

GREATER WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
White Gate Lodge, 97 Newton Lane, Wigston Magna, Leics.

BULLETIN 115

1st NOVEMBER 2019



Braunstone Hall (formerly Braunston) from Nichols Volume IV, Part II, Page 620

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS – NOVEMBER 2019 TO AUGUST 2020

Wednesday 27th November 2019 (note change of date)

Gunpowder Plot - Sally Henshaw

7.30p.m. Wigston College Concert Hall, Station Road, Wigston. LE18 2DS

Wednesday 18th December 2019

Christmas Social and talk on Edith Piaf – Julie Ede

7.30p.m. Wigston College Concert Hall, Station Road, Wigston. LE18 2DS

*(Please bring £2 on the night towards refreshments, guests will be charged £3)

Wednesday 15th January 2020

Rise & Decline of the Coaching Trade in Market Harborough – Dr Len Holden

7.30p.m. Wigston College Concert Hall, Station Road, Wigston. LE18 2DS

Wednesday 19th February 2020

AGM followed by Presentation of Pictures of Wigston – Mike Forryan

7.30p.m. Wigston College Concert Hall, Station Road, Wigston. LE18 2DS

Wednesday 18th March 2020

No Greater Enemy: Leicester & the Influenza Epidemic of 1918/19 – Cynthia Brown

7.30p.m. Wigston College Concert Hall, Station Road, Wigston. LE18 2DS

Wednesday 15th April 2020

In Search of Daniel Lambert – Philippa Massey

7.30p.m. Wigston College Concert Hall, Station Road, Wigston. LE18 2DS

Wednesday 20th May 2020

The History of Milestones – Helen Crabtree

7.30p.m. Wigston College Concert Hall, Station Road, Wigston. LE18 2DS

Tuesday 16th June 2020 (note change of day)

Visit to Lamport Hall, Northamptonshire

With refreshments, times to be advised

Saturday 25th July 2020 (extra event)

Special 40th Anniversary Celebrations

Details to be advised

Wednesday 19th August 2020

Guided walk in Oakham – Jill Collinge, Blue Badge Guide, to be followed by pub meal

Time to be advised

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

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

Chairman: Mike Forryan's email: chairman@wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk

AUGUST 2019 MEETING GUIDED WALK AROUND ANCIENT LEICESTER FOLLOWED BY OPTIONAL AFTERNOON TEA

Members did not have to travel far for the summer outing on this occasion. We met in the early afternoon in Leicester on St Nicholas' Circle overlooking the Jewry Wall museum (now closed) and the Roman remains. Our guide was Leigh, a member and treasurer of Leicester Civic Society which promotes a number of themed walks around Leicester. For a change, the weather was just right for our walk with the promise of even hotter temperatures for the following bank holiday weekend (which materialised). Leigh explained that in the planned two hour tour we would not actually walk very far proving that the ancient centre of the town is quite compact. She would split the places to be visited into three time spans, Roman, medieval and middle ages.

The Roman element was the Jewry Wall and the remains of the Roman baths. Although the Wall has obviously been known about for ever, the remains of the baths were not discovered until the 1930s when the site was being excavated prior to the building, of all things, a swimming baths. The original Roman town had been created by the end of the 1C AD on the banks of the River Soar. This formed a defensive boundary with the other sides being originally ditch and rampart. These were later walled which followed what we now know as Mill Lane, Southgate Street, Millstone Lane, Horsefair Steet, Gallowtree Gate, Church Gate, Sanvey Gate and Soar Lane. The town was named Ratae Coritanorum by the Romans. The Jewry Wall itself formed a barrier between the baths and the forum which stood roughly where St Nicholas' church stands today. It is thought that the site was in use for 200 years until a fire destroyed it in 360AD. Water was brought by a stone aqueduct from Knighton Brook via Conduit Street. The Wall itself was constructed of stone and brick and the clearly visible holes were made for scaffolding poles. The wall has survived so well probably because at one time it was the west end of the church.

We then walked into the St Nicholas' church yard. The church is originally Saxon, some 900 years old, and built using stone and brick from the Roman baths. It was substantially altered in the 19C as were many churches. It was perhaps the cathedral for Leicester Diocese in its first existence before Leicester became part of Lincoln and then Peterborough dioceses. (Leicester was re-established as a diocese in its own right in 1926 when St Martin's became the Bishop's seat). It was at first dedicated to St Augustine before becoming St Nicholas in 1225. Before leaving the Roman era we were reminded of the latest discoveries of Roman pavements and pillars which indicate the town was probably more important to the Romans than had been thought in the more recent past.

We then moved via Castle Street to St Mary de Castro church where we were lucky. It was about to be closed but we were allowed to come in for a short time. By coincidence the person in charge was well known to some long term Wigston residents. It was John Burton who kept a stationery and paper shop in Leicester Road for many years. He pointed out many of the unusual features, the sedilia where priests sat near the altar in arches in the wall, the Norman arches, especially around the doors inside and out, the two aisles, one for the castle residents and the other for the townspeople, the tower, once outside the church, but now incorporated within it, and the font not in the correct position. We were reminded of the taking down of the spire in 2013 because it was unsafe, and one member jokingly pointing out that Wigston might soon have a spare spire (from our own St. Wistans Church)!!!

Our next stop was on Castle Green just through the archway from the church door. What we see today is the Castle Hall of 1150 built by Robert de Beaumont, but with a more modern frontage subsequently added. It has one of the best roof constructions in the country. Having more recently

served as the law courts it is now part of De Montfort University. The castle itself was originally a motte and bailey of which the only part remaining is the cut off motte, it can be climbed with a good view from the top. The castle was of course developed, extended and made more secure over the centuries. Originally the motte and bailey were built by Hugh de Grantmesnil in 1068, two years after the Battle of Hastings. Parliament sat at Leicester Castle three times, kings stayed there during their travels, but not Richard III, people were knighted and Chaucer married his 3rd wife in St Mary de Castro in 1360. In more recent times J M Barrie of Peter Pan fame worked as a reporter in the courts and the famous green bicycle murder trial took place there 100 years ago. This concluded medieval Leicester and we moved on to the post 1485 period.

We walked to Jubilee Square, the current and original site of what remains of the Highcross, it having been moved several times over the years. Then we walked down what is now Highcross Street but in earlier times was called High Street. The Wednesday market was held here. The main features of the current Highcross Street are the remains of the town wall against which stood Leicester Gaol where Daniel Lambert was at one time employed. Further down (on the left) is the Elizabethan Free Grammar School, now a restaurant, of which both Elizabeth I and William Wyggeston were benefactors. Inside there is a further example of a timber beamed roof. Elizabeth also gave the town its first conduit, to bring in fresh water, since the Roman aqueduct described earlier. More or less opposite is the site of the former White Boar Inn where Richard III slept before he travelled out to Bosworth Field 534 years ago more or less to the day, the name being changed to the Blue Boar after Henry VII won the battle.

We then retraced our steps to the corner of Applegate and Guildhall Lane which was earlier known as Holyrood and then Town Hall Lane. This and Silver Street are two of the oldest streets in the town. Wygstons House, where we were later to take afternoon tea, was the home of Roger Wygston (uncle of William Wyggeston who is commemorated on the Clock Tower). The family were very successful wool merchants. This is the oldest house in Leicester albeit with an early 18C façade to Applegate.

The oldest part of the Guildhall is dated 1390 with the second part added in 1450, the divide is clearly seen from the outside with different windows and roof covering. Inside the main hall the roof also shows the different stages with examples of cruck and Queen post designs. The hall was the original home of the Corpus Christie Guild of wool merchants but this was disbanded as part of Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries. It was sold off and eventually bought by the town Corporation for £25 in the 1570s. The minstrels' gallery came from the old Corn Exchange.

Here, in the Mayor's Parlour, our walk ended and Leigh was heartily thanked for a fascinating tour of old Leicester showing us many features that some of the group had not seen before. This report mentions a small part of the facts and information we were given and should act as a taster for members to return at a later date. The group then split, with some members departing for home and others to Wygstons House for afternoon tea.

SEPTEMBER 2019 MEETING THE WINSTANLEY FAMILY OF BRAUNSTONE

Sadly, Glenys Janes who had been booked for this meeting to talk on the 'Rise and Demise of the Country House' had recently passed away. So for the first meeting of the new season we welcomed Helen Catterwell to speak on 'The Winstanley Family of Braunstone'. Helen is a lead member of the Braunstone History Group who have their base in the stable block at the side of the former Braunstone Hall, now the superbly renovated Winstanley Hotel. The group has a well presented and

extensive display of photos and documents about the old village of Braunstone and a fascinating exhibition of artefacts relating to the Winstanley family, many donated by present family members who live elsewhere in the UK.

Helen's talk was centred on the many generations of the family nearly all of whom were confusingly named Clement, and each had several children. She also mentioned the unusual arrangement of the boundary between city and county running along the centre (not to one side) of Braunstone Lane. This situation arose because originally the whole of the village and park was in the county but when the city authorities wanted to purchase the park for the purpose of constructing a housing estate, the family resisted and eventually a compulsory purchase took place and the city boundary was extended. Clearly the two local authorities could not agree so a centre line down the middle of the road was adopted. The Hall itself was included in the purchase and eventually became a school, fondly recalled by older people who lived in Braunstone as children. Eventually the school closed and the building suffered much vandalism until it was bought and converted into the hotel, a project recognized by several awards. The original stable block is well used and the gardens continue to be maintained by the council and are open to the public. Braunstone Park itself was used by the Americans as a camp in WWII, while the school was still open, leading to some interesting memories for those attending at the time!

On a summer evening visit to Kirby Muxloe and its castle several years ago we were told that the Winstanleys bought the castle and half of the village and Helen reminded us of this link during her talk. Other links with Wigston were that Anna Jane Winstanley eldest daughter of the Rev. George Winstanley married C.M.D.R. Ralph George Pochin R.N. of Barkby in 1855. Also back in time before a police force was established farmers and landowners evolved their own methods of protecting their livestock. Owners got together in groups, the local one being the Great Wigston & Blaby Association for the Prosecution of Felons. Members met every six months at alternate venues, paid a subscription to cover the cost of employing people to patrol the fields, and to compensate any of their number who became a victim anyway. They also enjoyed a chat over a good lunch. It is on record that Clement Winstanley Esq. of Braunstone Hall rode over to Wigston on 4/5/1830 to such an event hosted by the landlord of the Blue Bell in Bell Street. As well as many well know local names, other members of note present on that day were Henry Halford Esq., of Wistow Hall and John Clarke Esq., of Little Peatling.

Helen was thanked for stepping in at the last minute, she donated her fee to the Braunstone History Group.

OBITUARY OF CLEMENT WINSTANLEY ESQ (1775-1855)

Jan 25. At his residence, Brookfield, Nr. Teignmouth, Devon in his 80th year, Clement Winstanley Esq., of Braunston House, Nr Leicester, a deputy Lieutenant and Magistrate of Leicestershire.

The family of which Mr. Winstanley was the representative, of high antiquity in Lancashire, became connected with the county of Leicester in 1650, in which year James Winstanley purchased the Manor of Braunston from the family of the Hastings. Since that period the family has constantly taken part in the affairs of the borough or county. The purchaser of Braunston held the Office of Recorder of Leicester from 1653 to 1662 and his grandson James Winstanley represented the borough in Parliament for seventeen years, till his death in 1718.

Clement Winstanley the fourth in descent from the Recorder, took a very active part in county matters as a magistrate, and for a time Vice-Lieutenant, and in 1774 the year of his shrievalty the

gentlemen of the county showed their respect for him in a very marked manner, by escorting him from Braunston to Leicester Castle, arrayed in a uniform, and in military order. He married Jane, eldest daughter of Sir Thomas Parkyns, Bart, of Bunney Park, and was the father of Mr. Winstanley, the subject of the present notice.

Mr. Winstanley was born in 1775 and was educated at Uppingham School and at Pembroke College, Cambridge where he entered in 1792. In 1794 he quitted the university to take a company in the Prince of Wales' Fencibles, a regiment which his uncle Lord Rancliffe was at that time raising for service in Ireland; and in 1796 he obtained the rank of Major. He served in Ireland seven years, in the heat of the Rebellion, and on one occasion received the thanks of the Duke of York in general orders; it had fallen to him to escort a body of French prisoners with a very inadequate force, and surrounded on all sides by rebels; and nothing short of the vigilance and firmness displayed by Major Winstanley on the occasion could have brought the prisoners safe to their destination.

In 1798, after the engagement at Killalla, he was for sometime left in complete command of the Prince of Wales' Fencibles who remained to garrison the town, and on his resignation of the command into the hands of a superior officer, he received an address from the principal inhabitants, expressive of their "high sense of the manly spirit and activity" which he had manifested and to which they considered themselves in great measure indebted for the tranquility they had enjoyed.

In 1802 the Prince of Wales' Fencibles were disbanded and he returned to England, where the next year he joined the Leicestershire Militia as Lieutenant Colonel, and brought the regiment into the highest state of discipline and good order. When soon after his father's death, he resigned, considering that he had important duties to perform in the county, the officers of the regiment requested the Duke of Rutland to use his influence to induce him to remain, and being unable to change his resolution, they presented him with a silver cup as a proof of their esteem and regard. In 1817 he served as High Sheriff at a time when the Luddite Riots imposed more than ordinary duties upon the office.

Subsequently he acted as Chairman of the Leicester & Swannington Railway Company, from the time when the line was first proposed until it was sold to the Midland Company, and the directors testified their appreciation of his services by the presentation of a handsome testimonial of plate. Of late years Mr. Winstanley's health had obliged him to withdraw almost entirely from Leicestershire, and to retire to a residence in the south of England, at Brookfield, near Teignmouth, where he expired.

The following notice of his character is extracted from one of the local papers:- "He had great amenity of manners and thorough English kind-heartedness. His benevolence was extensive and unostentatious. As a magistrate, a land lord, and a neighbour he was highly valued by all parties; and it may truly be said of him that few men ever better discharged the duties of an English country gentleman."

Having died unmarried he was succeeded in his estates by his nephew James Beaumont Winstanley Esq., only surviving son of the late Rev. George Winstanley, Rector of Glenfield in Leicestershire, who had died in 1862.

By Sylvanus Urban from the Gentleman's Magazine.

The above James Beaumont Winstanley (1832-1862) succeeded to the Winstanley estates upon the death of his uncle in 1855. By 1862 he was unmarried and High Sheriff of Leicestershire. He was

travelling in Europe when lack of contact caused concern at home. A local detective “Tanky” Smith, noted for his different disguises, travelled to Germany and discovered James had drowned while crossing the Moselle River in a ferry boat about midnight. He had been buried as an unknown person. “Tanky” had the grave opened and ascertained it was James before closing it again.

There is a certain amount of mystery in this case with newspapers reporting several different stories but actually no-one really knows what happened to the poor man.

From newspaper accounts of the tragedy in 1862

OCTOBER 2019 MEETING THOMAS COOK & THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT IN LEICESTER

For this meeting, our second in the new venue at Wigston College, we welcomed back an old friend Neil Crutchley to speak on ‘Thomas Cook and the Temperance Movement in Leicester’.

At the commencement of the 19C everybody drank alcohol, including children, because natural drinks such as milk and water were unsafe. However there was so much alcohol consumed that drunkenness caused severe social problems, paintings of the time clearly illustrated the extent of the situation. Although beer was commonly drunk, gin was introduced which only made matters worse. The government was cautious because abolition in America had caused the problem to go underground.

Under the 1830 Beer House Act the Government introduced a licensing system in order to control alcohol production; but by 1841, 45,000 licenses had been issued at £2 2s 0d each. The artist, Hogarth, created vivid illustrations of the problem of drunkenness emphasizing the use of pawnbrokers by the poor to obtain cash to buy beer and gin. However, gin was seen to be the worst of the two and so there was a movement, especially in the north of England to encourage beer drinking and this was the theme of the early temperance societies. The first being formed in Bradford in 1830 which resulted in the first temperance hall being built there in 1837.

Many followed in the northern cities which were also very non-conformist, as was Leicester. Eventually, Preston Temperance Society decided to campaign against all alcohol. This action alienated brewers and landlords, but the societies still met in pubs and hotels until they could construct their own halls. These were used not only for rallies against drink but also for all sorts of activities to encourage social improvement and entertainment much like non-conformist chapels at the time. However, amazingly, one Methodist chapel in Garstang, Lancashire did not like the Temperance Society meeting in its own chapel and so it had to build its own hall. There was disagreement between the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists, the former not wishing to support the movement and the latter offering assistance.

Thomas Cook was born in 1808 in Melbourne, Derbyshire (place of a GWHS visit in 2018, a local centre for market gardening). His father died when he was four years old and when he was 10 he started work in a market garden where his boss was a drunkard. The same situation occurred in his next job as a carpenter, but after this he became a printer and a devout Baptist and he definitely did not drink, signing the pledge in 1833. He eventually became a Baptist Evangelist. He organised a train excursion to a temperance rally in Loughborough and moved to 1, King Street, Leicester where he was a bookseller and the premises became a base for the temperance movement in the south midlands. At the time there were 223 licensed premises and 136 beer shops in Leicester.

Cook worked with local industrialist Thomas Corah to raise funds for a temperance hall in the town and although the first suggestion of such a hall in Leicester was in 1843, a site was not purchased until 1850 when a company was formed with Cook as Secretary. The site was located on Granby Street and cost £452.10s 0d. Nine trains full of visitors arrived for the laying of the foundation stone in 1852 and on completion the following year the cost had amounted to circa £10,000.

Both the exterior with Greek columns and the interior with a barrel roof and galleries were very grand. There was space for 1700 people in the main hall with many side rooms for lectures, meetings and a library. The organ was installed later by local organ builder Joshua Porritt. The hall was the only suitable space in the town for grand concerts until the De Montfort Hall was built in 1913.

The Mayor opened the hall in 1853 when tickets for the event cost 2/6p, comparatively high to discourage the poor of the town. Eventually a splinter group built the Secular Hall to cater for the less well off. The Secular Hall still exists on Humberstone Gate and is the oldest in the country outside London. But, Cook demonstrated his support for the poor when during the potato famine he purchased hundreds of tons of potatoes and resold them at cost. He also ran a soup kitchen.

Cook was definitely the force behind not only the Temperance Hall but the events. However, there were problems, the hall was cold and poorly lit and when two concerts were going on at the same time in different rooms, the sound transmitted through the building. Cook gave talks on his world travels which he was developing at the time. At the same time a hotel was being created next door to the hall and Cook and his wife ran this as a reasonably priced temperance commercial hotel, ideal for travellers arriving at the station on London Road. The nearby Wyvern Hotel (where Elizabeth House now stands next to the railway station and designed by Arthur Wakerley) was also a temperance hotel.

The hotel and hall contributed well to the street scene in Granby Street leading down to the clock tower with the Midland and National Provincial Banks, the Grand Hotel and the Victoria Coffee House further down the road. The hall declined after 1913 and was sold for £8,000, becoming the Essoldo cinema, also known by other names, before it was demolished.

The Temperance Movement encouraged the development of coffee houses of which there were several in Leicester perhaps the most notable being the Eastgates Coffee House, still in existence near the clock tower.

Altogether a very interesting talk, well presented, about the 'other side' of a local person who remains famous despite the recent problems caused by the collapse of the travel company which he founded.

Neil donated his fee for the talk to the 'Dr George Gray Memorial Trust' which supports high standards in choral music at Leicester Cathedral.

August & October meeting reports by Colin Towell. September one by Colin Towell & Tricia Berry

A FEW PROBLEMS AT OUR NEW VENUE

A change of venue is always a problem both for our committee and our members, our September meeting was no different.

Our problems started with our booked speaker having passed away. Helen Chatterwell from Braunstone History Group kindly stepped in to help us out. Our thanks to Helen for her efforts.

The committee tried to forestall any problems by visiting the hall ahead of the meeting to have a trial run. The new sound system worked well on the microphones and was fully audible at the rear of the theatre. However, on the day, the use of the 'lapel' microphone did cause some issues. This we have now fixed with a cheek microphone for the speaker which cannot be covered with a hand or book or clothing. Let's hope all will be well.

However, can I ask that members who are having difficulties hearing to please make the fact known by raising your hand so that Peter or I can see the issue and correct it immediately. We will run a complete sound test before each meeting to make sure everyone is comfortable with the sound.

We also thought that there might be a few members who needed a guiding hand on arrival on the campus, so we had our own car park attendant on duty in his high 'Vis' jacket. (See picture).

It has been reported to us that on exiting the hall members found the steps in darkness. We have now sorted this issue and lights will be on outside the entrance.

I look forward to seeing you all at future meetings.

Mike Forryan
Chairman



Colin Towell welcoming members at the new venue Wigston College Hall on 18th September

GRANVILLE ROAD IN THE EARLY DAYS

NAMING THE ROAD AS REPORTED IN THE LEICESTER CHRONICLE &

LEICESTERSHIRE MERCURY 19/10/1872

Wigston Fields

“Some years ago the Freehold Land Society of Leicester purchased a tract of land for building purposes, and it was designated by the above name. A substantial road was made through the property, and the land on either side divided into shares for the erection of dwellings of a superior class. One of the first to give effect to the scheme was Mr. John Holland, builder, of Leicester, who erected several pretty villas on the road. His example was soon followed, and now may be seen on both sides of the way handsome villas, with grounds laid out in an artistic manner, occupied by gentlemen who have retired from business, or are desirous of a pleasant country retreat. It is sufficient to say that the whole of the shares have been purchased, and utilised for building or horticultural purposes, and Wigston Fields now is one of the most charming and salubrious situations within a four mile radius of Leicester.

The altered condition of the neighbourhood induced several of the freeholders to think that the term “Wigston Fields” was not the most appropriate, and, although they were fully aware of the poetic dictum, that “a rose by any other name would smell as sweet” resolved to give another appellation to the road.

With that view a meeting of the owners of the estate was convened at the hostelry of Mr. Leonard Sibson, on Wednesday evening last week, to consider the question. At the time named the great majority of the owners were present, and under the presidency of Mr. John Holland, who was unanimously voted to the chair (and not inaptly termed the “father of the colony”), various names were submitted to the meeting. The names proposed were respectively Lansdowne-road, Westbourne-road, Carlton-road, Granville-road, Springfield-road and Villa-road, when, upon being balloted for, the name Granville-road was, by a great majority, resolved upon as the future designation of the road, to be superadded to that of Wigston Fields.

After this part of the business had been transacted, W.T. Crick Esq., brought before the meeting various questions affecting the interest of the residents on the estate, amongst which was the gas and postal requirements, for the forwarding of which the speaker had, for the benefit of the owners generally, made considerable efforts. Mr. Crick, who had prepared memorials to the Wigston Gas Company, and to the postal authorities respectively, fully detailed the disadvantages under which the residents laboured from the absence of postal facilities, and the non supply of gas, the meeting unanimously adopted the suggestions made by him, and signing the memorials he had prepared. A unanimous vote of thanks was afterwards passed to Mr. Crick for the interest he had taken in the matter, and to Messrs. J.E. Holland and Clarke of Leicester, under whose auspices the meeting had been called together. It was also resolved that a levy be made upon the owners of property in Granville-road, to defray the expense of a thorough repairing of the road.

At the close of business “mine host” served up a capital supper, which received ample justice. Upon the removal of the cloth, the usual loyal and patriotic toasts were given and responded to as they deserved. Mr. Gamble of Leicester, proposed the toast of the evening, “Success to Granville-road, Wigston Fields” remarking he thought it quite right that a more distinctive name should be given to

the road, considering the great improvement effected there during the last few years, and the rapid increase in the value of land there, owing to that fact and other concurrent circumstances. Mr. Fleming spoke to the toast, and said that without being egotistical, he might claim to be the originator of the Freehold Land Society, under whose direction the present road was opened. Mr. Clarke then gave a very humorous recitation, entitled “Bullum versus Boatum” which being given a peculiarly humorous style, elicited great laughter. Mr. Rowe followed with a song of a bacchanalian character - Mr. Clarke again favoured the company with another comic reading, with equal success – Mr. Fleming spoke of the salubrity of the situation, and that he went back to business of a morning greatly invigorated – Mr. Pratt and Mr. Pridmore also spoke – Mr. A. Clarke gave a recitation from “The Lady of the Lake” which with toasts, and harmony, and votes of thanks to the Chairman and Vice-chairman, brought the proceedings to a close.”

All the people mentioned above were presumably residents but only the following have been positively identified. William Throne Crick was a retired shoe manufacturer who lived in one of the bigger properties named Rood House at the time. Records suggest this is the one now known as Mitcheldene. He was a brother of the perhaps better known Thomas Crick also a shoe manufacturer. The builder John Holland also came to live in Granville Road, his name is associated with both Sunnyside and Lorraine Villa, and Josiah Fleming lived at Ivy Cottage. William Gamble was another owner of one of the big houses. The meeting was held at Leonard Sibson’s hostelry on Leicester Road, later to be named The Royal Oak.

A LOOK AT ONE PROPERTY – IVY COTTAGE

The Leicester Freehold Land Society held a ballot to sell the plots of land after their AGM on 25th October 1855. A total of 12 people purchased 29 of the available lots. Seven further lots were left unsold at this time. Plot 5 which consisted of the ground upon which numbers 18 and 20 (Ivy Cottage) were later built was purchased by William Joiner. William was a Leicester framework knitter, living at 20, Garden Street, St. Margaret’s, Leicester.

Sometime before 1867 John Neale Petty, a Leicester solicitor, but originally from Deddington, Oxfordshire, had acquired this land. At the time it was described as a parcel of land, 1350 sq. yds., bounded to the North 105 ft. by Freehold Road, (later Granville Road), to the East 117 ft. by land belonging to Wm. Stevenson, to the South 105 ft. by land belonging to Captain Baddeley and to the West 114 ft. by land belonging to David Henry Horn. In 1867 he paid Wigston Church rates of £11 for a “summer house” and land plus £2.4.0. for separate land. He still retained his regular address at 17, Halford Street, Leicester. On 23/7/1869 he sold the property to Josiah Fleming.

Josiah Fleming was a Leicester businessman owning J. Fleming & Co., printers, chromo lithographers, stationers and book binders at 112, Wellington Street, Leicester where he employed about 80 staff, both men and women. He lived at 25/27 Upper Tichborne Street, Leicester but was born in Halifax.

When Josiah put his property up for sale on 26/6/1880 in the Leicester Chronicle & Mercury it was described as a:

“Freehold garden and building site with a spacious well fitted brick built and slated summer house with kitchen, cellar, yard and outbuildings and large garden thereto, situate on the Granville Road, Wigston Fields, in the occupation of Mr. Josiah Fleming, the owner. The garden comprises a tastefully laid out flower garden with lawn, flower beds, and borders, planted with shrubs etc; also a productive kitchen garden well stocked with vegetables and choice fruit trees; it is in an excellent

state of cultivation, enclosed on two sides by a substantial brick wall, and in every respect well adapted as a site for the erection of a Villa. The property has a frontage of about 38 yards to the Granville Road, and contains a total area of 1,400 sq.yds. or thereabouts”.

It did not sell, or was perhaps withdrawn at the time, but on 30/10/1889 Josiah, by then living in Aylestone, sold it to Sarah Lowe for £150. It was then described as a parcel of land on Granville Road, 1350 sq. yds., bordered to the east by land belonging to the late Leonard Sibson, to the south by land belonging to the late John Yates and to the west by land belonging to the late Mr.Chambers.

Sarah Lowe was a single lady brought up in a modest household in Birstall. She worked as a hosiery hand and later as a home nurse. In the 1891 census she was listed as aged 61, living on her own means at Ivy Cottage and with her niece Harriett Ireland aged 27, living with her. Harriett was the daughter of George and Mary Ireland who also lived in Granville Road at a house named Iona. Mary Ireland nee Lowe was Sarah's sister.

It is most likely that it was Sarah who upgraded the house to a villa and named it Ivy Cottage. She later moved to 6, Knighton Fields Road, Leicester in about 1898 and in the 1901 census Ivy Cottage was occupied by James Seddon, a boot manufacturer, his wife Julia and their 3 year old daughter Jessie. On 29/3/1904 Sarah sold the house to Louisa Anne Stone of Carlton House, Countesthorpe for £450. At this time it was occupied by a Mr. Hill.

Louisa Stone was another single lady, brought up in a farming family at Barkby Thorpe, Leicestershire. She lived with her family and worked as a dressmaker and then as housekeeper to her brother. By 1881 she was working as housekeeper to a farmer in Gilmorton where she stayed at least ten years. By 1901 she was at the above mentioned Carlton House in Station Road, Countesthorpe where she is described as living on her own means. Also living with her as a boarder was a young bank clerk, and a fourteen year old servant was employed.

By 1912 she was staying with her married sister Ellen Cooper in Hull. It seems most likely she bought Ivy Cottage as an investment as there is nothing to suggest she ever lived there. On 28/9/1921, by then living at 410, Narborough Road, Leicester she sold the cottage to Annie Ellen Louisa Whitehouse for £580. At this time it was occupied by Harold Bower. Louisa died at 13, New Walk, Leicester in 1925.

Annie Whitehouse was also a single lady who was born in West Hallam, Derbyshire into a farming family. She attended boarding school in Birmingham. By 1891 the family had moved to Thorpe Satchville, Leicestershire and Annie worked as a school teacher. By 1901 she was living with her brother Henry, a coal merchant in Leicester. By 1911 she had moved to 3, Hobart Street, Leicester, when she took in a lodger and was living on her own means.

On 16/5/1925 she sold Ivy Cottage and 690 Sq.Yds of garden (about half the original size) to Henry Sisson Martin for £750. She died in 1933 and her address at this time was Dunstall, Granville Road. This was the name of No.18, next door to Ivy Cottage making it likely she had retained the remaining area of approx. 660 Sq. Yds of land and had Dunstall built for her own use.

This discovery of the three single ladies, Sarah, Louisa and Annie, seems to suggest hard working people who because there was no husband to support them, saved throughout their working lives in order to fund a comfortable retirement in the days before pensions and the various other savings schemes available now.

The next owner of Ivy Cottage, Henry Martin, was living at 19, Sykefield Road, Leicester at the time of the purchase. Henry was unmarried and worked as a cashier and secretary at an engineering company. He changed the name of the house from Ivy Cottage to Woodcroft. When the 1939 register was compiled (a war time census of the population), Henry was living at Woodcroft with his widowed mother Mary Martin and two of his sisters, Emily Russell nee Martin, a tax clerk and Dorothy Helen Martin a chartered accountant.

Henry died in 1973 still living at Woodcroft which he left to Emily Russell. Emily sold the house on 19/9/1975 to John Raymond Smith and his wife Rita Joyce, the latter owning it until 2003. They reverted the name of the property back to Ivy Cottage.

There have of course been other owners since 2003 but for reasons of privacy I chose not to include them.

My grateful thanks to the present owners of Ivy Cottage for very kindly making their deeds available to me.

Tricia Berry

WIGGY'S CHILD 1926-1939

HOSPITAL HOURS (Part seven of Doreen Boulter's childhood memories)

I was a victim of the Diphtheria epidemic that swept the county in the 'thirties. Carried into the large hospital ward, empty beds stretched on both sides as far as I could see. Tucked into the first bed, all by myself in the empty ward, I was lonely and frightened. Hospitals were grim in those days and highly regimented. You were not supposed to enjoy yourself in hospital, you were there to get well with the minimum of fuss and the maximum speed.

A young Scottish nurse was sent to keep me company and she talked to me about Scotland and how she loved to dance the Scottish Reels. Intrigued, I asked her to dance a spirited Highland Fling, Sister appeared.

One look at Sister's scandalized face was enough. Poor nurse was peremptorily dispatched with the scathing comment that not only had she brought the whole of the Nursing Profession into disrepute, she had actually endangered her young patient, even the youngest probationer was aware of the fact that excitement would have a detrimental effect on a feverish child.

I was left to the administrations of Sister. After peering down my throat and "tutting" she proceeded to give me an injection in my bottom, covering the site with sticking plaster. Nurse Jackson came next wielding a bedpan which I was instructed to use forthwith.

During the night I was frequently awakened by trolleys bearing inert forms, being pushed past my bed. Within three days, the ward was filled to capacity. Extra beds were shoved into any vacant space available. Finally, my bed was pushed inside the men's ward, temporarily said Nurse. My sojourn with the men was short lived. It was considered quite unsuitable and a niche was found in the ladies' ward for me.

Visitors were not encouraged and on Sunday afternoon Mother and Father would peer at me through the window and I would wave back. Small gifts and fruit were left with Nurse to be handed over at her discretion. From time to time our ward was enlivened by a lady patient walking up and down with a bedpan on her head singing "Rule Britannia".

Matron was on a par with God, and when it was time for Doctor's rounds, you daren't move a finger in case you disturbed the bed clothes. One morning, Doctor and his entourage came round. Pausing at the foot of my bed, he gazed long and thoughtfully at me. Turning to Sister, he remarked, "See that she has iron Sister, plenty of iron," and continued on his rounds.

The next morning, instead of going into School, I went to the "Little Park" instead. For most of the morning, until I judged it was dinner time, I sat conversing with the pensioners sitting on the adjoining seats.

I accepted a Mint Imperial, and informed the company that I had a morning off from School. I didn't care if I was struck down dead from a bolt from Heaven! Arriving home, Mother looked at me in astonishment. "You're home early, it's only ten to twelve," she exclaimed, looking at the clock on the wall.

Realising my mistake, I stammered that we'd been let out early.

"Why?" asked Mother. I hadn't got an answer to "Why."

The whole sorry tale was sobbed out to Mother.

She looked at me in consternation. "That's all high fine and watercress," said Mother. "What your father will have to say about all this when he comes home, I dursn't think."

Thoughts of Father brought on a fresh outburst of sobs.

"You'd best stay home this afternoon, getting yourself "all of a work" like this, we'll have you 'going down' again at this rate, she went on worriedly.

For the first and only time, FATHER WENT UP TO SCHOOL.

I never knew what transpired at that interview, I only know I was studiously ignored by teacher for the remainder of term, for which I offered up devout thanks each night when I said my prayers, and assured the Almighty, if He could manage to overlook my sad lapse just this once, I would never run away from school again!