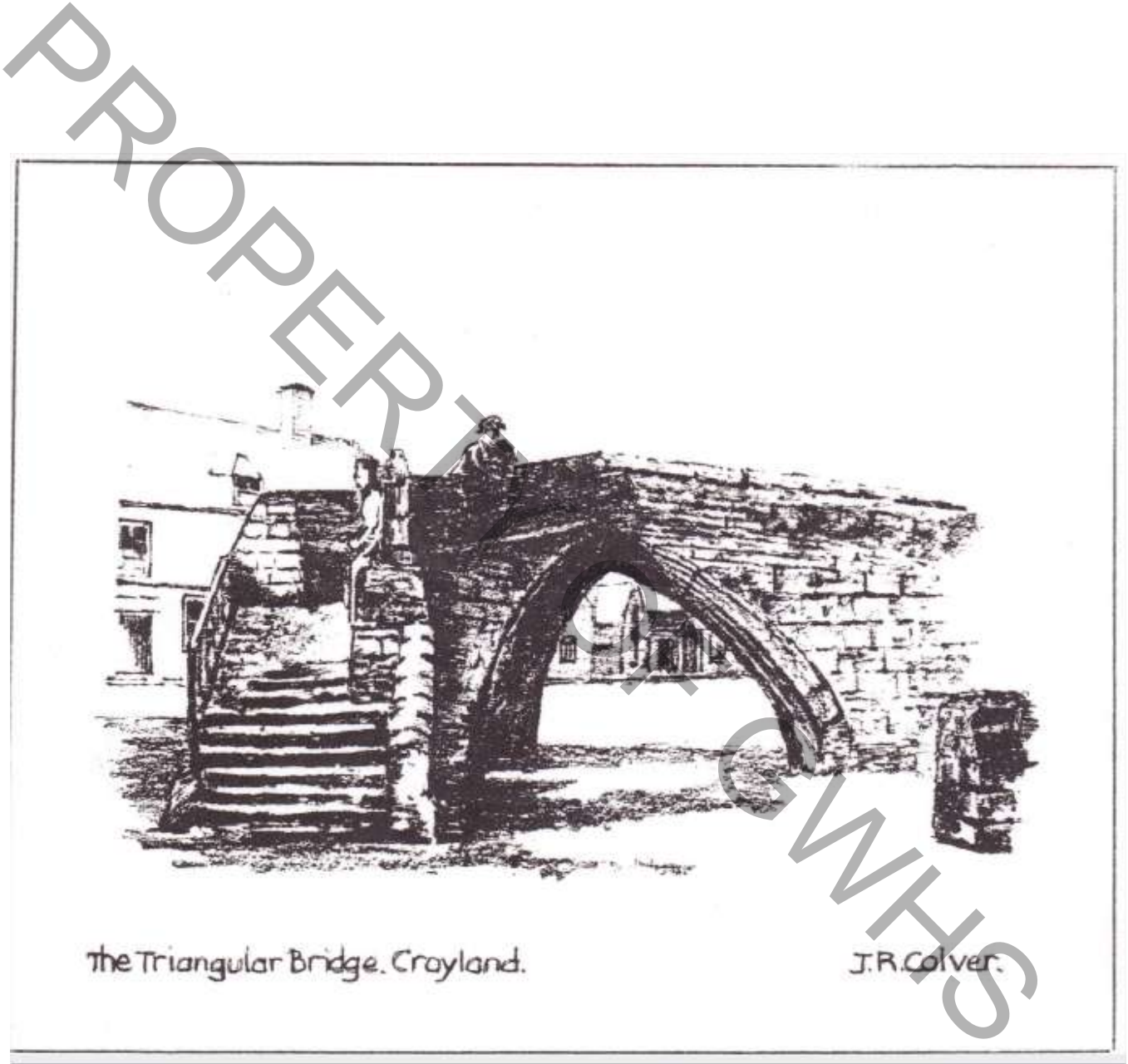




Greater Wigston Historical Society
White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna Leicestershire

BULLETIN 46



The Triangular Bridge. Crayland.

J.R. Colver.

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS - OCTOBER 1996 TO FEBRUARY 1997

Wednesday 16th October 1996

'History of Leicester Market' -Mr. L. Jarvis.
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

Wednesday 20th November 1996

'History of Wigston' - Text of a Lecture given to the Wigston Literary & Scientific Society by W.J.R. Pochin Esq. M.A. , Barrister, of Newgate End, in 1911 - read by Duncan Lucas. 7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

Wednesday 18th December 1996

Christmas Party.
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

Wednesday 15th January 1997

"Sketching the Past" - Olwen Hughes. 7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

Wednesday 19th February 1997

A.G.M. followed by slides on the growth of Wigston, 1950s onwards - Dennis & Edna Taylor.
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

FRONT COVER DRAWING

Jim Colver describes his drawing thus - Not only does Crowland (in Lines) possess an historic Abbey, it also boasts a bridge which is the outstanding curiosity of its kind in the country. The present bridge, built 1360-1390 replaced a former timber structure, the earliest reference to which is Eldred's charter AD943 that mentions the Triangular Bridge. It is somewhat difficult as one looks at it standing high & dry in the market place to ascertain the use for which it was built. One needs to remember that what are now streets were once waterways in an area of many small islands. It stands on three piers, arranged in a circle at the apices of an equilateral triangle; every two semi-arches balanced by a third. Though it has three arches it has but one groined arch consisting of three ribs. It was never intended for anything else but passenger traffic being too narrow for vehicles and too steep for horses or pack mules.

Formerly the River Welland divided into two streams at this point, one branch leading past the Abbey and discharging into the River Nene, the other continuing to Spalding. Water still flows beneath the bridge, but the channel conveying it is arched over forming part of a main sewer for the town.

The statue on the bridge represents our Saviour holding in his hand the mundus or the world. Originally it stood in the centre of the west gable of the west front of the Abbey. Careful examinations have proved that it was never originally part of the bridge. The statue was built for a lofty position as the inclination of the head shows. It is six feet high but only measures ten inches from its wall face to the edge of the knees.

The Bulletin is published three times a year on 1st February, June & 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

For the June summer outing members & friends assembled in Paddock Street for a coach to the Old Rectory, Cadeby. We were welcomed in the church by Mrs. Audrey Boston who gave an introductory talk explaining that the building dated from 1250 & had a similar squat tower to the one at Dadlington. That her late husband, Rev. Teddy Boston, had moved there in 1959 to be Rector of the parish & had founded the 'Boston Collection'.¹ After his untimely death in 1986 she had decided to continue to run the place herself. Rev. Boston was the last rector, the church now being run as part of a team ministry with 4 other parishes including Market Bosworth.

The first part of the evening was taken up with brass rubbing. The church is well known for this & same size replicas of brasses from all over the country & Europe line the walls. These are made of fibreglass but look just like originals. A modern one of the Rector & his wife features also their pet dog, a canal narrow boat & train symbols, reflecting their interests. The Rev. Boston's collection of 2000 rubbings has been given to the Monumental Brass Society & is used from time to time as a reference for repairs. The brass rubbing for which special rag paper is used, either black with a metallic wax crayon or white with a black crayon, looked easy when demonstrated & about half the company had a go with very encouraging results.

We then divided into groups & looked round the garden at the various steam engines & farm machines & had a ride on the narrow gauge railway. There are many well preserved slate headstones in the churchyard, the earliest noted being 1702. We were surprised to discover one in memory of William Davenport of Great Wigston who died in 1732 & Ann his wife. What brought them out to Cadeby, one wonders! Perhaps Ann was a native of that area.

Then followed a short talk & demonstration on the GWR "00" gauge model railway layout which took up an entire building. It is based on the actual route, as it was in 1935, from London to Olton Priors in Devon. It has all the working parts & interconnecting telephones & is sometimes actually run to an original time table speeded up so that 24 hours is compressed into 3 hours.

There was just time to look round the museum which is mainly railway but also much else, such as bygone of Rev. Boston's school days, before it was time to walk down the road to the village hall for an excellent ploughmans supper. Edna Taylor then thanked Mrs. Boston very much for a most interesting evening.

AUGUST MEETING

On Wednesday the 21st of August the Society met for a guided tour of Leicester Town Hall. We were met on the Town Hall steps by our guide Eugene Dowd. The talk and guided tour provided a fascinating insight into the workings of local government both in the present day and in the past.

During the nineteenth century public responsibility was shifting from the parish to local government or the town corporation. Thus the building of a new town hall in the 1870s was to accommodate a growing bureaucracy, and to reflect civic pride in the achievements of preceding years. The Town Hall was built on the site of the Old Cattle Market, which had moved in 1866. It was designed by F.J. Hames and was the first public building in the country to be built in the "Queen Anne" style. The City Corporation moved there from the Guildhall.

It was built in three phases, The main body of the building completed in 1876 (or 1875 on an upper gable), the Bishop Street wing in 1910, and the Bowling Green Street side in 1924. Francis Hames also designed the Town Hall Square and Sir Israel Hart donated the bronze fountain in 1879 to complete the picture.

Many imposing portraits line the corridors to the Council Chamber where Council meetings are held. We were shown the interesting old Court Rooms and the town silver, much of it quite recent, as the old town silver was sold off in the nineteenth century! The list of Leicester Mayors provided interesting reading, many of them now associated with street-names, schools and other public buildings.

Many thanks to Eugene who made the tour most entertaining with a wealth of facts and amusing anecdotes.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Our Autumn season opened with member, John Royley, giving a talk illustrated with slides on Ancient Egypt. The subject he is currently studying at Liverpool University.

He started by explaining that the Egyptian's apparent obsession with death, because of all the mummies & tombs, should more correctly be interpreted as a zest for life & a desire that it should continue in the next world. They believed in resurrection but only if something tangible remained hence the preserved bodies. So that there should be no doubt as to identity stylised portraits or masks showing the features of the deceased were made. The golden mask of Tutankhamen being the best known. Statues were also sometimes made, the Sphinx being an example of this.

After a death the internal organs were removed & stored separately. Sometimes mud was packed under the skin of the face to prevent a sunken look & false eyes might be used as the originals did not survive. The body was then dried in salt for about 70 days & embalmed with perhaps Palm wine, incense, gum from trees or spices. It was then tightly wrapped & bound in linen & placed in a coffin. This might be a large box in wood or stone or in later periods the figure shaped & highly decorated burial cases. Royal subjects were placed in specially built Pyramids & tables laden with food & wine, Lotus flowers, weapons & fabulous jewels placed there before all was sealed up. The mummies of more ordinary people were buried in the surrounding streets & the poorer ones in the sand.

The Ancient Egyptian period is divided into 4 time scales. Before 3000BC is known as the Archaic, 2700BC is the Old Kingdom, 2000BC the Middle Kingdom & 1500BC the New Kingdom.

After some questions & discussion the Chairman, Edna Taylor, thanked John for a most interesting if rather gruesome evening!

VISIT TO ST. THOMAS'S CHURCH & VICARAGE, SOUTH WIGSTON

A late addition to the programme occurred as a result of Rev. Peter Day very kindly offering to give a group of up to 20 members a guided tour of his home & the church. This took place on Saturday morning, 22nd June. The visit commenced in the house which was built in 1894; probably by Harry Bland who had been the contractor responsible for the church. It was funded by various donations & a mortgage of £400. Constructed with the typical high ceilings, deep skirting boards, solid wooden doors & picture rails of the period, it is largely unchanged except for the addition of central heating & a shower in the bathroom. There is still the odd mark on the wall where a gas pipe once emerged for the lighting!

The large handsome ground floor rooms consist of a lounge, dining room with unusual window over the fireplace, study, kitchen & hall with staircase leading to 5 bedrooms above. There is the master bedroom & a suite of three inter-connecting rooms designed for a nanny, with girls on the one side & boys on the other. The remaining bedroom was reserved for the Bishop when he came to visit. All vicarages had to be capable of providing this hospitality & to this day a vicarage must still have four bedrooms for the same reason. Up another staircase into the roof space is a very modest maid's room & access to storage area. Outside in the garden are lawns, specimen trees & a herb bed.

We then had a welcome cup of coffee & examined various maps & parish registers. Norah Moore was pleased to find her own baptism entry & those of some of the children of Orson Wright & his brother Joseph were noted. The first marriage at the newly consecrated church was between Joseph Turner Gadsby aged 23, a fireman (on the railway) & Ada Mary Herrington aged 18. There was no burial register because there was no churchyard. Burials took place at Wigston Cemetery & funeral services were not initially recorded.

After crossing the very busy Blaby Road to the church, we learned that the foundation stone was laid on 26/7/1892 & building completed the following year; the cost including fittings being £3000. The tower was added in 1901. The weight of the bells made it necessary to build the porch with 4' thick walls. Church, tower & bells were generously funded with large donations from Thomas Ingram as was the splendid organ which he dedicated to the "loving memory of Frances Dowley Ingram his wife & their happy married life of 57 years. A.D. 1895." St. Thomas's has always been known for its bell ringing & excellent music. The beautiful East window is dedicated to Sir John F.L. Rolleston who was Lord of the Manor & another generous benefactor of the church. A three panel painting of angels & Virgin & Child on the West wall is the work of Lady Rolleston & hanging over the font & down the sides is some lovely symbolic modern applique work.

This visit was really enjoyable & informative & Edna Taylor thanked Rev. Day for making us so welcome. It was thought other members would appreciate this visit & Rev. Day has very kindly agreed to repeat it for another party of 20 in the future which will be incorporated in the programme.

FRAMEWORK KNITTERS MUSEUM

At a recent committee meeting of the 'Friends' of the Museum, membership numbers were discussed. While these are quite satisfactory at present they do show a slight decline. A small proportion of 'Friends' for various reasons do not renew at the end of any given year & new applications are not quite keeping up with this inevitable trend.

It was decided that the Secretary should contact all Historical & similar societies in the county to invite membership & offer the services of a speaker or group visit. Clearly the second & third options are not appropriate to our Society but it was agreed to invite any of our Society members who are not currently Museum 'Friends' to consider joining. The subscription is modest & support from as many people as possible will help to make the Museum's future that much more secure.

For more details contact the Secretary - Mrs. C. Nisbet, 3 Wells Avenue, Kilby. Telephone 240 2787.

TOWN CRIER

Oadby & Wigston Borough Council having agreed to become involved in our quest for a new Town Crier, following the resignation of Mr. Stan Croxtall, organised a civic barbeque on Sunday 18th August at Parklands Leisure Centre. This event raised money for the Mayor's Asthma Awareness Appeal & during the evening a competition was held to choose the replacement. Five people entered & the winner chosen was Mr. Joe David from Sapcote. Mr. David is a former British Army Sergeant Major & Beefeater at the Tower of London, so his qualifications seem just right. He has also been Town Crier of Blaby for the last two years. We look forward to 'hearing' of him in the future.

LOUGHBOROUGH ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

Burial Records 1808 13th July

"The Heat was so intense that in consequence thereof many people died, especially they that were at work in the Hayfields, also a great many Horses, particularly Carriage Horses drawing Stage Coaches.

The Thermometer as High as 92°"

Thanks to Margaret Rice for supplying this excerpt from the Loughborough Parish Records. It shows that very hot spells of weather are not a modern phenomenon after all.

Our November meeting is to take the form of a reading & discussion of a lecture originally given in 1911 on the history of Wigston. With this in mind the subject of Who's Who for this issue is the author of that work, Mr. W.J.R. Pochin.

WIGSTON WHO'S WHO NO: 15

WILLIAM JOHN REYNOLDS POCHIN M.A.

William John Reynolds Pochin was born the eldest child of the Rev. William Henry Pochin, a Church of England minister, on 8/4/1850, at Caythorpe, Nottinghamshire. His mother Elizabeth nee Reynolds was the daughter of Elias Reynolds of Dunton Bassett. There were to be 2 more children, another son Henry Elias Slater Pochin, who followed his father into the Church, & a daughter, Catherine Mary Elizabeth Pochin. These 3 children were the grandchildren of John Armston Pochin I (1777-1843) who lived & farmed at The Manor House, Newgate End. The children's father would have been brought up there but not being the eldest son had chosen another occupation. The Pochin family had lived in Wigston for at least 6 generations prior to this & were a branch of the Pochins of Barkby who still live at Barkby Hall to this day.

Young William's father was appointed Vicar of Ramsgill, Yorkshire & probably for this reason he was sent to school at St. Peter's, York, from where he matriculated in 1869. He then went to Cambridge where he gained a B.A. (Law & Hist. Trip. 1st Class) in 1873 & M.A. in 1877. He embarked on a legal career & was admitted to Gray's Inn on 11/11/1879. He was called to the Bar on 18/4/1883. During his career as a barrister he became a Master Bencher of Gray's Inn, an Equity Draftsman & Conveyancer. When in London he lived at 6, New Square, Lincoln's Inn & had chambers in Gray's Inn.

Fate decided that William should inherit his grandfather's property after all. His father's eldest brother John Armston Pochin II (1806-1880) & another brother James George Pochin (1816-1905) lived & farmed at the Manor House for many years. Neither of these two married & so when the survivor, James, died he left "everything" to his nephew William & his niece Catherine jointly. The other nephew Henry had died prior to this, unmarried, otherwise he would most likely have been included.

William & Catherine took over the Manor House. Neither of these married either & the two lived together, Catherine running the household on a day to day basis & William dividing his time between Wigston & his London chambers.

Catherine who is remembered as being very musical & playing the organ at All Saints' died in 1916. Thereafter William must have led a rather lonely life. He continued with his work in London & the management of his Wigston estate. The land stretched down to include the old gas works site & into South Wigston to include the present recreation ground. He owned Yew Tree House & was one of the three largest landowners in the parish.

He was much involved with All Saints' Church & gave the new clock in 1926. In 1930 he paid for electricity to be installed & a plaque inside states that this was in memory of Rev. W.H. & Miss C.M.E. Pochin, his father & sister. He also spent quite a time with the parish records which he used to prepare his lecture on the history of Wigston which was read to Wigston Literary & Scientific Society in 1911. This was later published as a pamphlet by Deeming Bros, of South Wigston.

William died aged 80, at his chambers on 17/5/1930. A press article reports..."a noted lawyer...a man of extremely reserved disposition...lived the life of a recluse at the Manor House, Wigston Magna...but was a brilliant man in his profession & worked at his chambers...almost up to the time of his death. At a service at Gray's Inn Chapel, the Rev. Dr. Matthews said 'After a distinguished career, an academic career distinguished both in classics & law, Master Pochin became a student of this Society in 1879...he served for a time as Chairman of the Law Committee. He was one of those perhaps somewhat rare people at the present time who blend the lawyer & the country gentleman. He was by nature a student. The centuries old customs of this Inn & Society appealed strongly to his historical sense. He devoted himself to their preservation, & to research into their meaning¹".

William's body was brought back to Leics. & buried in the peaceful little churchyard at Great Stretton. Sometime later his executors presented a sword to Wigston Council which was said to have been left behind at the Manor House by Oliver Cromwell when he stayed a night there prior to the Battle of Naseby. The Manor House is not that old but there was very probably a previous house on the same site. What is more puzzling is that later investigations have suggested the sword is of much more recent date & European in origin. This seems an odd mistake for such a family to make. Was there perhaps more than one sword in the effects & the executors got them mixed up?

Tricia Berry

Sources: Alumni Cantabrigienes 1752-1900 J.A. Venn. Will of James George Pochin. LRO Rp208 1905. Leicester Mercury 22/5/1930. Leic. Evening Mail 9/2/1933. Leics. Pedigrees & Royal Descents by Geo.D. Fletcher 1887. Various directories.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

In Aid of FWK Museum

19th October at 7.30p.m.

Quiz Night at All Saints Church Room. Entrance £1 at door. In teams of four, either make your own team or join with others upon arrival.

6th December at 6.30p.m.

Festive carols, wine & mince pies, at the Museum.

7th December

Christmas Open Day at the Museum. Stalls, cards, pantry, Christmas Cake raffle etc.

28th February 1997 at 7.30p.m.

Skittles Evening at The Old Crown. The Society v FWK Museum. £5 including supper. Tickets nearer the time.

7th June 1997.

Coach trip to Chester. Plan your own itinerary. Details later.

24th June 1997.

Evening Coach Trip, commentary by Duncan Lucas.

In Aid of South Wigston Methodist Church

1st & 2nd November at 7.30p.m.

Slide Show 'South Wigston Re-visited' at the Methodist Church South Wigston £2 50. Please note admission by ticket only -contact Peter Mastin 2882503.

RETURNS FROM WIGSTON MAGNA TO THE POPULATION ENQUIRY 1831

QUESTIONS addressed to the OVERSEERS in England, and to the SCHOOLMASTERS in Scotland:

1st. How many inhabited Houses are there in your Parish, Township, or Place; and by how many Families are they occupied?

2nd. How many Houses are now building, and therefore not yet inhabited?

3rd. How many other Houses are uninhabited?

4th. What Number of Families in your Parish, Township, or Place are chiefly employed in and maintained by Agriculture; or by Trade, Manufacture, or Handicraft; and how many Families are not comprised in either of the Two preceding Classes?

N.B. The total Number of Families in answer to this Question must correspond with the Number of Families in answer to the First Question; and if any Doubt shall arise as to the Class in which any Family or Families ought to be comprised, such Doubt is to be stated as a Remark, not omitting therein to specify in which Class such Family or Families may have been comprised in your Answer to the Fourth Question.

5th. How many Persons (including Children of whatever Age) are there actually found within the Limits of your Parish, Township, or Place, at the Time of taking this Account, distinguishing Males and Females* and exclusive of Men actually serving in His Majesty's Regular Forces, or in the Militia, and exclusive of Seamen, either in His Majesty's Service, or belonging to registered Vessels? *Every Female Servant must be again entered under Question 13th.

6th. How many of the Males enumerated in answer to the 5th Question are upwards of Twenty Years old?

N.B. If this Number of Males upwards of Twenty Years old should differ materially [or otherwise, as compared to the Return of 1821] from One Half of the total Number of Males [in answer to Question 5th] some Error has probably been committed, and the Answer to this Question should be examined, and corrected, if necessary.

[In the Year 1821, the Number of Males in Great Britain returned as being upwards of Twenty Years of age, as also the Number of those under that age, somewhat exceeded 3,000,000; But in the City of London and other parts of the Metropolis generally the Number of Males upwards of Twenty Years of age preponderated; in other places, wherever the increase of Population has been unusually rapid, a contrary Result may be anticipated].

7th. How many Males upwards of Twenty Years old are employed in Agriculture, including Graziers, Cowkeepers, Shepherds, and other Farm Servants, Gardeners (not taxed or taxable as Male Servants), and Nurserymen? In answering this Question, you will carefully distinguish these Males into Three Classes; viz. First, Occupiers of Land who constantly employ and pay One or more than One Labourer or Farm Servant in Husbandry; Secondly, Occupiers of Land who employ no Labourer other than of their own Family; Thirdly, Labourers in Husbandry and Farm Servants employed by Occupiers of the First Class.

8th. How many Males upwards of Twenty Years old are employed in Manufacture or in making Manufacturing Machinery; but not including Labourers in Warehouses, Porters, Messengers etc., who are to be included in a subsequent Class? [Question 11th].

9th. How many Males upwards of Twenty Years old are employed in Retail Trade or in Handicraft, as Masters, Shopmen, Journeymen, Apprentices, or in any Capacity requiring Skill in the Business; but not including Labourers, Porters, Messengers, etc., who are to be included in a subsequent Class?

N.B. The enable you to answer this Question in a Manner satisfactory to yourself, a Half Sheet [Formula No. 2] containing a List of the Denominations of several Trades is transmitted herewith, with blank Spaces and Lines for Entry of the Answers you obtain; (it being understood that if any Trade or Business carried on in your Parish or Place does not appear in the printed List, you will specify such Trade at Bottom of the said List), making a Mark for each Male opposite to the Denomination of his proper Trade or Business, and adding all together for final Entry in the Schedule; to which Schedule you will annex the said printed List, with your original Entries thereon.

10th. How many Males upwards of Twenty Years old are Bankers, Capitalists, Professional Persons, Teachers, Clerks, Surveyors, and other Educated Men?

And in answering this Question, you will include generally Persons maintaining themselves otherwise than by Manufacture, Trade, or bodily Labour. [*A Retailer sells to the Consumer the Article sold].

11th. How many Males upwards of Twenty Years old are Miners, Fishermen, Boatmen, Excavators of Canals, Roadmakers, Toll Collectors, or Labourers employed by Persons of the Three preceding Classes, [Questions 8th, 9th, 10th,] or otherwise employed in any Kind of bodily Labour, excepting in Agriculture? Labourers in Agriculture having been already entered in the proper Place.

12th. How many other Males upwards of Twenty Years old (not being taxable Servants under the next Question) have not been included in any of the foregoing Classes? Including, therefore, in answer to this Question, retired Tradesmen, Superannuated Labourers, and Males diseased or disabled in Body or Mind.

13th. How many Household Servants, including all Female Servants, and such Male Servants (of whatever age) as are taxed or taxable as such; also Waiters and Attendants at Inns, distinguishing the Males upwards of Twenty Years of Age from the Males under Twenty years of Age? N.B. Observe that the Number of Males, in answer to Questions 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, and 13th collectively, cannot be less than the Number of Males upwards of Twenty Years old, in answer to Question 6th; but will exceed that Number in consequence of under Twenty Years of Age; and as a general Individual of mixed Occupation or Income to that to profit more than by any other.

14th. If you have entered any Males in answer to the 8th Question, be pleased to specify the Manufacture or Manufactures in which they are employed; and what Proportion of the Number of those entered in answer to Question 11th are employed in any Quarry, Mines, Coal Pits, Fishery, or public Work now in progress?

RETURNS FROM WIGSTON MAGNA TO THE POPULATION ENQUIRY 1831

QUESTIONS ADDRESSED TO THE OVERSEERS IN ENGLAND, AND TO THE
SCHOOLMASTERS IN SCOTLAND

FORMULA No 1. COUNTY OF LEICESTER; PARISH OF WIGSTON MAGNA

1	Inhabited Houses	452
	Families	483
2	Houses Building	None
3	Houses Uninhabited	27

4	Families. Employed in Agriculture	93
	Families In Trade, Manufacture & Co	336
	All other Families	45
5	Males	1061
	Females	1113
6	Males upwards of 20 years	511
7	Agriculture. Occupiers 1 st class	13
	" 2nd class	10
	Labourers in Agriculture	6933
8	Manufacturing of Stockings	258
9	Retail Trade and Handicraft	100
10	Wholesale and Capitalists, Clergy, Office-clerks, Professional and other Educated Men	6
11	Labourers, not Agricultural	
12	All other Males of 20 years	23
13	Male Servants, Upwards of 20 years	5
	Under 20 years	10
	All Female Servants	31
	[Within Q.8]	

PROPERTY OF GWTHS

Signed Thos. Vann

J.R. Colver

(LRO WIGSTON MAGNA DE3 84/91)

Thanks to Jim Colver for supplying these details of the Population Enquiry of 1831⁷ featured on Pages 8, 9 & 10 & the Prisoner of War Fund notes on Pages 11 & 12.

WIGSTON MAGNA PRISONER OF WAR FUND 1918

Although the First World War had been going since 1914, not until the end of July 1918, some three months before the Armistice, did the scheme for sending aid to Wigston Magna's prisoners of war get under way. The following items are taken from the Prisoner of War Fund Minutes Book.

An inaugural meeting was held on July 25th, 1918 in the Wigston Council Chambers to consider a scheme to raise funds for the Prisoners of War from Wigston Parishes and the following minutes were noted by Mr J.A. Broughton. Chairman - Mr J W Black

ITEM I/ 23 Ladies and Gentlemen were present The Rev. F.RC Payne of Leicester. Gen. Sec. for the Leicester and Rutland Prisoner of War Fund explained the scheme now in operation for sending parcels to the Prisoners of War.

ITEM 2/ Extract:- It was resolved to co-operate with the Committee at Leicester to raise £1350 per annum needed to supply Wigston's War Prisoners with parcels of food.

MEETING SEPT. 5th 1918

ITEM 47 Extract:- Several efforts already taken place. Letters of appreciation to be sent to Mrs. Barnley for arranging a pageant which realised £16 on July 6. To Miss Lucas & friends for various efforts made on Aug 24 and 31 which realised the magnificent sum of £103..10..Id. To the Vicar & Churchwardens of All Saints' Church for collections taken £11..6..6d and to the Schoolmaster and children of the National Schools for collecting £2.1 .Od.

ITEM 5/ It was decided that the following committees be formed:- Propaganda; Employer & Employees; Sewing; House to House Collecting; Entertainments.

MEETING SEPT. 12th 1918

Introductory remarks. Mr. J.H. Holmes reported on the work already done & various particulars as to the cost of parcels etc. needed for the Prisoners. It was stated that each man was sent 6 Pels. Every 4 weeks, value 107- (50p) each and in addition to this 107- (50p) of bread was also sent from Copenhagen or Beme every 4 weeks making the approximate cost of each man £45..10..0 per annum. Up to the present date there were 32 Wigston Magna Wai Prisoners. The sum required for these being £1,500 per annum.

ITEM 9/ The President asked for offers for the fund and the following promises were made.

Messrs. A.H. Broughton & Co. £25

Messrs. W. Holmes & Son £25

Mr. E. Foulston £25

Mrs. W. Maycock I/- per week

ITEM 137 Extract:- The Ladies of the sewing committee stated that they had already started planning a Great Bazaar to be held in December and Miss Ada Geeves stated that a flag day had been arranged for October.

MEETING OCT. 10th 1918

ITEM 47 The offer by Mr Ladkin on behalf of the National School Managers to use a room for committee meeting when necessary at the small sum of 1/6 (7p) each meeting

was gratefully accepted.

- ITEM 57 The suggestion of Mrs. J. Hassle that the committee pay Id each to defray costs when having a meeting was accepted.

MEETING NOV. 14 1918

- ITEM 3/ Extract:- The action of the secretary in obtaining the loan of a parcel for demonstration purposes was confirmed.
- ITEM 5/ Extract:- The following charges to be made for admission to the Bazaar. Season tickets (3 days) 21- (\ Op), Thursday and Friday afternoon I/- (5p) each day. After 6 o'clock 6d (2p). Saturday afternoon 6d (2p). Saturday after 6 o'clock I/- (5p) including a dance to be held.
- ITEM II It was decided to invite the following Gentlemen to preside at the openings; Mr. J.A. Broughton, first day. Mr. B Toone, Mr. Lee, Mr Hincks, Mr. Pochin & Rev. Mortlock.

MEETING NOV. 18 1918

- ITEM I/ Rev. T.W. Wright moved the following resolution, that owing to the Armistice having been signed by Germany, the Leicester committee have informed the public through the press that further contributions for the prisoners of war are not necessary and that in view of this statement we discontinue any other efforts.
- ITEM3/ A hearty vote of thanks was passed to the Rev. F.R.C. Payne & helpers for the great work done by them in the sending of parcels to the Wigston Boys.
- ITEM 5/ Extract:- It was decided that the Bazaar would be held as planned and the money raised should be devoted in some way for the Wigston men who have served with the forces.

MEETING NOV. 29 1918

- ITEM2/ Extract:- A letter had been received from the Leicester Parcels Committee stating they intended forwarding to the homes of former prisoners of war, the parcels intended for Xmas.
- ITEM 5/ Extract:- The committee discussed the Wigston Urban District Council's proposal for erecting a memorial in Honour of the Wigston men but were not prepared to pledge support until further details were known.
- ITEM 6/ It was agreed that the funds raised from the Bazaar be devoted to a memorial for the Wigston men.

MEETING FEB. 27 1919

Extract:-

A Mr. A.H. Broughton was asked to explain the scheme proposed for the War Memorial. It was proposed to construct a park & institute the approx. cost of which was £3,500. The resolution was passed and if it was accepted at a public meeting, the Peace Memorial Park would receive the whole of the takings of the Xmas Faire.

The total funds raised by the Committee since its formation after all expenses paid was:

For the Prisoners of War Fund £508.. 7..2 1/2
For the Peace Memorial Park £279.. 10..0

ONE MAN'S WAR

A copy of the late Bernard Elliott's book 'Wigston in 1891' sits on a bookshelf in a villa situated on the North/East coast of Italy, some 50 miles from Venice. It belongs to 78 year old Giovanni Bredariol whose interest in it stems from the fact that one of the illustrations shows his old home, 46 Gladstone Street, Wigston!

Giovanni served in the Italian Navy during World War II & in 1940 following one of the fierce engagements in Tobruk was captured & brought to England. He was sent firstly to POW Camp 28 in Loughborough & later moved to a castle like building near Queniborough. When camp tasks were being allocated he volunteered, though not a trained chef, to be the Officers' cook. These Officers very likely came to enjoy pasta & pizzas long before they became such a popular part of the English diet! It is interesting to learn that the Italians were treated well by the British, their supposed enemies, but not so well by the Germans, their allies.

After the war Giovanni returned to Italy to marry the girl friend he had left behind. He returned with her to England to settle in 1948 & they lived on a farm in South Croxton. It was compulsory at the time for all immigrants to work two years on the land. The couple had a daughter, Dorina, before moving to North Street, Wigston where Giovanni took up employment with Mr. Thorpe a Wigston Fields farmer. Mr. Thorpe's Wigston 'Fields' have long since disappeared but his house survives surrounded by more modern ones at the junction of Grange & Grangeway Roads.

The Bredariols had a son Frank & then moved to 46, Gladstone Street, where another son, Giannino, was later born. This house was one of a pair owned by Mr. Thorpe at the time. Iole's brother Mario Trevisanutto & his wife also decided to come to England & they moved into the other house, No: 44, Mario also working on Mr. Thorpe's farm.

In later years Giovanni worked for Wheatcrofts the builders & then for BSS Group on Lee Circle. It was while there that a lasting friendship developed with his supervisor Mr. H.A. Wells. Iole worked for Mrs. Wheatcroft as a mothers' help & also for a time at Cherubs.

Mario & his wife & son returned to Italy in the 1960's & in 1970 Giovanni & Iole decided they would return too, after 22 years in England. Dorina & Frank chose to remain in England but Giannino aged 16 went with his parents. Dorina took over the family home where she lives to this day, while Frank went to live in Kibworth.

As well as visits from his son & daughter Giovanni welcomes friends he made in Leicestershire who sometimes spend holidays in Italy. It was on one of these visits that Mr. Wells of Broughton Astley took over a copy of the book.

Tricia Berry

Thanks to Dorina Voyle & Mr. Wells for their willing help with this interesting little piece of more recent history & to Jean Elliott for drawing my attention to it when the book was purchased.