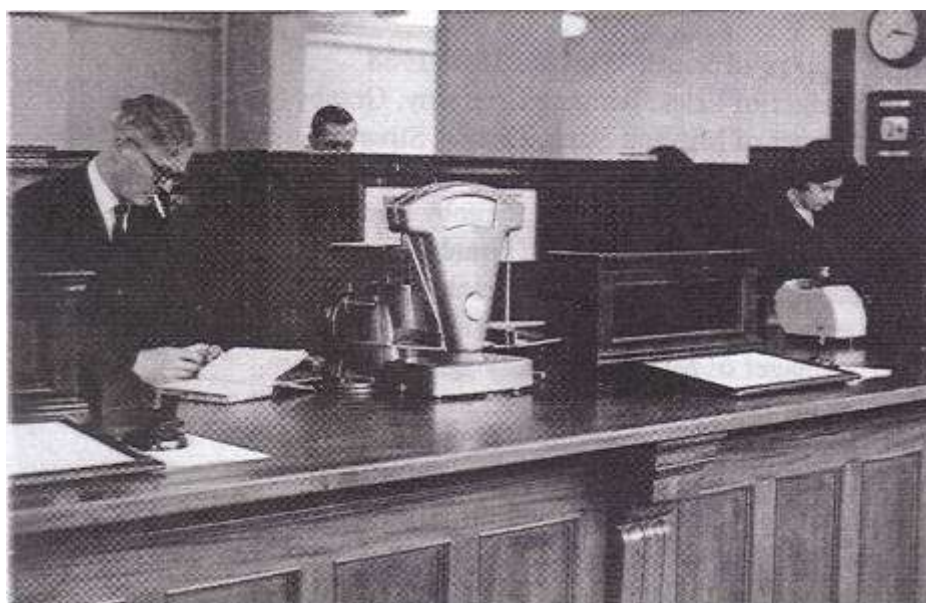
J. Lawford, manager of Leics. Banking Company, Granby Street	c 1890-1900
J. Lawford, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1900-1905
W H Jones, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1907-1921
J W Stelfox, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1921-1929
C T A Sadd, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1929-1933
N W Payne, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1933-1938
J N T March, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1938-1950's
B Beechener, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1950's-1961
D P Clarke, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1961 -c 1963
H L Moore, manager of Midland Bank, South Wigston	c!964
D J Schofield, manager of Midland Bank, South Wigston	c!967
B. Taylor, manager of Midland Bank, South Wigston	c!981
A Day, manager of Midland Bank, South Wigston	1987-1985

B C Baker, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1985-1988
Managers in charge of Wigston Magna 1919-1999	
W H Jones, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1907-1921
J W Stelfox, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1921 -1929
C T A Sadd, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1929-1933
N W Payne, manager of Midland Bank, Granby Street	1933-1938
J N T March, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1938-1950's
B. Beechener, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1950's-1961
D P Clarke, manager of Midland Bank. Wigston Magna	1961-c1963
C M Pocock, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	C1963-1967
E C Simpson, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1967-c1977
G. Preston, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1977-1981
B C Baker, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1981-1989
R N Cafferty, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1989-1992
C G Smith, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1992-1995
M A Palmer, manager of Midland Bank, Wigston Magna	1995-to date

Note: The lists of managers with their dates in office after 1938 should be treated with caution. The bank's head office records are incomplete and have been augmented by personal recollection and reference to incidental local sources, but there may be some errors and omissions.

Acknowledgements - Thanks to (1) Rachel Huskinson, Assistant Archivist, HSBC Group Head Office, Lower Thames Street, London for searching bank directories and board minutes and also supplying information from *100 Years of Joint Stock Banking* by Crick & Wadsworth (1936) and *The HSBC Group - A Brief History* by the Group (1995). (2) Peter Wilson, Manager's Assistant at Wigston Magna for searching in local records & (3) Mr. K A L Ford an ex-colleague for helping with the managers in charge during his time at Wigston Magna.

Tricia Berry



An interior view of 57, Long Street taken in 1967 by Mr. C M Pocock. Mr. G M Griffith and Miss P M H Broughton are cashing up shortly after closing time. Just visible behind the partition is Mr. K A L Ford.



57 Long Street prior to 1923 when it was occupied by J W N Hassell & Son



57 Long Street after the Midland Bank conversion. The property was demolished circa 1969 and Neville Chadwick's photography business now occupies the site.