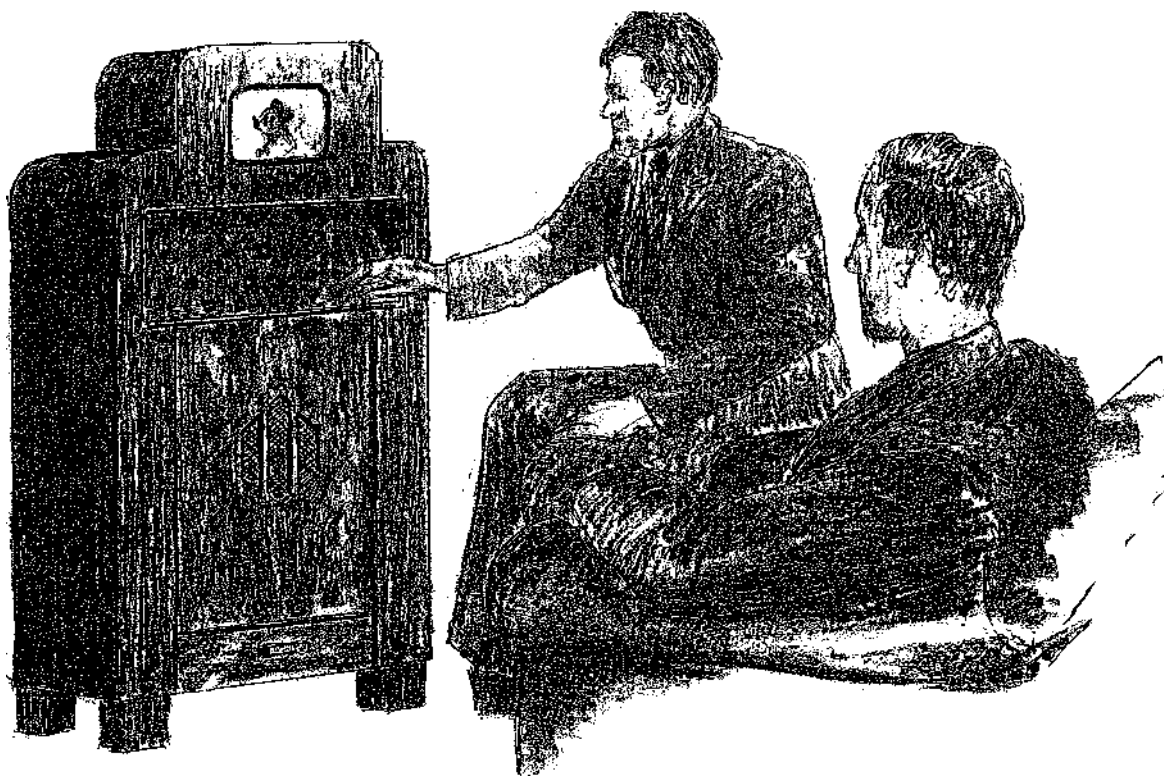


# *Greater Wigston Historical Society*

White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna, Leicester.

## BULLETIN 75



1958.

J.R.COLVER

**PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS - JUNE 2006 TO FEBRUARY 2007**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006**

Visit to Bruntingthorpe Airfield with supper in old control tower - Geoffrey Pool & Olwen Hughes

Meet 6.30p.m. Paddock Street Car Park to share transport.

**Please note 7.00p.m. start for this evening, for access to airfield please see page 7.**

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

The Pre-Raphaelites - Tom Kelly

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

The South Leicestershire Hoard - Vicki Priest

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2006**

Notable National Trust Gardens - Barbara Hewitt

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

The Life & Times of Cardinal Wolsey - David Baldwin

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2006**

Christmas Social with supper, quizzes & raffle

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2007**

Foxton Locks, Past, Present & Future - Mike Beech

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007**

AGM followed by local slides

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

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

Editor: Tricia Berry, 7 Wensleydale Road, Wigston. Leics. LE1 8 3RX.

## **FRONT COVER**

The front cover this time features Jim Colver's drawing of a 1936 television set. The screen is tiny in comparison with modern ones which seem to get larger all the time. Early television technology involved rapid line-by-line scanning of the images, conversion into electric impulses, their transmission by radio waves, then reception and re-assembly on the screen of the receiving set. A German railway engineer, Paul Nipkow, had invented a revolving scanning-disc as early as 1884 and this method was used by John Logic Baird when he transmitted the first image of a human face in 1926. Mechanical scanning however proved to be too crude and when the first regular television service in the world was opened from Alexandra Palace, London, in 1936, an all-electronic system developed by the American, Dr. V. K. Zworykin, was adopted.

TV was initially very expensive and reception limited to an area around London. However, ongoing improvements to the technology and reducing costs eventually opened the market to a wider audience. The coronation in 1953 proved a turning point with many families investing in their first TV at this time.

## **FEBRUARY MEETING**

The Society held its Annual General Meeting when approximately 40 members were present. The evening commenced with:

- 1) Apologies for absence being recorded from Sue Woolley, Margaret Wardle, Mary Whearity, Margaret Dyke, Cynthia Aisthorpe, Pam Ward & Valerie de Soto.
- 2) The Secretary, Tricia Berry, reading the minutes of the February 2005 A.G.M. which were then agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.
- 3) Matters Arising: Colin Towell reporting that suitable buildings had been identified for inclusion in our Blue Plaque Scheme and that owners had been notified and consent obtained. The Lottery Grant was about to be applied for.
- 3) The Treasurer, Brian Bilson, explaining the year end accounts. He noted these showed a surplus of £94 65. The meeting agreed the accounts be passed. It was proposed to again donate £100 00 to the Framework Knitters Museum. Some discussion then occurred as to whether to raise the subscriptions and/or do away with the collection at meetings. It was noted that the Lottery Fund might require some match funding for the Blue Plaque Scheme. On a majority vote it was decided to leave the subscriptions at the present rate of £7 (full) and £5 (concessionary), and continue with the collections which provide a useful contribution towards room hire.
- 4) The Chairman, Edna Taylor, reporting another successful year with meetings well

attended and quality speakers enthusiastically received. The summer outings to Rockingham Castle, Medbourne and the Royal Infirmary Museum had also been much enjoyed and blessed with fine weather. The Bulletins continued to be published three times a year, keeping members in contact and providing an outlet for pieces of local research. She thanked the Committee for their work over the year and members for their loyalty. She noted that it was eight years since the Society had moved its meeting venue to the Boys' Brigade Rooms and that this arrangement had proved very satisfactory. Our thanks were recorded to the U.R. Church for their use.

5) The Membership Secretary, Stella Tweed, firstly thanked those members who looked after her welfare when she became unwell at the Christmas Social. She reported that the annual attendance at meetings varied between 37 and 49. Nine new members were welcomed during the year making the current total number 84, four more than last year. Of these 17 are full members, 65 are concessionary and 2 honorary.

6) Election of Officers: Bob Wignall proposed and it was agreed that all be re-elected.

7) Any Other Business: Duncan Lucas enquired if anyone would like to sort out his local collection of newspapers and make them into scrapbooks, so that they can more easily be consulted. A manned display was to be held at the Bassett Centre in South Wigston on 7<sup>th</sup> March regarding the reappraisal of the South Wigston Conservation Area. The Civic Orchestra was holding a 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert on 25<sup>th</sup> February at Guthlaxton School. The Framework Knitters Museum continued its fund raising with a quiz in the Church Rooms on 11<sup>th</sup> March & a coffee morning on 8<sup>th</sup> April.

Members were then reminded that renewal subscriptions were due and should be paid that evening if possible.

The second part of the evening was taken up with member, Mike Forryan, giving an impressive computer presentation of his one name study into the Forryan surname. Believed to be a variant of the French name Feron or Forien, it was very peculiar to North-West Leicestershire, and is first recorded in the 1377 Poll Tax when William Forion of Shenton paid his dues. The first parish record is in Burbage in 1540. Over time branches spread around the county but not further afield until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mike's Wigston line can be traced to Abraham Forryan, a farm labourer, born in Burbage in 1777, who moved to Newton Harcourt upon his marriage to Elizabeth Ellis at St Wistan's Church, Wistow in 1806. They later moved to Wigston and their third child William was the first Forryan to be baptised there on 11/2/1810. Abraham prospered to become a farmer and grazier. His eldest son Robert became a butcher in Oadby and had links to Melton. His second son William 1810-1892 remained in Wigston and started the butchery business in Bell Street. His third son Abraham took over the family farm in Newgate End. Several descendants remain in the area but others have spread far and wide mainly to America, Australia and New Zealand. Mike has plotted their destinations on a world map and he and Linda have had some memorable holidays visiting them and adding to the ever growing family tree and photograph albums.

Several local Forryan family members were present at the meeting and were welcomed by Edna Taylor, when she thanked Mike for a very interesting talk.

## GREATER WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

### Receipts and Payments for the year ending 31st December 2005

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>
Opening Balances as at 1/1/05:	Lecturers' Fees & Expenses 209.0
Cash in Hand 4.83	Donations 0
Current A/c 529.61	Bulletins/Programmes 100.00
Deposit A/c 664.61	Room Hire 65.20
Subscriptions 10.00	Secretarial Exes 112.00
Donation Collections Visit: 105.11	Visit: Rockingham 69.22
Rockingham Visit: 594.00	-do- -do- (+ £50 Pd in 2004)
Medbourae Christmas Social 72.00	-do- Medbourne 25.00
Bank Interest 241.83	Christmas Social 224.13
22.66	
<b>2688.65</b>	Closing Balances as at
	Cash 31/12/05
	Current A/c 4.83 -115.49 1404.36
	Deposit A/c 1293.70
	<b>2688.65</b>

### MARCH MEETING

In March the Society welcomed Martin Sharp who gave a very well received slide show on his home town of Oadby. His interest in the history of the area was stirred when he went away on National Service in the early 1950s and returned to find nearly everything demolished.

He reminded us that Oadby was similar to Wigston in having two manors and industry based mainly around hosiery and boot and shoe manufacture. Among his huge collection of photographs we saw the Race Course Grandstand which had been built by his family firm, Sharps of Wigston. Much older was the old Wyggeston Hospital property which had stood in the main street on the site of the former Post Office opposite Chapel Street. The Hermitage (later an hotel) built in 1920s for the Flude family, hosiery & elastic web manufacturers. Martin named the new road to the rear, Honeywell Close, after a gardener at the Hermitage. Wayside Lodge in the present

Wayside Drive which was built by architect Sir Tudor Walters, MP for Brightside, Liverpool. He was a friend of Arthur Wakerley who developed much of the Crown Hills area of Leicester. It is thought that Ethel Road was so named after Sir Tudor's daughter. Jackie Morton, a leather merchant subsequently lived at Wayside Lodge and sadly lost everything in the Wall Street Crash. The property was used as a maternity home during WWII for mothers evacuated from London and many a youngster has since puzzled over why he was born in Oadby when his family had no connections with the area.

Oadby Frith was the home of George Hodges, another elastic web manufacturer and noted amateur photographer, whose house stood on the site of the Asda store. The FWK almshouses, whose foundation stone was laid, amid huge ceremony in 1907, by the Lord Mayor of London. And the North Memorial Homes established by Sir Jonathan North after WWI which were declared open by the future King Edward VIII.

We also saw the still much mourned Tinkers Thatch, the Church Hall, VE celebrations in Regent Street, Infirmary Feast Day parades in early July on St Peter's Day, a Celtic stone head found in a rockery in a garden in Harborough Road and the site of an old Roman farmstead in the university playing fields next to Gartree Road.

After some questions and discussion the Chairman, Edna Taylor, thanked Martin for a most interesting evening.

## **APRIL MEETING**

For our April meeting we welcomed Peter Barratt, and his sister dressed in appropriate costume, who gave a fascinating presentation on the life and times of their great-grandmother Alice Hawkins, the Leicester Suffragette leader, who became a nationally known figure in the movement's long and hard battle to gain the vote for women.

Alice was born in Stafford the daughter of a journeyman shoemaker, who later moved to Leicester. She left school at age 13 and followed him into the boot and shoe trade. She quickly realised the unequal treatment of women who were paid 10/- a week, when men were paid 25/- for the same work. She joined a trade union and it was through socialist activities, in 1884, she met her future husband Alfred, who was to become a loyal supporter throughout her campaign. In 1886 she went to work at Equity Shoes in Western Boulevard, a workers' co-operative company, still in business today, which encouraged workers to participate in political organisations and allowed time off when necessary to do so. By early 1900s she became disillusioned with what could be achieved through the Trade Union movement whose main focus lay in improving conditions for male workers who were seen as the breadwinners.

Real change came in 1907 when Alice, by now age 44, attended her first meeting of the Womens' Social & Political Union (WSPU) in Hyde Park, followed by a march to the House of Commons to demand the vote for women. She and others were arrested and imprisoned and in the following seven years she was to be jailed another four

times. This first experience of Holloway Prison had a profound effect and when she was released she quickly founded the Leicester branch of the WSPU, and began a tireless campaign of speaking at factory gates, market squares etc. throughout Leicestershire and parts of Northamptonshire. In summer 1907 Sylvia Pankhurst spent much time in Leicester rallying support within the shoe industry. Civil disobedience followed with members chaining themselves to railings and arson, with Blaby Railway Station being a local casualty. Alice's finest moment came when she addressed a mass rally of 250,000 in Hyde Park. The Times the following day describing her as a keynote speaker.

The activity halted with the outbreak of WWI, and afterwards the determination of the movement and the contribution women made during the war while the men were away caused a shift in attitude. In 1918 women over age 29 got the vote and by 1928 they were eligible on a par with men.

In addition to all this activity Alice still managed to raise a family of six children and she died aged 83, in March 1946. Peter and his family have traced Alice's story largely through newspaper cuttings and postcards which Alice collected and passed down to them. They also have typical clothes of the period and a WSPU sash in mauve, green and white. The collection is of national importance and merited a slot in a recent episode of the Antiques Road Show.

Leicester Council have commemorated Alice with a Blue Plaque on the Equity Shoe Factory building and the Museum service recently paid £9,400 at auction for a pastel sketch by Sylvia Pankhurst, dated 1907, of an Equity Shoe factory worker, believed to be Alice. This sketch was used by Leicester Council for their official Christmas Card in 2005 and is to be on display in Newarke Houses Museum when it reopens.

After some questions and discussion the Chairman, Edna Taylor, thanked our two speakers for a very personal account of their inspirational ancestor.

## **MAY MEETING**

A change of arrangements was necessary for this month's visit to Welford when very heavy rain ruled out any thought of walking outside. Instead our host, the churchwarden John Haynes, expanded his planned introductory talk in the church so we could all stay dry.

We learned that Welford being partly in Leicestershire and partly in Northamptonshire experienced great difficulty in getting anything done because two local authorities had to be involved. The boundary follows the line of the River Avon. The village also suffers from an identity problem as in spite of the very well known Welford Road a surprising number of people have no idea where the village is. However it has very early origins, Roman remains having been found and the Jurassic Way from Stamford to Banbury, a limestone ridge, and recognised long distance footpath, passes through the churchyard.

The church of St. Mary the Virgin was once a chapel of ease to nearby Sulby Abbey, its earliest existing feature is the 13<sup>th</sup> Century south aisle. The tower is 15<sup>th</sup> Century and has an Ordnance Survey plate at the base which marks the 500 foot contour. The church currently shares a minister with Sibbertoft and Marston Trussefl. It possesses c!330 silver gilt paten believed to be the only piece of pre-reformation plate in the county. There are monuments to notable families such as the Pagets and also noted was one in memory of Capt. Thomas L. Ingram DSO, MC who was killed on the Somme 16/9/1916 age 41 years, 10 years doctor of Welford. 'Our' Thomas Ingram, solicitor and resident of Abington House, was born in nearby Market Harborough so possibly there is a connection here.

Welford was once situated on the main turnpike road to London, midway between Leicester and Northampton, which made it a very busy place with fifteen coaching inns at its peak. During the mid 18<sup>th</sup> Century the Market Harborough road was upgraded and became the preferred coach route and the number of inns declined. Some have been demolished while others survive as private houses. The main one, the mid 17<sup>th</sup> Century Talbot was well known to Charles Dickens who included both the inn and its owner, Ann Spencer, in Bleak House. Other inns were built to serve the canal trade, notably the Wharf in 1814, which has a brick yard, and some lime kilns, presently being restored, to the rear.

The Manor was owned by Sulby Abbey and the present Manor House c!SOO was the home of Tom Boardman, recently MP for Northampton. The nearest railway station was at North Kilworth. The well known Elizabethan Restaurant building has in its tune been a haberdashery shop, fish and chip shop and hair dressers but in keeping with the times is about to become a Chinese takeaway. The Congregational Chapel dates from 1790. The school was built in 1850. The ancient Welford Hall, demolished in 1700s, had fish ponds and was connected with the Saunders family. A Captain Payne of the Mary Rose also had links to this property.

After a very pleasant evening Mr. Haynes was thanked for his most interesting talk and we made our way through the still heavy rain back to Wigston.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **BRUNTINGTHORPE AIRFIELD VISIT**

Because the security arrangements may be a bit intimidating if you are not familiar with them it will probably be best if we all aim to drive into the airfield together. The directions from Wigston are - follow the A5199 going south towards Husbands Bosworth. Pass the right turns to Countesthorpe, Arnesby and then Shearsby and then take the next one signed to Bruntingthorpe (lorry route). Continue past the Shearsby Bath and the Walton New Road both on your left and at the point where the road turns sharply to the right you turn left, by the sign Bruntingthorpe Aerodrome Proving



Ground, into the airfield approach. There is room for us to stop there to re-assemble and meet up with members who are travelling direct, to then pass together through the barrier at 6.55p.m. If anyone is running late and misses us don't worry. You drive to the entrance keeping to the left of the gatehouse and tell the gatekeeper you are from our society in Mr. Pool's guided party, also asking him to point out the Vulcan Hanger which is the huge building directly in front of you. We shall be inside there for the first half hour or so. When the barrier rises you will notice a stinger device in the road, it is perfectly harmless to drive over this.

We plan to have supper at approx. 9p.m. Mr. Pool has said that if it is a fine evening and people are sufficiently interested he may carry on after supper. Should this happen he wishes to assure anyone who wants to leave that he will not be at all offended. Just drive back to the entrance, again keeping to the left of the gatehouse. The gatekeeper will raise the barrier but do not try to pass through until the traffic light is on green, this to ensure the stinger, which would this time cause damage to tyres, has had time to flatten.

## OBITUARIES

Sadly three members have passed away in the last four months.

**Margaret Ward** died on 31<sup>st</sup> March. She was a long standing, loyal member, having joined in 1981/2 along with her husband Bill, whose active role she supported and assisted all the way. Margaret continued her involvement with the society after his death until her own health problems made this impossible.

**Jim Colver** died on 9<sup>th</sup> April. He was one of the founder members of our Society when it was established in 1980, and worked tirelessly to further its causes as officer and committee member. He was often to be found transcribing documents at the Record Office, he edited and in some cases produced our Transactions, offered a ready supply of items for inclusion in the bulletins and willingly shared his considerable artistic talent to illustrate the covers. He also produced the book, *Wigston Magna, its buildings extant, altered or demolished* and many Christmas cards and calendars, the proceeds of which went to the Framework Knitters Museum.

**Margaret Barnes** died on 8<sup>th</sup> May. She joined more recently around 1999/2000 and attended regularly right up until March this year when a previous illness returned making it impossible to continue.

All three will be much missed, and our condolences go to their families and friends.

## OLD PARISH DIARY

Following on from Bulletin 73 and 74 here are some more entries from what is believed to be Thomas Burgess's diary:-

### 1855

Married on Sunday July 22<sup>nd</sup> at Great Wigston, John Johnson to Ava Holmes.

July 28<sup>th</sup> at the Register Office, William Folwell to Ruth Roberts of Newton.

Died August 8<sup>th</sup> Sarah Spence of Apoplexy [a stroke] aged 70 years. Died

August 14<sup>th</sup> Ann wife of John Ward, labourer aged 77 years.

Sunday August 19<sup>th</sup> the annual sermons for the benefit of the Sabbath School belonging to the Wesleyan Chapel, Great Wigston, were preached by the Rev. C Hawthorn of Leicester, the collections amounting to £3 .6. 4d.

On Sunday August 19<sup>th</sup> married at the church, Samuel Ross to Mary Horner.

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> Wm. Hurst (a sailor) to Elizabeth Smith.

Died August 26<sup>th</sup> Elizabeth wife of Wm Barker aged 86 years.

Died August 28<sup>th</sup> Edw. Genever aged 27 years.

September 2<sup>nd</sup> married James Munton to Ann Cook.

September 3<sup>rd</sup> married at the Register Office, William Varnan to Rhoda Buncher.

September 27<sup>th</sup> died Elizabeth Whyatt aged 67 years.

September 29<sup>th</sup> died Mrs. Elizabeth Eggleston aged 67 years. [Mrs. Eggleston lived at St. Wolstan's House. She was the mother of Samuel whose sudden death is recorded in this diary for April the previous year. Perhaps the shock and distress hastened her own death].

Sudden death - On Monday October 1<sup>st</sup> J. Gregory Esq. held an inquest at King William IV, Gt. Wigston on the body of Charlotte Gilbert aged 34 years, who went to bed on the Saturday night in her usual health, but about 2 o'clock on Sunday morning awoke her husband, and requested him to fetch her something to drink saying she was so very ill. He got up instantly, went into the house to mix her some brandy and water. When he returned she had gotten out of bed and was walking about the room. He gave her the drink, but she was so ill that he laid her on the bed and ran across the street to call a neighbour up, and when he returned she was dead. Mr. Hulme,

surgeon, was fetched with all haste, he attempted to bleed her but to no purpose, as the vital spark had fled, he pronounced her death to arise from disease of the heart, and a verdict agreeing thereto was returned.

Married at Gt. W. on Sunday September 30<sup>th</sup> by the Rev. T. J. Gallwey, curate, Mr. Amos Marshall to Mrs. Tebbutt, widow.

October - The Baptist Chapel - On the second inst. At Blaby by the Rev. Shem? Evans of Arnesby assisted by the Rev. J. Barnett, Mr. Wm. Bassett jnr. of Countesthorpe, farmer and grazier, to Miss Mary Mayne Bassett daughter of Mr. Christopher Bassett of the same place.

Married at Great Wigston on the 7<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr. Joseph Baker to Gumbley.

Died on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> inst. Mr. William Wright aged 85 years.

Married on 16<sup>th</sup> inst. at the Independent Chapel Great Wigston by the Rev. Thos. Mays, Mr. Thomas Hughes of Blaby Hill to Mrs. Ann Law of Blaby.

Attempted burglary on Friday night the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. or early on Saturday morning the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. - an attempt was made to break into the Horse and Trumpet Public House at Great Wigston. The burglars broke open the stable door, and took out a tub on which they mounted to reach the brewhouse window which they broke open and got in. It is evident they pulled off their shoes and stockings for the cooler was just under the window and into it they were obliged to get before they could reach the floor, and impressions of their feet were so distinct as to show their feet were bare; but here they found nothing that suited their purpose. They also tore off the wire lattice from the cellar window but as it was well secured by iron stancheons they could not effect an entrance. They likewise broke open the back parlour window, but there they found the same obstructions as at the cellar and were obliged to go away without obtaining any booty. As there were several men lodging in the house if they had got in and been heard there is little doubt but they would have been captured. And it is pretty evident that the burglars could not be well acquainted with the premises or they would not have bestowed so much trouble to get into the brewhouse as there is no immediate connection between that and the house. The only conclusion that can be drawn is that a traveller with a pack worth from £20 to £40 was coming to Wigston after dark on Friday night. A little before he got to the village he was overtaken by two men who entered into conversation with him, and when he got opposite the house he told them he should stay there for the night. They pleaded great poverty and he gave them some bread and chees [sic] he had with him and it seems very probable that they had the hope of getting into the house and stealing his pack.

November 23<sup>rd</sup> married, Mr. Thos. Cooper of Whetstone to Miss Charlotte Pochin of Wigston. [Miss Pochin lived at the Manor House in Newgate End].

Continued from Bulletin 73 and 74 here is the final part of Edna Taylor's account of the South Wigston Schools.

## **ALL ABOVE BOARD CHAPTER V -**

### **RE-ORGANISATION**

In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, South Wigston was a pleasant place to grow up in, according to Frank Noble, born there in 1907. There were 'greens' in Dunton Street, Fairfield Street and Leopold Street, and when the fair came it was held on Timber Street green. These open places provided good play areas for football, cricket, marbles, hopscotch, and whip and top. Children could swim in the canal in summer, fly kites in the fields and, forbidden but exciting, explore the old brickyard. Then there were always the soldiers to watch in their scarlet tunics on sentry duty at the Barrack gates, or on church parade on Sundays.

The village, still lit by gas lamps, had factories and shops, its own fire-engine in Station Street, horse-drawn of course, several churches, three railway stations and three schools. It was still a fairly self-sufficient community, but now we can see people moving into Leicester to work. Professor Jack Simmons states that at this time the two Midland railway stations handled between them 110,000 passengers a year, together with over 500 season-ticket holders, most of whom must have been travelling to and from Leicester to their work. This was a sign that the growth of Wigston had halted. In 1901 it had 8,400 people, double the number 20 years before, but growth would not be resumed for a quarter of a century.

Also growing up in South Wigston at the same time as Frank Noble, were Ada and Ida Gothard (now Franklin), born in 1908 and 1910 respectively. They both attended the Girls' School, moving there from the Infants' School when they were between 7 and 8 years old. When asked if they had recollections of the school, they produced some astonishing memories of school days 80 years ago.

They remembered the beautiful parquet floor of the hall, with Miss Smith's desk at one end and a piano, played by Mrs. Vardy for singing and dancing lessons, and assembly at 9 o'clock sharp. For country dancing they wore a brown dress provided by the school. Uniform was not compulsory. There were about 30 in each class and discipline, aided by frequent use of the cane, was good. Ada thinks she might have been caned at some time.

The sisters learned sewing, laundry work, ironing and cooking, as well as arithmetic, reading, writing, and they played netball. One afternoon, per week, they knitted red rugby jumpers for the boys across the road at Mr. Barwick's Boys' School. One can imagine what remarks that would produce nowadays!

It is interesting to note which festival days were kept: of course Christmas, Easter and Whitsun, but also Empire Day with dressing up in Empire Costumes, and Oak Apple

Day when you had to wear either an oak apple or oak leaf to celebrate King Charles hiding from his enemies in an oak tree.

From some of the time at the Girls' School, it was war time with its queues for food and shortage of writing paper at school, so that they had to use slates and sweaky slate pencils.

The years immediately following the Great War were marked by a rapid expansion of education. The 1918 Education Act raised the school leaving age to 14. This came into operation in 1921. The Act also laid down the general principle that no child should be debarred from a secondary education by reason of inability to pay fees.

William Brockington, a forward-looking Director of Education for the County, instituted an Annual Schools Examination in 1919 to test which 11 and 12 years olds could qualify for a secondary school place. Ada and Ida remembered these exams, saying that if you passed you could go to the Wyggeston School or the Newarke Girls' School on a scholarship that would pay your fees. The results of the new exam showed there was a great deal of untapped ability in the elementary schools and the number of scholarships rose from 45 to nearly 500. The 11-plus examination was with us.

However, a serious economic crisis occurred in the early 1920s, which resulted in the number of scholarships being severely cut back to 100. Ada and Ida left school at 14 and went to work in a Leicester shoe factory. Perhaps their chances of a scholarship were now much less, and their parents might not have been able to support them at school until 16. This was certainly the case with James Hill, born in South Wigston in 1916, who passed the 11-plus exam twice. Fortunately, by 1927 there was another course of action open to him.

The 1918 Education Act had laid down another principle: that suitable, more advanced courses must be provided for children in elementary schools now that they had to stay on until 14. William Brockington tacked this with vigor, and decided on a basic re-organisation of the elementary all-age schools. He proposed that all children over 11 should receive a secondary education by being transferred to separate senior schools. Those who gained scholarships should go to Grammar Schools, the rest to go to central or modern schools. This arrangement is so familiar to us now, and was later stated in the Hadow Report of 1926; but it was Brockington who first proposed it, and thereby put Leicestershire in the forefront of educational thought.

Thus the South Wigston Boys' and Girls' Schools, which had a good technical bias in the syllabus, became central schools, and later, intermediate schools. They used separate classrooms in the original schools at first, until the new schools on Blaby Road were built, in the late 1930s.

James Hill went to the Intermediate Boys' School in 1927, and says in his autobiography that he had a good education there, and appreciated fully what was done for him.

**Sources:** The minutes of the Wigston Magna School Board, copied out with great care by Bob Wignall. The memories of many South Wigston people.



School governors and staff at a presentation in 1930s for Miss Richardson, on her retirement as Headmistress of Bassett Street Infant School.

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## **HOUSE HISTORIES**

### **5 Alfreton Road**

At the time of enclosure in 1766 the area to the west of the Leicester Road from about the present traffic island to the city boundary was divided into a number of smallish allotments of land which were awarded to different people. Most of the houses which were much later to be built on the north west side of Alfreton Road including number 5, fall into two different allotments with different histories. This article firstly looks at the site of the house and approx. first two thirds of the garden which comes within the allotment of 1 la Or 14p awarded to Simeon Bruin of Wigston.

Also at enclosure, John Ragg, a surgeon, who lived at The Manor House, Long Street, was allotted 267a Or 36p of land, consisting of two separate farms plus meadowland elsewhere in the parish. Gradually over time John and his only son, also named John,

bought, as they became available, some of these smaller parcels of land to the west of Leicester Road and including Simeon Bruin's allotment. They ended up with a holding of about 180 acres, all adjoining, and thus created a new farm, which they named Home Farm. John the younger farmed this himself, while the other two farms were let to tenants. When he died, unmarried, in 1838 he left The Manor House and Home Farm to his cousin Robert Haymes of Glen House, Church Road, Great Glen.

The Manor House and Home Farm, passed from Robert Haymes to his son Arthur Haymes, solicitor, of Great Glen and Leamington Priors, Warwicks, and then in 1872 to Arthur's son Richard Haymes. After Richard's death in March 1920 his executors divided up and sold the land in separate parcels, the Manor House having been disposed of as a separate entity.

One parcel consisted of two fields together measuring 15a.1r.0p. The fields were named on the conveyance as Long Brewins (number 103 on the 1914 Ordnance Survey Map) and Laws Close (number 74). Both of these still being known by the names of their enclosure owners Simeon Bruin and Alice Laws. The Brum/Brewin variation is not significant as spelling was not standardised until much more recently. The purchaser of these two fields was Frank Freer of Braustone Gate, Leicester, a poultry dealer. Frank Freer built a prominent house on the site named The Poplars, which much later was to become a community centre. In September 1938 Frank Freer, by then having retired, sold field 103 and part of 74, an area of 54,612 sq. yds. (11.38 acres) to James Herbert Jelley and Florence Christine Jelley trading in partnership as builders and contractors under the name of J. Jelley & Son of 43, Shenton Street, Leicester. He retained his home and approx 4 acres of his land which was later to become the recreation ground.

There were a number of conditions attached to the sale, amongst which were; the purchasers agreed to fence off adjoining land. They would, prior to 26/8/1940, construct a new road with causeway, properly drained with sewers, drains and culvert beneath (this was later to be named Carlton Drive). No buildings but private dwellings were to front this new road or overlook the adjacent land of the vendor. Each dwelling inclusive of site not to be sold for less than £550. Not to dig or sell any sand or gravel or burn bricks, tiles or clay or keep pigs, fowls or other offensive animals thereon.

It is likely that the outbreak of WWII caused delay to the proposed building work. An aerial photograph taken in August 1945 shows only a short length of Carlton Drive had been marked out and this appears to be still under construction, some five years after it should have been completed.

In December 1953, 55.938 acres of land which included the parts of fields 103 and 74, which were not yet undeveloped, were legally conveyed from James Herbert Jelley and Florence Christine Stubbings (who had married and changed her surname since the purchase) to Jelson Ltd. This name, an amalgam of the old partnership name being chosen when the business became incorporated as a limited company.

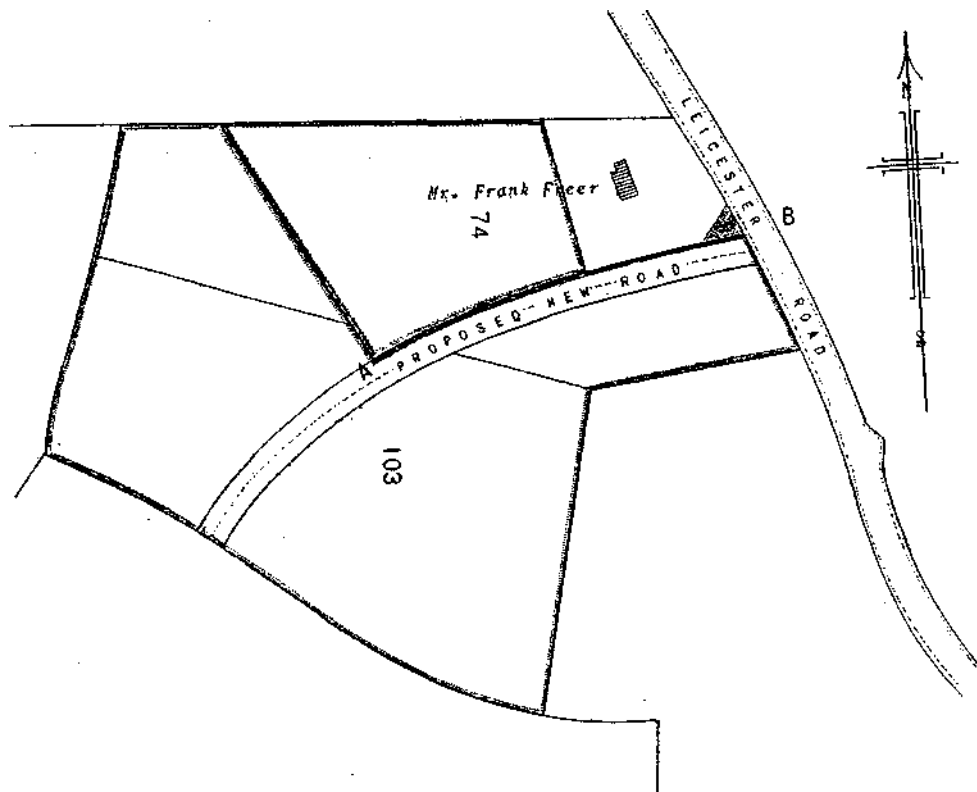
Number 5 Alfreton Road which is situated mid-way along the north west boundary of

Field 103, was not completed for another three years. It was in April 1956 that Jelson Ltd conveyed it, at the time referred to as Plot 28 for £200 to Jack Douglas Wilson, an assistant works manager, formerly of Orson Drive. In the July he raised a mortgage to comply with a covenant that he should "not erect any building other than one private dwelling-house with usual out-offices on the land ..... the cost of such dwelling-house reckoned at the lowest current prices in labour and materials should be not less than £1400." In November 1959 Mr. Wilson sold to Ronald & Barbara D Williams who came from 3, Brighton Avenue. In July 1968 Mr. & Mrs. Williams sold to Cyril A J Delves of 417, Cannon Hill Lane, Raynes Park, London and in December 1976 Mr. Delves sold to John D and Judith C Whitby who came from Plymouth. In 27/7/1983 Mr. & Mrs. Whitby sold to Colin & Sue Towell.

Acknowledgements:- I would like to thank Colin & Sue Towell very much for lending me the old deeds to their property. Other sources used:- the Wigston Enclosure Records, the will of John Ragg the younger (1785-1838) PROB11/1903, Schedule of the Wigston property of Arthur Haymes, 1872, LRO 11D58/7.

Tricia Berry

The somewhat different history of the land now forming the bottom piece of the garden to this property will follow in Bulletin 76.



1938 Plan of the two fields numbered 103 & 74, the proposed new road is Carlton Drive. 5, Alfreton Road was built about midway along the west border of field 103 and extending over the boundary.

The outlined area of field 74, with the number within, is the recreation ground site.