



Greater Wigston Historical Society

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

## BULLETIN 81



SHROPSHIRE CORACLE.

J.R. COLVER

**PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS - JUNE 2008 TO FEBRUARY 2009**

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

Visit to Launde Abbey, tour followed by tea/coffee & biscuits - Rev. T.J. Blewett  
Meet 6.45p.m. Paddock Street Car Park to share transport.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> August 2008**

Memories of Wigston during WWII - Colin Hames & Marion Daetwyler  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

Mock Trial - the law in action led by Ivor Sutton J.P.  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008**

Leicester's Footwear Industry - Roger Beeby  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2008**

Sir Frank Whittle & the Jet Engine at Rugby, Lutterworth & Whetstone - Geoff Smith  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008**

Christmas Customs & Traditions - Diane Courtney  
(followed by a seasonal drink & mince pie)  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2009**

The Tigers, History of the Leicestershire Regiment - Derek Seaton  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

A.G.M. followed by more Newsreels from the 1940s - Mike Forryan & Tony Lawrance  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

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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 the publication date please.

## **FRONT COVER**

Jim Colver's drawing this time is of a Shropshire Coracle. These distinctive little river going vessels have been used in the British Isles since pre-Roman times. They were made by hand, traditionally of willow or ash laths to construct a frame, which was then covered by animal hide. Nowadays the covering is likely to be of canvas, calico or synthetic materials which is then coated with bitumen or tar to make it waterproof.

They are designed to carry one person, and weighing 25-40 pounds are light enough to be carried on a person's back. They are primarily for transport or fishing but there are instances of them being used for military purposes. They are propelled by a single long paddle held with two hands but a skillful fisherman can paddle with one hand using the other to hold his nets.

The Greenwood Trust at Coalbrookdale, Nr Telford, runs courses in their construction and use, together with other interesting country crafts such as coppice management and long bow construction.

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## **OBITUARY**

We were very sorry to learn of the sudden death of Gill Oakley on 13<sup>th</sup> March. Gill had been a member of the society since the very early days, her name appearing on a list of members dated October 1980. Gill taught at Abington School for many years. She and her husband John had many interests including travelling. They will be remembered by many members for the illustrated talk they gave at a meeting two years ago on the history of places they had visited in Italy. Our thoughts are with her family at this sad time.

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## **CHANGES AT THE RECORD OFFICE**

Following the retirement of Carl Harrison from the post of Chief Archivist at the end of March, Margaret Bonney has been appointed in his place. Members will remember Dr. Bonney who gave such an interesting talk on the abolition of the slave trade last November. She has recently joined our Society, so congratulations on the appointment and also welcome from us all.

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## **THE SOCIETY GOES ON LINE**

Over the last few months Mike Forryan has been collecting information for a web site for the Society. More features will be added in due course, but a good start has been made and it has now gone live. If you use the internet do log on to:- [www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk](http://www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk) and see what you think.

**NEW PUBLISHING DATES FOR THE BULLETIN**

Ever since the Society was founded in 1980 the Newsletter, later changing to a Bulletin, has been published on the 1<sup>st</sup> February, June and October. However, over time this arrangement has become unsatisfactory. It has meant that any business from the A.G.M. in February, is not reported to members who were unable to attend, until the next Bulletin is issued on 1<sup>st</sup> June.

This situation has become more of an issue lately because we now have quite a few members who don't come to meetings regularly and have been forwarding renewal subscriptions unaware that the rate has been raised this year. This causes extra work for them, and also for Stella, our Membership Secretary, who has to make contact and ask for the balance.

At the last committee meeting it was decided to change the publishing dates to 1st March, July and November. The next Bulletin will therefore be issued a month later than usual, on 1<sup>st</sup> July, and thereafter at 4 monthly intervals as at present.

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**GREATER WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

**Receipts and Payments for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007**

<b>Receipts</b>		<b>Payments</b>	
Opening Balances as at 1/1/07:		Lecturer Fees	200.00
Cash in Hand	4.83	Bulletin & Programme	56.30
Current A/c	139.79	Room Hire (2007)	144.00
Deposit A/c	1102.39	Deduction (overpayment 2006)	-42.00
Subscriptions	404.00	Secretary's Expenses	68.83
Collections	65.85	Visits	269.70
Visits	274.00	Christmas Social/Raffle	158.28
Christmas Social	159.00	Bank Int. & Petty Cash w/o	6.68
Bank Interest	39.05	Blue Plaques (Legacy)	250.00
Donation Received	5.00	Donation O & WBP Trust	150.00
		Friends FWK re B Bilson	25.00
		Closing Balances as at 31/12/07:	
		Cash	.00
		Current A/c	-5.55
		Unpresented Chq	-102.00
		Deposit A/c	1014.67
	<b>2193.91</b>		<b>907.12</b>
			<b>2193.91</b>

**FEBRUARY MEETING**

The Society held its Annual General Meeting when approximately 45 members were present. The evening commenced with:

- 1) Apologies for absence being recorded from Elizabeth Ward.
  - 2) The Secretary, Tricia Berry, reading the minutes of the February 2007 AG.M. which were agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.
  - 3) Matters Arising - None.
  - 4) The Chairman, Tony Lawrance, reporting another successful year with excellent speakers and enjoyable trips out to Sheepy Magna and Broughton Astley. The Christmas Social however may be altered in format due to a decline in attendance. The year also saw the successful launch of the Blue Plaque Scheme in partnership with the Civic Society. Tony thanked all the committee for their work and encouraged members to suggest suitable speakers or contribute articles for the Bulletin. He stepped down from being Chairman to Vice Chairman, exchanging offices with Mike Forryan, who has been Vice Chairman since March 2007, and from now becomes our Chairman.
  - 5) The Acting Treasurer, Colin Towell, handing out copies and explaining the Income and Expenditure Account for the year 31/12/2007. It was noted that there was a deficit this time of £339.89, but £250.00 of this was the legacy from Ralph Wignall which had been held in reserve, and was finally used as our contribution to the Blue Plaque Scheme. The other £89.89 was due to a small decrease in subscriptions and our donations to the Framework Knitters Museum. The room hire had also increased by £2.00 per session. Following discussion it was unanimously agreed to raise the subscription to £10.00 full, and £7.00 concessionary, to dispense with the collections at meetings and make no donations at present. The meeting approved the appointment of Gary Davies as auditor.
  - 6) The Membership Secretary, Stella Tweed, reporting that the current membership stood at 75; made up of 14 full members, 60 concessionary and 1 honorary. Four members resigned during the year and two had passed away. Three new members had joined. However, there had been a reduction in attendance at meetings. Notices to invite new members had been placed in the Library, Council Offices and Willow Hairdressing, and items placed in the Oadby & Wigston Letterbox and Arts Newsletter.
  - 7) Election of Officers:  
**Chairman:** Mike Forryan, **Vice Chairman:** Tony Lawrance, **Secretary/Bulletin Editor:** Tricia Berry, **Acting Treasurer:** Colin Towell, **Membership Secretary:** Stella Tweed, **Auditor:** Gary Davies.
- Committee Members:** Sue Woolley and Ruth Granger.
- 8) Any Other Business: Suggestions for the Christmas Social included Carol Singing or a Christmas themed evening followed by mince pies and wine. Mike Forryan has started establishing a web site and will inform us when it goes live. Colin Towell reported that the final Blue Plaque has now been fixed to the former Bates Factory in Station Street.

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

The second part of the evening was taken up with a 'bring and tell' session where eight members brought along an old or interesting item they had acquired and spoke about it for a few minutes. We heard from:-

Ruth Granger (Poole Pottery), Mary Freestone (Nutcracker dog), Mike Forryan (RAF powder compact & 1814 army token coin), Tony Lawrance (carrier bags), Tricia Berry (family photographs), Marion Daetwyler (telephones), Pam Woolley (Old Man cigar lighter), Duncan Lucas (local archaeological finds).

### **MARCH MEETING**

In March Paul Sharpling gave a fascinating talk on stained glass. Using his own slides he showed the various styles and methods of construction of different craftsmen, dating from Medieval times to quite modern. The glass could be either coloured during manufacture or painted later as the design required. Most examples are in churches, but large country houses often have fine examples too. Not all feature religious themes; heraldry, nature, people and their achievements, war memorials, and foundations and anniversaries, are all subjects commemorated this way.

Starting appropriately with Wigston's Davenport window in All Saints' Church, Paul showed notable examples from Leicestershire and Rutland, and also from just over the borders. The following is a selection:-

Leicester, The Cathedral - to the Rev. Macnutt  
Leicester, Holy Trinity - rural scenes with birds and the Trinity Shield  
Leicester, St. Margaret's - to a famous bell ringer  
Alixton - medieval (1340) featuring birds  
Stanford-on-Avon - the 12 Apostles regarded as the best bar one in the Midlands  
Withcote - world famous for Apostles, Tudor Rose, Prophets, Fleurs-de-lys and Henry VIII by the same craftsman who worked at King's College  
Wytham - 15<sup>th</sup> Cent. Renaissance Dutch Figure  
Twycross - 13<sup>th</sup> century French to Lord Howe  
Stanford Hall - the Cave children and their parents  
Goadby Marwood - to Charles I  
Medbourne - to Dr. Watts, former minister and founder of Leicester Infirmary in 1741  
Bitteswell - to John Cooper a rugby player  
Aylestone - Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee by Herbert Gardiner  
Scraptoft - war memorial to Corah family member by Theodore Salisbury  
Market Harborough - Parable of the Talents  
Aylestone and Ashby Folville - examples in the style of the Arts and Crafts Movement  
Foxton- Millennium Window  
Donisthorpe - founding of the National Forest  
Knipton - people from Belvoir Castle

After some questions and discussion, the Chairman Mike Forryan, thanked our speaker for a really interesting evening.

## **APRIL MEETING**

Mike Frisby was our guest speaker this month, and his talk on his home village of Langham in Rutland was very thoroughly researched and conveyed in a clear and easy to understand way. The village, situated in a most rural part of Britain, dates from Anglo-Saxon or earlier times. It has good ground, and water meadows named after the parish which have remained so for 700 years. There are three iron age enclosures, a medieval dye works, two mills (one water), and Roman artefacts and Anglo-Saxon pottery have been discovered.

The Manor was given to Westminster Abbey by Edward the Confessor, and in 1075 taken, along with the whole of Rutland, by William the Conqueror. By 1100/1135 Henry III had granted it to the Earls of Warwick. In 1310 Simon de Langham (a Cardinal, later Archbishop of Canterbury) was the owner. In 1600 Sir Andrew Noel purchased it from Thomas Cromwell.

The church is 13<sup>th</sup> century and the third biggest in the county with a cross in the churchyard even older. A bell dated 1480 is still in place. The parish registers began in 1559. The Primitive Methodist Church was built in 1869 and the Baptist one in 1854. In 1377 there were 140 people paying the Poll Tax, and in 1524, 48 people listed in the Lay Subsidy. Welles House was built in 1486, the first school in 1640, and the Old Hall and Manor House in 1650s. A map of the parish prepared in 1624 survives. The village is known for Ruddles Brewery and there are 610 families living there today. The Manor House was sadly in the news recently when it suffered from a huge fire.

In 2000 a local History Group was formed, initially to work on a Millennium Project. It continues and currently has 18 members. With the help of a generous Lottery grant they have published eight books, and an excellent guided walk leaflet. They have also created a web site which is an absolute dream for family history researchers whose ancestors once lived there. All the censuses and parish registers have been transcribed and added, as have maps, pictures, trade directory entries, and much more, all freely available.

Mike Forryan, then gave the usual vote of thanks for showing us what really can be done.

## **MAY MEETING**

Our visit to Beeby was blessed with very fine weather and a good turnout of 36 members. The village is very rural even though it is only six miles from Leicester, and the population has hardly increased since the Domesday Survey. At that time it belonged to Croyland Abbey. The parish is well watered by the Eye Brook and about seven springs.

A spring near the church produces water always the same temperature, and never known to run dry. It has an impressive stone cover erected in 1855 by the Rector. The parish consists of 1,418 acres and there is a Manor House, Rectory, some farm houses, two or three substantial houses, and a few small cottages.

The evening began in All Saints' church, where our guide, Arthur Howell, outlined some of its history. It dates from c.1350, and has a handsome tower with three bells. The spire however is unfinished which has given rise to the legend that it was being built by two brothers who quarrelled and one threw the other off the scaffold, and then in remorse threw himself off too. Mr. Howell doubts if this legend is true because he has climbed the tower many times and observed a change in the stone construction before the work was finally halted. He thinks it more likely the project ran out of money resulting with the capped stump and the nickname of Beeby Tub. The chancel was rebuilt in 1819 when the broken corbels and piscina were renovated and the beautiful stained glass was added to the window. This represents Noah, Daniel, Job, Abraham, Moses and Elijah. Within are the arms of George III, some interesting box pews and the clock given by George Edward Bouskell-Wade.

We then walked up to the Manor House, once the home of Thomas Nuttall who was the first person to make Stilton Cheese using factory production methods. We saw the outbuildings where the business was based and in nearby fields two lofty Wellingtonia trees. Many years ago our guide met an elderly lady walking there and she told him she was one of the daughters of Thomas Nuttall and that her father had planted these two trees to commemorate her birth and that of her sister.

We then continued over a tricky stile to see the remains of the Leicestershire Brewery building, also started by Thomas. This has since been partially demolished and the remains converted into cottages. Following thanks to our guide, we proceeded to Barkby for a pleasant meal at the Malt Shovel.

Thomas Nuttall was born in Beeby in 1834, the third of the four children of William and Catherine Nuttall who were farmers in the village. He had three sisters and all four children were baptised in the village church. By the time of the census in 1851, William (born in Hognaston, Derbyshire c.1810), and his family had moved to another farm in South Croxton. It was from there that 25 year old Thomas returned to Beeby on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1859 to marry 21 year old Louisa Marriott. Louisa lived at the Manor House with her father John Marriott, who was Lord of the Manor. John was originally from Nottinghamshire (born at Wiverton Hall in c.1806). It appears that John had been a widower for many years and that Louisa was his only child. In 1861 Thomas and Louisa lived with their first child, John Marriott Nuttall, at Beeby House where they farmed 103 acres of land. Nearby at the Manor House, John Marriott, farmed the 328 acre Manor estate. He lived alone except for an elderly aunt and two servants.

Ten years later in 1871 census Thomas and Louisa with their growing family were living at the Manor House with her father, John Marriott. Thomas was described as head of the household as he farmed the manor estate. His father-in-law was, however, still Lord of the Manor and described as a landed proprietor.

It was in 1875 that Thomas started his Stilton Cheese enterprise within the outbuildings at the Manor Farm. White's 1877 directory describes it thus:

"A cheese factory has been erected lately by Mr. Thomas Nuttall with steam engine and every appliance for efficient manufacture. To this factory many of the neighbouring farmers send their milk twice daily during the summer and autumn months."

There followed a period of spectacular growth with the business employing 30 people. By 1881 Thomas had opened the brewery as well as being a farmer and cheese manufacturer. This venture was probably prompted by the availability of a plentiful supply of high quality water in the parish. The early 1880s also saw huge expansion of cheese production. He opened another big dairy in North Street, Melton and also began production in Etwall, Derbyshire, later moving this to Uttoxeter.

In 1887 John Marriott died aged 81. He was buried in the churchyard, and the stone and polished marble pulpit presented in his memory by his friends. Louisa inherited the title Lady of the Manor and became the owner of the Manor House and farmland.

The cheese venture was extremely successful and won awards worldwide. His letterhead for 1896 is profusely decorated with his trade mark, images of the medals won, and the following description:

"Thos. Nuttall was awarded for his Stilton Cheese in 1877 the First Prize Medal of the British Dairy Farmer's Association, & Silver Medal of Dairy Show, & in 1878 Two Silver Cups & Silver Medals & First Prize in Class open to all England Makers, Factors & Dealers....First Prize in Champion Class at Frome Great Cheese Show Sept. 1879....In the Sweepstakes Class open to all the World a splendid lot of Stiltons shown by Mr. T. Nuttall of Manor Farm, Beeby, Leicester won the First Prize....Times Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>. The Gold Medal & Champion Prize & First & Second Prize & Silver Medal in Stilton Class at Dairy Show, Agricultural Hall, London Oct. 1879. First Prize at the International Dairy Fair at New York in the American Institute Dec. 1878, and First & Second Prize at the Birmingham Dairy Show June 1881. First Prize British Cheese & Champion Cup & 200 Guilders for Best Rich Cheese of Europe at Amsterdam International Exhibition 1884....& many other Prizes."

There is more information and a number of relevant photographs in the book *The History of Stilton Cheese* including one of Thomas, the Manor House, the letterhead, and two spectacular displays of cheese exhibited at the Islington Dairy Show. The 1877 one is of four pyramids of stacked cheeses, believed to be the largest anywhere in the world, and the 1878 one which is in the form of a replica of Cleopatra's Needle. This last so impressed Queen Victoria, that she purchased the lot.

During the late 1890s though, the Nuttall family left Beeby. Probably the business had become too large for its situation. The need to transport in the milk, labour, and coal for the steam engine, and transport out the beer and cheeses from such a rural spot was probably quite a problem. The Brewery became the Midland Brewery Co. Ltd., and though Stilton was still made in the village the Nuttalls were probably no longer involved. The Melton Dairy was sold in 1900 and cheese production concentrated at Uttoxeter and at a new venture in Hartington, Derbyshire. The family appear to have moved to The Grange at Wigston for a couple of years. In the 1899 and 1900 Wright's

Directory a John Thomas Nuttall is listed as the occupier and the 1899 Kelly's mentions just Thomas Nuttall. His name was not John but printers have been known to make errors. What is certain is that at the census in 1901 Thomas and Louisa with their two youngest daughters were living at 10, Upper Tichborne, Leicester. Thomas though by then aged 66, was still described as a Stilton Cheese Manufacturer. They soon moved to Uttoxeter and subsequently to the Ashbourne area of Derbyshire. Louisa died there in 1922 aged 84, and Thomas in 1926 aged 92. They were both buried in Beeby churchyard together with two of their eight children, Thomas Herbert and Louisa Catherine, who both died as babies.

The remaining six children all married and moved away. Of the three daughters, Louisa Marriott married George Long, a maltster, and moved to Whatton-in-the-Vale, Notts, Mary Frances married Ernest Stretch in Uttoxeter and Gertrude Eveline married Harry Coulson also in Uttoxeter. Of the three sons, John Marriott moved to Hartington, Derbyshire and with his wife Christian ran J.M. Nuttall & Sons Ltd., Stilton Cheese Dairy, until 1942 when they sold it to their manager. In 1962 it was sold on to the Milk Marketing Board, and in 1982 became a division of Dairy Crest Foods but still retained the Nuttall name. William Nuttall and his wife Lily went to Ashbourne where he was also a Stilton Cheese maker, but whether he worked with his brother John is not known. The third son Thomas Harry became an auctioneer and lived with his wife Florence in Haslington, Cheshire.

When the family left Beeby Louisa retained ownership of the property and remained Lady of the Manor. A distant relative lived in the Manor House and the land was let to tenants. After her death the title Lord/Lady of the Manor appears to have lapsed. The farm land was bought by Thomas Fielding Johnson, the Leicester yarn spinner and donor of the land and buildings for the University College (Leicester University).

By 1936 George Edward Bouskell-Wade was living at the Manor House. He was a partner at solicitors, Freer Bouskell (still practising today in New Street). He was also Clerk to the Justices and coroner for Leicester. The farm land had been bought by Victor R. Pochin.

Tricia Berry

Sources: Beeby Parish Records, Census, Trade directories, BMD indexes, *The History of Stilton Cheese* by Trevor Hickman (available in local studies of Leicestershire Libraries).

### **MEMORIES OF EARLY MOTORING**

Mary Jane was a 1934 Morris 10 Saloon, MJ 6063 which father bought before the war. Nicknamed Mary Jane, there was nothing feminine about her. She was a green and black heavy metal box with a spare wheel and a luggage rack at the back, maximum speed about 50 m.p.h. at the most, but she was solid and reliable. There were no sealed units then so it was possible to do lots of jobs under the bonnet. There was no power steering so it was like driving a tank and no heater. My mother had a foot muff, like a huge boot

lined with fur to keep her feet warm in cold weather. Then, we were not accustomed to all the later luxuries.

To go to Newmarket to visit grandparents was a real adventure. We would also visit an aunt who lived in Felixstowe and this was a real expedition. Grandfather and Grandmother in his red and black Morris 8 accompanied by Uncle Ben and Aunt Hilda, (Uncle Ben was to help Grandfather with the driving) were in front. We followed, Dad driving, Mother sitting in the front, three unmarried aunts sitting in the back and my brother and I sitting on stools between. No child seats or onboard entertainment then. I remember we played I-Spy sometimes as we went along. There were very few garages on the way but we would be served with petrol with a shot of upper cylinder lubricant for each gallon to keep the engine happy. I think this was later known as Redex.

During the war the metalwork and woodwork teachers over a certain age, (the younger ones were already in the forces) were withdrawn from schools to work on munitions at Loughborough Brush Works. I don't know how long this continued but I was amazed how Dad accompanied by others was able to drive there each day in Mary Jane without road signs and only the faintest glimmer of light from masked headlights.

For many years driving was considered to be a "Man Thing" but with the war many women were taught to drive buses and tanks and how to service them. Perhaps you remember seeing pictures of the Queen working on a vehicle in a photo shoot at this time. Later some husbands let their wives drive if they were there, often with much criticism. It was still a "Man Thing".

I learned to drive in an Austin 10 at the Driving School in Knighton. It was much lighter to drive than Mary Jane. Dad welcomed the idea and was pleased for me to help out on family trips as my brother did later.

When my Grandfather was told by my Mother that I had passed THE TEST, he replied, "Can she cook?" He allowed his sons to drive his car but not his daughters, one of whom was a headmistress. Though she was upset and complained, it never occurred to her to buy one for herself.

By the time I was in my late thirties I decided to have a car of my own. My Dad was pleased but men friends said I was foolish as I only had to ask for a lift and women did not own cars. In those days you never saw a woman on her own or with her children alone in a car.

My first car was a Triumph Herald Coupe, gunmetal and wedgwood in colour, registration 51 DUT. I had to wait six weeks for it. I wanted a sports car but Dad said they were too dangerous so I chose this one because it had a sporty look. Not many of these were produced and when you were out and saw another you would hoot or stop for a brief chat. £626 was its price and it was the most I had paid for one item at that time.

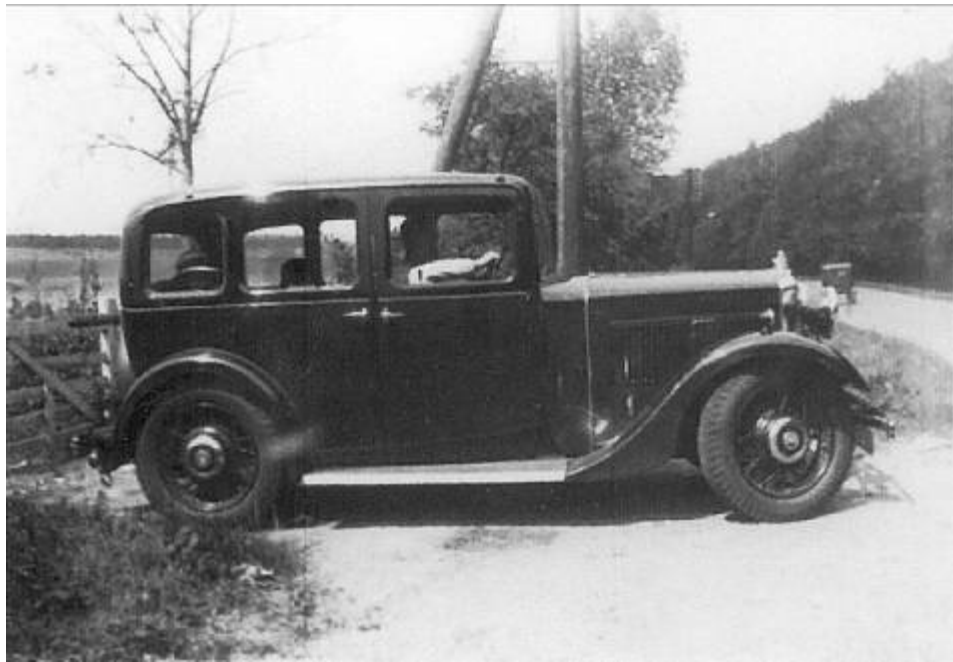
I bought it from Browetts Garage which was near the Royal Oak. There were no saleswomen in garages then. The salesman I saw was very suspicious and said that I should bring a man with me if I wished to buy a car. He seemed quite put out when I said it was my money, I had earned it and that was the car I wanted, showing him the catalogue, unbelievable today!

It's amusing to think back to the time when cars were fitted with little arms which shot out when you turned left or right and all the hand signals we used to use. Motoring was much more leisurely then, more accent on the journey than the being there. Now I fear it's so many places to go, so much to see and so little time!

By the way, the man who taught my father to drive was a Mr. Forryan of Forryan's Garage, Wigston, so he will be on Mike Forryan's family tree.

Stella Tweed

The  
Morris  
Saloon,  
MJ6063  
(Mary



1934  
10

Jane)



Stella with her Triumph Herald Coupe, 51 DUT

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### **MY WIGSTON STANYONS AND FRAMEWORK KNITTING**

My Granny, Elsie Stanyon (born 1884), married Alexander Patrick, so becoming Mrs. Patrick. They were both tailors and lived in Belgrave, Leicester. But I knew she started life in Wigston, in Bushloe End - such an intriguing street name. Her father was Sydney Stanyon (born 1860), both names he insisted should be spelt with a 'Y' not an 'I'. I still have his signet ring. Being interested in my family history, I started looking at the census records for the Stanyons in Wigston.

The alternative spelling is Stanion, however, I knew enough about census records to know that the enumerators spelt how they thought, even apparently when family members knew how to spell their names. In my researches I have also found other variations on my family name; in 1861 they are recorded as Stanyards, and elsewhere as Stangons, and in a computer census index as Hanyons as the indexer misread the looped copperplate St for an H! It really does pay to look at copies of the original census record.

There is only one village in England called Stanion (south of Corby), and none with a Y spelling. It seems likely that Stanyons and Stanions both came from the village of Stanion. I have visited this attractive yellow stone village but found no gravestones in the

churchyard or memorials on the outside of the chapel walls with the family name on. I did discover that there are still Stanions living in neighbouring villages, such as Brigstock. However, I have yet to make the connection between the villages of Stanion and Wigston. It does seem quite logical that people from what may well have been a poor agricultural village in Northamptonshire should travel before 1851, perhaps by the newly-opened railway line, to Wigston and the metropolis of Leicester, to find work. There still seem to be a considerable number of Stanyons and Stanions in the Leicester area.

I knew that my Stanyons lived in Bushloe End and there was Sydney (born 1860) at the age of 5 months old in the 1861 census. By 1882 he had married Lizzie Gamble at All Saints' Church, Wigston and by 1891 they had moved to Ratcliffe Street, Belgrave. Gambles too are well known in Wigston. Elsie was still living in 4, Mill Lane, Wigston with her grandmother, Ann Gamble. Apparently, according to family tradition, Sydney was drinking too hard and that is why his daughter Elsie did not live with her parents. The good news is that Sydney took the pledge and eventually became a verger at St. Michael's and All Angels in Belgrave, he learnt Greek from the vicar so that he could read the Bible in the original Greek. So Sydney really knew how to challenge himself.

Elsie had two younger brothers, both born in Wigston, Lawrence (born 1885) and Oliver (born 1891), both born in Wigston but grew up in Belgrave. They joined up in WWI. Lawrence became an Hussar and as a small child my mother remembered him looking very handsome in his blue uniform and brilliant smile. He was killed in 1918. Oliver returned to Belgrave and became a milkman despite having caught TB in the trenches. He must have been a health hazard to his customers! He died about 1920.

But returning to Wigston, I discovered to my surprise that Sydney was one of eight children born to John Stanyon (born c.1812) and Jane Goode (born 1824). Many of the birth dates I quote are approximate (usually only a year or two out), estimated from the census records, which are renowned for inaccuracy. However, as I work on obtaining the birth certificates, I am correcting the dates, where needed.

Sydney's brothers and sisters were Joanna (born c.1836), James (c.1838), Elizabeth (c.1847), Mary Ann (c.1850), Sarah J. (c.1853), John junior (c.1858) and William (c.1863). The early censuses, starting in 1851 give the address as Bushloe End so obviously no-one had started to use house numbers at that stage, they just knew who lived at which house. In the 1851 census John senior, was a royal rib hand, his daughter Joanna at the age of 15 was a framework knitter, and son James aged 13, a winder.

By 1861 John senior, and his 14 year old daughter Elizabeth were shirt framework knitters. I found few references to framework shirt-making so it seems a much less common occupation than knitting stockings. In *Victorian Wigston* by Bernard Elliott, Lewin's factory in Burgess Street produced shirts so perhaps John Stanyon senior worked there. His wife Jane was a seamer as shirts and later socks were made flat and then seamed up.

In 1861 Lizzie Gamble, (born c.1860), lived with her family Henry and Ann Gamble, her brother George and two sisters Harriett and Mary at 4, Mill Lane. Henry and Ann are framework knitters and Harriett aged 11, was already a plain seamer. Henry Gamble was still a framework knitter in 1882 when Sydney Stanyon married his daughter.

By 1871 John Stanyon senior, was making mittens so perhaps he now worked for Hurst's factory in Bushloe End which produced fancy hosiery, and would have been close to the family home. Jane, his wife, was a stitcher, and of his children, James had become an agricultural labourer - another ill paid job; Mary A, aged 20, a cotton winder; Sarah J. aged 18, a sock cutter and John junior at 13 years old, a winder. Sydney aged 11 years was apparently still at school although this is not certain as it looks as if the census enumerators tended to record most children under 12 (the school leaving age at this date) as scholars and it is not certain if all parents could afford to send their children to school.

In the 1881 census John senior, at 69 years, is still working as a framework knitter, his wife had died. Mary A. is a machine stitcher, John junior has become a stoker at the brick yard, and Sydney at 21 years is a framework knitter, as also is his youngest brother William junior, aged 17 years. Sydney's other sisters had married and left home.

By the time Elsie was born in 1885, Sydney had become a mill framework knitter and a year later a repairer of railway wagons. In 1891 he was an ironmonger's porter in Belgrave. It looks as if the poorly paid occupation of framework knitting was becoming even less rewarding, or perhaps it was the drink affecting his employment opportunities.

But it is William junior, and his family that made me see the full implications of living in Bushloe End for framework knitters. William junior, married Elizabeth Barratt and had four children, Albert Edward (born c.1887), Laura E. (born c.1888) Ethel (born c.1889) and little William (born 1891). When Albert was born in 1887, William his father, was still a stocking framework knitter but by 1891, aged 27, had become a gas labourer.

Having discovered so many of my family were framework knitters and that some of them actually lived in Bushloe End, I visited the Framework Knitters Museum, some years ago. Imagine my surprise and excitement to see a brick near the entrance door to the framework workshop, roughly engraved with A. Stanyon (or was it S. Stanyon!). Unfortunately I did not have a camera with me but I am quite sure I saw the engraved brick on more than one occasion but sadly I can no longer find it. Of course, I thought of Albert Edward Stanyon. Talking to the curator some years later, he did know a Bill Stanyon (spelling not certain) who ran a shop in South Wigston.

There is so much more to research. Maybe I can find out more about who attended schools in Wigston or perhaps the names of employees of the framework knitting workshops in Wigston. I will shortly be looking up Stanyons and Stanions in the parish records for All Saints Church at the Record Office. Perhaps I will find that some of the Stanyons or Stanions in the Leicester area are related to my family. Maybe you know some of them? If you know any more about the family and framework knitting in Wigston, I would love to hear it.

Alison Coates, July 2007.

Alison wrote this article in the hope she might find other Stanyons who can add to her knowledge of the family, if anyone knows any please do let me know and I'll put you in touch. While working with the Wigston parish & census material I found some Stanyons myself, so hopefully this will be of some help.

There were four Stanyon households in Wigston in the 1841 census. In Bell Street - Edward (50) Sarah (50) Ann (20) William (15) Sydney (13) Sarah (9). Edward works in Woollen Hosiery & is the only one not born in Leics. Also in Bell Street - Edward (20) Eliza (20) Harriett (1). Edward works in Woollen Hosiery & all are born in Leics. In Long Street - Sidney (50) Elizabeth (40) Mary (10) Charles (8) Sarah (6) Jane (3) & Alice Simons (15). Sidney & Alice work in Woollen Hosiery & Sidney is the only one not born in Leics. Also in Long Street - John (25) Hannah (5) James (4). John works in Woollen Hosiery & all are born in Leics.

There were five Stanyon households in Wigston in the 1851 census. In Bell Street - Edward Hd Mar (61) FWK b Corby, Northants, Sarah Wf (60) b Ansty, Leics, Sydney Son Mar (23) FWK, Charlotte Dau-in-Law (23), Ann Grd-Dau (3mths), Emma Allen Grd-Dau (5) all last four born in Wigston. In Long Street - Sidney Hd Mar (60) b Rowell (Rothwell?) Northants, Elizabeth Wf (51), Charles Son (18), Sarah Dau (16), Jane Dau (12), James Grd-son (3), all the adults are FWKs & everyone except Sidney was born in Wigston. In Bushloe End - John Hd Mar (39) Royal Rib Hd, Jane Wf (27) Seamer b Oadby, Joanna Dau (15) FWK, James Son (13) Winder, Elizabeth Dau (4) School, Mary Ann Dau (5mths), all except Jane born in Wigston. Also in Bushloe End - William Hd Mar (27) FWK, Mary Ann Wf (26) FWK, Sarah A Dau (1), all born in Wigston. In Mowsley End - Edward Hd M (32) FWK, Eliza Wf (30) FWK, Harriett Dau (10), James Son (5) Winder Boy, Ann Dau (2) Scholar, all born in Wigston.

In the Wigston Parish Records these Stanyon entries look very relevant.

12/3/1830 baptised John son of Sidney & Emma Stanyon, FWK of Wigston (in the 19<sup>th</sup> year of his age).

12/3/1830 baptised Mary daughter of Sidney & Elizabeth Stanyon FWK of Wigston.

8/6/1835 married John Stanyon bachelor & Harriett White spinster both of this parish.

Two baptisms on the same date suggest a family connection. This John would have been born c.1812. Therefore I think he is 'Alison's' John. I think he is the son of Sidney born (Rowell, Northants) and an earlier wife named Emma. The other baptism of Mary would be the child of the same Sidney & his second wife Elizabeth. They are listed on the 1841 census. John & his first wife Harriett nee White would have been the parents of James & Hannah. Jane nee Goode would be a second wife & the mother of his other children. The IGI gives the marriage of John and Jane as Christmas Day 1843 at Wigston.

John Stanyon lived next door to Eli Bailey families in Bushloe End. Peter Clowes, related to them, says the back gardens of these cottages were on what is now a grass area with large Chestnut tree on the corner of Launceston Road. The site of the actual houses lost to road widening. The writing on FWK museum workshop doorway is on the right as you enter, about 4'6" above the ground. It actually reads Albert Stanyon. He worked as a gardener, so perhaps he worked there, or as his sister Laura (age 12 in 1901) was a hose turner, perhaps he collected work for her to do at home.

Tricia Berry



