

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

BULLETIN 108

1st JULY 2017



The Victorian Army as dressed for action in:

Egypt 1882

Zululand 1888

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS – AUGUST 2017 TO MAY 2018

Wednesday 16th August 2017

Pictures of Wigston & area – Mike Forryan

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

Wednesday 20th September 2017

Happy BBC anniversaries 2017 – Dave Andrews at Radio Leicester

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

Wednesday 18th October 2017

St. Pancras Station, gateway to London for the East Midlands including Wigston – John Stevenson

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

Wednesday 15th November 2017

Norman & Underwood, restorers of cathedrals & other historic buildings – John Castleman

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

***Wednesday 20th December 2017**

Singalonga Christmas – Lizzy Rushby (in costume) plus picture quiz, nibbles and drinks etc – Mike Forryan and the committee.

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

Wednesday 17th January 2018

Castle Park & the Honour of Leicester – Caroline Roberts

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

Wednesday 21st February 2018

AGM followed by a quiz – Virginia Wright, Leicester Blue Badge Guide

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

Wednesday 21st March 2018

The Leicester to Swannington Railway – Malcolm Riddle

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

Wednesday 18th April 2018

Some Wind & Watermills of Leicestershire – Dr Susan Tebby

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

Wednesday 16th May 2018

Queen Eleanor of Castile – Julie Ede

7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston

*Please bring £2 on the night towards the cost of refreshments, guests will be charged £3.

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.wigstonhistorical.society.co.uk

Chairman, Mike Forryan's e-mail: chairman@wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk

MARCH 2017 MEETING

BELGRAVE CHURCHYARD, LIVING MEMORIES

A full house welcomed Sandra Moore in full Victorian (black) costume, complete with draped reading stand, to give us a well illustrated talk about the residents (deceased) of Belgrave Cemetery. Before Sandra's dramatic entry from the back of the hall her 'apprentice', Nick explained that after the movement into the cities of great numbers of people in the early 1800s there was a problem with space to bury them. Gravediggers dug shallow graves leaving bodies exposed causing disease. There was not enough room in city churchyards, even if they existed, in crowded city areas so the Borough of Leicester created four municipal cemeteries, Gilroes, Saffron Hill, Welford Road and Belgrave.

Belgrave was opened in 1881 and covered 5.5 acres. There are two parts, one was consecrated for Church of England burials and the other half left unconsecrated for non conformist burials. The cemetery is now closed as it is full with about 4500 plots although occasional burials do still take place in existing plots with spare capacity. There are about 15,000 individuals buried there.

Sandra took the role of Miss Elizabeth Goodwin who from 1896 had been the head teacher at Belgrave Elementary school, she had lived with her mother and sister in nearby Thurcaston Road. Her father had also been a head teacher at Cropwell Bishop in Nottinghamshire where Elizabeth was born in 1868 and had later entered the profession. She remained unmarried as having done so would have debarred her from teaching. The school was built in 1861 by Mr Ellis of Belgrave Hall. Miss Goodwin died in 1922 aged 53 although she is not mentioned in the school records. She was a typical Victorian teacher who used her cane to emphasise her authority and made her pupils look small (as demonstrated by the way she spoke to her 'apprentice'). The three 'Rs' were drummed into her pupils.

Miss Goodwin's gravestone records her mother who died in 1923 and her sister Constance who died in 1958 aged 93. Her memorial stone had become badly worn and was broken so the Friends of the cemetery have had it cleaned and repaired and it now looks as good as new.

Miss Goodwin then went on to describe some of her 'neighbours' in the cemetery. These included Hannah Croft who died in 1944 aged 71 who came to Leicester from Staffordshire to seek work in the shoe factories. She was tee total and a Rechabite, joining protest marches against the demon drink.

Roland Vincent Sylvester Grimston who died in 1889 aged 53 was Chief Constable of Leicestershire and said to descend from William the Conqueror. He had climbed the social ladder and employed two grooms but after becoming unwell he took his own life so his grave points to the west and not the east.

A well known industrialist was Edwin Carr, inventor of the locally famous Carr's Fever Powders, for all ailments. His stone records that 'he did what he could'. He died in 1915, a single man, and left all of his £40,000 estate to the Royal Infirmary. His memorial stone is very tall and highly decorated in the Celtic manner, it is said that he took his powder recipes to the grave. An advertisement can still be seen for his 'Sea Breeze' Powders on the wall of his former premises in High Street. Ann Garner (Granny Garner) was 103 when she died in 1953 after breaking her hip falling down the cellar steps which she was trying to clean. She had 3 sons, 19 grandchildren and 33 great grandchildren. The oldest person buried in the cemetery was aged 106 at the time of death.

Noah and Jane Smith are buried with their daughter Jane. At Noah's funeral in 1960 there were 12 Rolls Royces in the procession to St Mark's Church, it could be seen on the photo that they had '999' registration numbers, clearly a Ginns and Gutteridge funeral! Jane who died in 1965 had 17 cars in her procession.

A more recent well known personality buried at Belgrave is Wilfred Barry Deacon, better known as Barry Young who died in 2012. He produced dance shows at Goscote Hall and the Stardust at Coalville. Other 'names' are those of the father of Joseph Merrick, the elephant man and Thomas Hoskins, the local brewer. One man, Joseph Cave, designed his own memorial and watched the gravedigger making the brick lining, he even climbed into it to inspect it. He died 9 years later.

The grave of Billy and Sally Elliott is decorated with a horseshoe in recognition of their love of horses. Sally's hearse was drawn by 4 black horses with a large number of floral displays. More were in vintage lorries following behind. Billy was recalled by our President, Duncan Lucas as a local character.

APRIL 2017 MEETING THE VICTORIAN ARMY, JED JAGGARD

There was a packed house for the visit of Jed Jaggard to talk on the Victorian Army. We had previously heard Jed's talk on Arming a Knight so we had some idea of what to expect, hence the capacity audience. Jed was dressed in early khaki uniform as used in the second Boer War. He brought many examples of guns and equipment which were passed around the audience, and to some folks the weight of a gun was a surprise.

Up to this second Boer War of 1899 – 1902 the uniform of a soldier had changed little since 1815 and Waterloo. Red was the colour of the coat, because it was cheap to dye cloth red and it could be seen by officers through smoke caused by gunpowder. Unfortunately it could also be seen by the enemy. No one mentioned it was also so that blood was not so obvious. Different regiments were denoted by facings on cuffs and collars and if you did not want to be recognised as being a member of a certain regiment you just 'turned your coat'.

Another traditional piece of army kit was the 'Brown Bess' musket which was introduced as far back as 1690. It took a long time to fire and a soldier would be good to get three rounds away in a minute, more usually only two. It was ineffective at anything more than 40-50 yards. An advance in design was brought about by a Presbyterian Minister, Alexander Forsyth 1769-1843. In 1805/7 he invented a percussion cap firing mechanism which, because it did not use gunpowder, created less smoke and sparks. It was used as a second line of defence up to the 1880s. This gun was rifled as well to create a more accurate shot, rifling is where the inside of the barrel is ridged to make the bullet spin. These bullets had a flat end which caused a lot of damage, usually, of course, to human bodies.

An American, Jacob Snider, 1811-1866, attempted to improve the rate of rifle fire by inventing a hinged block to enable breach loading instead of muzzle loading (that is the barrel and the stock are hinged so that the bullet is inserted at the hinge instead of down the barrel). This type, named the Snider Enfield, had a short period of usage in the 1860s. Then, in 1871, came the Martini Henry where a lever pulled down under the block opens the breach to enable the rejection of the used cartridge, this method allows a firing rate of 10-12 rounds a minute. Soldiers were now being restricted by the limit of 70 rounds being the number of rounds they could carry. This was the last

single shot gun before the Lee Enfield bolt action repeater guns were brought into use in 1895. These then remained in use until 1957.

The bayonet was originally plugged into the end of the barrel, clearly a disadvantage but the socket bayonet had been invented by the time of the Crimean War in 1856. Later developments of the bayonet were the luger version used by the artillery and a sawback bayonet to cut down trees. The navy developed the cutlass version of the bayonet and trained sailors to fight with both hands with the point downwards to prevent damage to low roofs below decks, sails and rigging.

The method of fighting had not changed and troops were formed shoulder to shoulder in long lines which meant that they could easily be out flanked and then attacked from the rear. So the square formation was devised so that all troops were facing outwards and could attack an enemy approaching from any direction. An ammunition pouch was supplied, attached to a belt on the right hip with 40-70 rounds allocated per man. Sometimes an additional left hip pouch and a cross chest strap was provided. The white cross chest strap the other way for a bayonet provided a good target for the enemy. These were still in use in the Boer War until 1902. Water caskets were made of wood, they were numbered and waxed to prevent shrinkage.

The round flat hat was used from 1806 and this had a leather peak added and in the 1860s gave way to the pith helmet. Pith was a dried out plant found in India. The helmet had very little battle protection but did protect from the sun and was still being used in the Desert in WWII. Black pith helmets were worn at home but as French power diminished and German power came to the fore, soldiers' head gear reflected German designs.

Until the early Victorian period there were no medals for ordinary soldiers and so the Queen introduced the Victoria Cross, it was awarded for an individual's valour rather than his bravery, so that other soldiers were not perceived as less brave. The first person to be awarded the VC was the son of Robert Peel in 1855 at Sebastopol.

The East India Company had its own private army with 300,000 men. They had a white uniform and dyed this to khaki which meant dust or dusty coloured in Indian. In the early Victorian period the navy often fought on land as they approached battle sites from the sea and had superior guns nearby on their ships.

The first Boer War started in 1881 when the Boers were more professional and better equipped. There was no conscription in the British army at that time so soldiers were less well trained and less disciplined. The red uniform began to disappear and be replaced by the less conspicuous khaki and in the Sudanese war of 1884 those regiments wearing khaki suffered less injuries than those in red, proving the point. The foregoing is only a taste of the vast amount of information given by Jed about the development of the Army, its uniforms, weapons, conditions and pay during the Victorian period. He was given a hearty round of applause and many questions were asked.

MAY 2017 VISIT THE NATIONAL CIVIL WAR CENTRE

Our coach trip to Newark left Paddock Street amid stormy clouds which as the day progressed turned into heavy rain. Fortunately as both our destinations were indoors this didn't matter too much. First stop was the National Civil War Museum in Appletongate, the venue sets out most successfully, to explain "that it was Britain's deadliest conflict and one which shaped our modern

world. Why did brother take arms against brother and how did a once all powerful monarch lose his head to the axe man?"

Newark played a key role in the war due to its strategic location. It is half way between London and York at a point where the old Fosse Road crosses the Great North Road. It also has the River Trent passing nearby which provided at this point a safe crossing. The Civil War (1642-1651) can be divided into three separate phases and involved Scotland and Ireland as well England and Wales. It started as the result of disagreement between Charles I and Parliament over which should control the army needed to crush an Irish insurrection. The two sides had their geographical strongholds with minority elements being silenced or forced to flee. Initially the north and west of England and much of Ireland stood for the King, while the south and east (including London), the Royal Navy and Scotland fought for Parliament.

The first phase (1642-1646) included the Battle of Marston Moor in June 1644 when King Charles lost control of the north, and the following year at the Battle of Naseby in June 1645 the Parliamentary force led by Oliver Cromwell routed his main field army. The second phase (1647-1649) ended with Charles' defeat at the Battle of Preston in 1648 and the trial and execution in 1649 after which the Monarchy and the House of Lords were abolished and a Council of State created which included Cromwell and Lord Fairfax. Cromwell then travelled to Ireland for a campaign of repression. This culminated in the massacred of the citizens of Drogheda in retribution for an anti-Protestant massacre (not involving the town). Irish land was given to English soldiers in lieu of pay and London merchants who had lent money to Parliament. Some 12,000 Irish mainly children were transported to the West Indies as indented labourers. Meanwhile the third phase (1650-1651) saw the Scots entertain the 18 year old future Charles II. They set out to invade England but were defeated at Worcester by Cromwell in the summer of 1651. Charles famously hiding in an oak tree and then managing to flee the country.

Newark suffered three sieges, the first lasted two days, the second three weeks. The third in 1646 lasted six months. 16,000 troops sealed off the town and dammed the river to stop water mills producing bread and gunpowder. An outbreak of typhus and plague added to the town's woes amid near starvation conditions. One third of the population died and one in six buildings were destroyed. Oliver Cromwell ruled until his death in 1658, when his son Richard took over, but the austere and radical ideas thrust upon the population were proving most unpopular and people wanted the monarchy back, not any monarch but the son of the murdered Charles I. Lord Fairfax was sent to accompany the future Charles II from The Hague.

This venue is well worth a visit, telling the story in a clear and interesting way. There is much to see and learn, and an interesting collection of relics which were abandoned in the town or have been dug up since. They also have the space to offer other displays, at the time of our visit it was one about Lawrence of Arabia. Afterwards we ventured into the town to find something to eat, before some of the party enjoyed a guided tour of St Mary's Church, while others explored the town.

JUNE 2017 VISIT EVENING TOUR OF UPPINGHAM

The longest day in 2017 turned out to be really hot and the evening was almost balmy with a lovely peaceful atmosphere surrounding the Market Place in Uppingham where we met for a conducted tour around the town. Our guides were members of Uppingham Local History Studies Group and we started in the adjacent parish church of St Peter and St Paul for an introductory talk. The church had been heavily restored (so often the case) in 1861 when balconies used by the school pupils were

removed. The Taylor pulpit is noticeable and named after the rector during the Civil War who later became a Bishop in Ireland. In fact most 16c rectors were not resident in the parish leaving the hard work to local curates while taking the money and living a highlife elsewhere.

After splitting into three groups (there were 31 of us) we left the church and each group started at a different point on the established Heritage Trail. The market place, much larger until 1960 when it was reduced to enable road widening, was established by a charter in 1281. This was obtained by 'someone' called Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, a man of history well known to the writer. The Falcon Hotel, a former coaching inn with a Georgian frontage on a 16c building, dominates the Market Place and is one of 24 pubs and 17 beer houses in the town in 1851, presently there are only six. The Post Office, The Vaults pub and Nortons ironmongers are other ancient buildings surrounding the market place, the latter displaying the town plough over its door.

Taking a narrow alley round the church we came to the Old Grammar School (even Leicester has one), built in 1584 by Archdeacon Robert Johnson who built a similar school in Oakham, both of which have gone on to become famous boarding schools dominating their respective towns. We moved on to Beast Hill and the Pinfold, reminders of the farming industry and animal markets and to another reminder of more recent times, the site of the former railway station on the LNWR line and in use for passenger traffic from 1894 to 1960 with the station being demolished on 1964.

As ever in these parts 'Cromwell Slept Here' was the case in one house near the Fossil Wall, a 'bastion' type protrusion in a garden wall, built of the same type of stone used in Peterborough Cathedral containing fossils. Round the corner is the former Congregational Chapel, now a private home with the Manse (still used as a home) next door. At the time of the 1851 census there were congregations of 500 at the church and 400 in the chapels of the town out of a total population of 2000 showing the strength of the non-conformists in the area. Turning back towards the Market Place along High Street East it was pointed out that the facades of most of the buildings were of later construction than main structures to the rear. Along this street we began to notice the many narrow passages leading down from the street to yards and clusters of buildings to the rear, one being 'The Little Crooked House' (and it really is).

Crossing London Road to the eastern half of the town and Leamington Terrace we were in among the school buildings and were able to peep in at a couple of gateways to appreciate the hushed calm (it was evening) of this top class educational establishment. The library dominating the school close was formerly Archdeacon Johnson's almshouses for 24 old men built in 1592. The steep hill down which London Road leaves the town was a source of spring water for use by the local residents but it became contaminated and the school was moved away for a time but after an outcry by local traders, because of the loss of business, a piped water supply was installed and the school returned. Many of the nearby large houses now owned by the school for boarders were originally privately owned and rented out to individual boarders (presumably actually to their families) much like some university accommodation these days.

After peering down Sheild's Yard, Dean's Yard, Printer's Yard and Bear Yard we returned to The Vaults pub for a welcome cold drink and a pre-ordered home cooked meal. Then it was a lovely drive in the twilight of the longest day along the A47 back to Wigston. The threatened thunder storm did not arrive, so breaking the spell of poor weather on our summer outings of the last few years.

For more information go to www.uppinghamheritagetrail.org.uk

All reports by Colin Towell

OBITUARY

Those who have been members of our society for ten years or more will be saddened to hear of the death of Edna Taylor on 11th May, aged 90 years. Edna was our chairman for 19 years taking over from Ian Varey in 1988 before handing over to Tony Lawrance in 2007, only stepping down for health reasons but continuing to attend meetings afterwards for as long as possible.

Edna nee Cheney was a Yorkshire lass, born in the Pontefract district in 1926, her family later moving to Sheffield. The early death of her father left her and her mother in straightened circumstances but her mother, aware of Edna's emerging talent (she passed the 11+ examination) and believing in the advantages of a good education, managed to ensure Edna received the grammar school education she had earned, paying back uniform and other costs at 1/- per week. This was followed by a degree from Sheffield University and then teacher training. During this time she met her future husband, Dennis J Taylor who was also a teacher, and the couple married in 1951.

They had heard of the pioneering ideas being trialed in Leicestershire in the late 1950's by the then Director of Education, Stuart Mason. Known as the Leicestershire Plan, it was a comprehensive system where children of all abilities were taught together, no more 11+ exams, or grammar and secondary modern schools. They decided to move to the county to see how it worked and planned to stay perhaps 2/3 years. Dennis took a teaching post in South Wigston but later left the profession and to become an insurance agent. Edna taught at Abington School and several others including a private one in Leicester and also at Leicester Polytechnic (now De Montfort University). She loved music and was a talented pianist and choir member.

Time passed, their three children were born here, and by 1985 when they were grown up and Edna had retired from work, she joined our society. At the AGM in February 1987 she was appointed Vice Chairman, and the following year she became the Chairman. Always active and involved she wrote her first article for the bulletin in 1986, it was perhaps predictably about Wigston schools, the early ones which existed prior to the Education Act of 1870. It was to be followed by other articles on The National (Church) School and the three South Wigston Schools. Other subjects she wrote about were the 1764 Enclosure Act and its effect of farming, Croft Hill, The Grange, the Welford Road (the Ancient Road to Welford), The Gas Works, The Residents of Wigston Hall and finally a discussion on a hedge near her home in the Little Hill development and whether it could be an original enclosure one.

Perhaps her greatest achievements were her published booklets. The first called Wigston Magna Town Trail was published in 1989. It was a walking trail around Wigston Magna featuring sketches and descriptions of notable buildings. It was a collaboration between several members but led by Edna with illustrations by fellow member Ralph Wignall. 700 Trails were sold making a profit of £340 for the society. The second one was For the Record, the story of Long Street School (the building now housing the Record Office) and was published in 1992. This time it was produced by Edna aided by Bob Wignall's detailed transcriptions of various archive records. The illustrations were again by Bob's father Ralph. Sales this time reached 250 making £300 for the society.

As well as her involvement with GWHS Edna was a member of Moat Street Methodist Church and a keen walker belonging to a local rambling group. She had a quiet and reserved nature but made an excellent leader and could be very firm and decisive when needed. I shall always be grateful for her support when I was secretary and remember her with great affection.

Tricia Berry

THE ROYAL MAUNDY

I expect that most members are aware that H M the Queen distributed the Royal Maundy at the Cathedral Church of St Martins, Leicester on 13 April. I thought that it may be of interest to members to set out some of the historical and practical details surrounding this memorable ceremony.

The word Maundy derives from the Latin 'mandatum novum' meaning new commandment or mandate. Jesus had given his disciples a new commandment on the night of his betrayal, when he washed their feet at the Last Supper in the Upper Room.

The first known account of the ceremony was when King John took part in the Maundy Ceremony in 1210 at Knaresborough Yorkshire, but it is almost certain that Royal involvement in the Maundy ceremony goes back even further. In 1213 the event took place at Rochester and the details were recorded. It took place there because of where the King happened to be on the day before Good Friday. The 'Wardrobe Expenses' for that time recorded that 'fourteen shillings and one penny for alms to poor persons, every one of whom received 13 pence at Rochester on Holy Thursday'. There is no indication that it was the intention to link that amount with the length of King John's reign but in 1213 the King was in the fourteenth year of his reign and this seems to have become the custom for a while. Since the reign of Edward I (1272-1307) continuous records have been kept and it was Henry IV (1399-1413) who established the practice of relating the number of recipients to the age of the Sovereign. At first the recipients had to be the same gender as the sovereign but since the 18th century there have been equal numbers of men and women. At first the feet of recipients were washed by the Monarch and in 1572 they were actually washed by three other officials before Queen Elizabeth I did the same (I wonder why?). The service was long and went on to sunset whereas now it is one hour at the most and carefully timed. In the 16th century actual goods such as cloth and food (fish because it was Lent) and bread were given out rather than the special money given today. Needless to say, foot washing does not take place today (although this does happen in some parish churches these days and I have experienced it).

Recipients today must be over 70 years of age and are selected because of 'Christian service rendered to the church and community and for which they would not be otherwise honoured'. The Queen takes a real interest in each recipient and the service that they have rendered. At some time in the 1700s the involvement of the Monarch seems to have ceased and the duties were carried out by the Lord High Almoner and his Officers, (roles which still exist today and who have a prominent part in the service). It was only in 1932 that King George V restored the royal involvement, the uncrowned Edward VIII did so once in 1936 and George VI attended 7 times in his 15 year reign. However Elizabeth II has performed the ceremony every year of her reign except for three occasions when she was abroad or giving birth.

The event is full of symbolism from the words used to elements of the robes worn by those taking part. The fact that the Queen comes to the people rather than they going to her, and that she leaves her seat near to the altar to give out the gifts to the recipients around the church, all represents the humility of Jesus.

In historical times food and money were frequently handed to the poor at the gates of royal palaces and during a royal progress. It was funded from the proceeds of selling goods taken from convicted criminals, this was called 'Deodands'. In the late 17th century this raised about £700 - £800 per year and was administered by the Royal Almonry. The law of Deodand was abolished in 1846 and the costs of the Royal Maundy are now met from the Privy Purse.

Today there are two different coloured purses containing the money. The red one contains modern currency, a £5 coin and a 50p coin being an allowance of £5.50 for clothing and provisions. The white one contains silver Maundy coins amounting, this year, to the value of 91p, reflecting the Queen's age. They are newly minted each year and are legal tender. There are nine plastic wallets containing one of each of a 4p,3p,2p and 1p coins, (90p in all) and a separate wallet containing just 1p making a total of 91p. The dishes on which the 182 purses are carried by the Yeomen of the Guard have symbolic histories and are kept in the Jewel House at the Tower of London and brought especially to the church where the ceremony is taking place.

Because the sovereign comes to the people, the church in question for the day becomes the sovereign's church or a Chapel Royal. This is not so much the description of a building but the description of a congregation and a choir. The Chapel Royal choir of boys and gentlemen wore distinctive robes and they joined the Cathedral choir for the Royal Maundy service in Leicester. In addition there are four Children of the Royal Almonry, wearing symbolic towels, who in former times assisted with the foot washing procedure. These were selected from schools in the Diocese and were, in accordance with tradition, formally presented to the Queen and the Duke at the end of the service.

The Queen also brought her bodyguard of the Yeoman of the Guard, not to be called Beefeaters. They are the oldest military corps still in existence having been created by Henry VII after his victory at Bosworth in 1485 and look very resplendent in their colourful uniforms. Another group of participants are the Wandsmen of the Royal Almonry who again originally assisted with the washing of the feet, but now ensure the comfort of the recipients and smooth running of the distribution. They, themselves, will be helped by twelve young people again chosen from local schools.

The Queen and the Duke, clergy and other principal office holders including the Children of the Chapel Royal were presented with traditional nosegays of purple, yellow and white spring flowers and sweet herbs, which were made by a team of 8 volunteers led by a local lady who holds the Royal Warrant for this role: 'By appointment, purveyor of nosegays to Her Majesty the Queen'.

Historically the ceremony was held wherever the Monarch happened to be in Holy Week but since 1953 the service has been held at Westminster Abbey on 15 occasions and sometimes at Windsor. But the Queen has, over the years, distributed the Maundy Money at 46 cathedrals in England and her visit to Leicester means that she has now completed all 47 English cathedrals during her reign.

Colin Towell

Taken from The Royal Maundy Lecture by the Rt Revd Dr John Inge, Lord High Almoner and the 'Office for the Royal Maundy' service booklet at Leicester Cathedral on 13th April 2017.

GREAT WIGSTON, BLABY ETC., ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROSECUTION OF FELONS

This rather lengthy title was the name of an organisation created to do just what it says. In the days before Sir Robert Peel introduced a national police force, law and order was managed locally. Towns such as Leicester generally ran and paid out of the rates for their own police service, calling in the military for serious trouble such as riots. The countryside had to largely fend for its self. There might be a local constable who could arrest people and hand them over for punishment but there was no-one around who could interview witnesses and search for evidence etc. Therefore lots

of crimes went unpunished and anyone with any visible assets, mainly farmers and publicans could be seriously out of pocket if targeted.

These associations were established to remedy the situation and were quite common throughout the country with all following the same pattern. Members paid an annual subscription to create a fund which was then available to pay for specialist crime detection and to compensate members who had suffered losses, a sort of DIY insurance scheme. Groups of men (and the occasional woman), living in a designated area would meet once a year at a local hostelry at an agreed time in the morning. Members of the committee would then deal with any claims under the guidance of the treasurer, who would pay out the compensation. The subscription for the coming year was then announced and had to be paid within three weeks. The amount varied according to how much had been paid out in the past year. Potential new members could apply to join at the meetings, or during the year with the agreement of any two existing members. A solicitor was attached to each group should any advice needed.

The local association covered quite a wide area: as well as Wigston and Blaby, people came from Enderby, Wistow, Narborough, Arnesby, Lubbesthorpe, Little Glen (Glen Parva), Kilby, Bruntingthorpe, Littlethorpe, Newton Harcourt, Whetstone, Thurcaston, Kibworth Beauchamp, Oadby, Great Glen, Foston, Knighton, Burton Overy, Thurlaston, Braunston[e], and Knaptoft, Peatling Magna and Parva, and an occasional one from Leicester. The meetings were held annually alternatively at The Bull's Head Inn, Blaby and the Bell Inn, Bell Street, Great Wigston. They were sometimes reported in the press and nine of these have been tracked down for the following years: 1790, 1813, 1830, 1833, 1835, 1838, 1841, 1842 and 1843. In 1790 Mr. J. E. Carter of Glen Parva was the treasurer and agent, for the other years it was Mr. John Gregory of Leicester, the district coroner.

The list below is of the Wigston members who belonged during some of the nine years mentioned, with the exact years shown in brackets:

Captain Charles Holland Baddeley (Member in 1838-1843). Charles was born in 1790 at Newport, Shropshire. He spent 17½ years in the service of the East India Company before settling at Wigston Hall, with its 12 acres of land attached. He died in Rampside, Lancashire in 1863, and is buried at All Saints' Wigston. (Full article about him in Bulletin 106.

Edward Blunt (Member in 1813-1833). Edward was the local surgeon and lived at The Cedars, Moat Street. This large three story property on the north side of the road, still survives now divided into three separate dwellings. It is believed his patients accessed the surgery from the back giving rise to the name Blunt's Lane. He owned land in Cooks Lane and Oadby Lane, was born in 1772 in Loughborough and retired to Princes Street (Princess Road), Leicester, where he died in 1843.

William Chamberlayne (Member in 1830-1833). William appears in records as landlord of the Bell Inn, Bell Street in c.1830 to c.1834. He is listed in an 1832 Poll Book as occupying a house (probably the Bell Inn) and some land, but nothing else discovered about him.

William Clarson (Member in 1830). William was baptised at All Saints' in 1782 and became a farmer and butcher. He lived in Bushloe End in what is now the Framework Knitters Museum property and died in 1845, aged 64. He is buried in Wigston.

Thomas Coltman (Member in 1830). Thomas was landlord of the Bell Inn, Bell Street from c.1816 to c.1829. The number of Coltman families in Wigston at the time make it difficult track which one he belonged to.

Joseph Cooper (Member in 1813-1842). Joseph was born in Market Bosworth c.1785 but moved to Wigston where he was a butcher, maltster and occupied 19 acres of land. He was also landlord of the Shoulder of Mutton public house from c.1838 to c.1846. He died in Wigston in 1851.

Thomas Cooper (Member in 1790). Thomas was a farmer and grazier in Wigston when he made his will in 1797. This mentions his daughter Jenny who was then under age but in 1799 married John Scott also a Wigston grazier.

John Earp (Member in 1790). John was born c.1734 and was a grazier. He died in 1823, age 89, and was buried in Wigston.

Thomas Earp (Member in 1813). Thomas was the son of the above mentioned John and was baptised in Wigston in 1776. In later life he moved to Lutterworth RD where he was buried in 1834, aged 58.

Abraham Forryan (Member in 1841-1843). Abraham was born and baptised in 1777 in Burbage. He moved to Newton Harcourt before settling at Squire's Knob Farm, Newgate End, Wigston. He died in 1850, aged 70 and is buried in Wigston. He is a 3xG Grandfather of our chairman Mike Forryan.

Samuel Freer (Member in 1790). Samuel was a farmer and victualler at the Bull's Head, in Bull Head Street, where he grew his own hops and malt. Following his death in 1811, he left his wife Mary a life interest in his estate, then apparently having no children, between various nephews and nieces.

George Gee (Member in 1813). George was born in 1799 in Wigston, and was a farmer. He married local girl Mary Johnson in 1822 at All Saints' Church, needing her father's consent as she was only 20 at the time.

Thomas Gillam (Member in 1813). Thomas kept the Black Swan public house at Kilby Bridge from c.1800 before selling it and moving to the Bull's Head c.1812 following the death of Samuel Freer.

John Hobson (Member in 1833-1842). John was born 1808 in Great Glen, moving to Wigston where he ran a grocery/bakers business in Long Street. He also occupied 7 acres of land. In later life he moved to Brighton and ran a lodging house, before retiring to Portsea where he died in 1899 aged 92.

William Heyrick (Member in 1835). William, born c.1804 was a farmer in Wigston occupying a house and 70 acres of land according to the 1834 Poll Book. He appears to have moved to Nottingham as some of his children were born there, but later returned, dying in Blaby RD in 1883 aged 79.

Benjamin Ingram (Member in 1813). Benjamin was born c.1759 and buried at Wigston in 1813, aged 54, the vicar describing him as Mr. in the register. His wife Mary died in 1835 also in Wigston.

John Ingram (Member in 1813-1833). John was a farmer and grazier and is mentioned in the 1830 Poll Book as owning houses and land in Wigston. He did not marry but acknowledged his daughter Ann who was the main beneficiary in his will. He died in 1833, aged 70, and was buried at All Saints' Church. His head stone records that he was 'a loving father and a faithful friend' it then continues with a rhyme about having consumption of the lungs.

Thomas Irwin (Member in 1790). Thomas was born c.1728 and was a grazier. His will indicates that he owned two closes named Millbank. He died in 1814, aged 86, and was buried in Wigston.

Charles Kirk (Member in 1830-1835). Charles was a builder, architect and stone mason. He worked with his father William and then on his own account. He was baptised in 1791 at All Saints' Church and brought up in a house near the present roundabout. In c.1835 he sold up and moved to Quarrington, Nr. Sleaford probably because there was an extensive stone quarry in the area. He died in 1847 and was buried in the village. His son, also Charles, was asked back to supervise the extensive restoration of All Saints' Church in 1863/4. He is believed to be responsible for many of the later gargoyle faces it contains.

William Langham (Member in 1830). William was born in Wigston c.1795. In the 1841 census he was living in Bull Head Street and is described as a farmer and grazier, of 350 acres, some land was his own and some rented. It was spread about the parish with Waterleys, Ball Dyke, Kilby Bridge west and Newton Lane west all being under his management. He died in 1851, aged 56 and is buried in Wigston.

Joseph Lewis (Member in 1790). Joseph owned the Crow Mills water mill, the windmill, and several closes of land on which he grazed cattle in what is now South Wigston. He was buried in Wigston in 1799 having made a detailed will leaving his assets between his children and grandchildren.

Samuel Morris Mason (Member 1835-1843). Samuel was born in Leicestershire in c.1807, and was living in Great Glen in 1827 when he obtained a licence to marry a local girl. This apparently did not happen as he married, as a bachelor, a Saddington girl in 1831, giving his address at this time as Normanton, Notts. The couple settled in Bull Head Street where he was described as a maltster. He rented the malt house from the executors of Samuel Freer (mentioned above). Sadly things did not go well and he went bankrupt in 1844, and appears to have left the district.

John Oldershaw (Member in 1833-1835). John, a farmer, was born c.1801 in Hemington, Leics. After a short spell in Wigston he seems to have spent most of his working life in Swithland. In 1851 by then aged 50 he married, for the first time, Mary Morley Eggleston who lived at St. Wolstan's House, Wigston. The couple retired to Peatling Magna to live with another member of the Eggleston family. He died in 1889, aged 89.

Samuel Phipps (Member in 1838-1843). Samuel was baptised in Wigston in 1813 one of the children of wheelwright Thomas Phipps and his wife Mary. The family lived in Bull Head Street about opposite the present 'Whacky Warehouse'. Samuel was a farmer and sometime in 1850/51 moved with his wife and family to a newly created farm on a plain to the west of Stoke Bruerne in Northants. Samuel's wife Mary died in 1860 followed by Samuel himself in 1864, leaving their children, the eldest, a young man only 19, to manage on their own. Samuel and Mary were my 2x Great Grandparents.

John Armston Pochin (Member in 1813-1842). John the son of John and Mary Pochin was baptised in 1777 at the Congregational Church. He was a substantial land owner and lived at the Manor House, in Newgate End. He died in 1843, aged 66, and is buried at All Saints' Church.

William Pochin (Member in 1830-1835). William was born in 1794 in Wigston. He was a butcher, grocer, farmer and also ran the Bull's Head, Bull Head Street, from c.1830 possibly until his death in 1850. The tomb at the front of the United Reformed Church is to his memory, but he is thought to be buried elsewhere. He is the father of Henry Davis Pochin, a notable chemist, who invented two key industrial processes. How to make Aluminous Cake for dying and paper making, and the purification of brown resin used in soap, enabling fancy white soaps to be produced. Henry bought and transformed the beautiful Bodnant Hall in North Wales, now run by the National Trust.

John Ragg Snr (Member in 1790-1813). John was born in 1734 in Wigston, the son of Peter Ragg. He lived at The Manor House in Long Street, and was the local surgeon. He was also a substantial landowner with property on the west side of Leicester Road past the present traffic island and also St. Wolstan's Farm, about 325 acres in total. He died in 1815, aged 81, and was buried in Wigston. There is a large memorial plaque to him and his wife on the north wall of the Chancel in All Saints' Church which is very complementary about his medical skills.

John Ragg Jnr (Member in 1813-1838). This John was son of the above. He was born in 1785 in Wigston and decided to farm the family land himself. He was unmarried and continued to live at The Manor House alone, following the death of his parents. He died in 1838, aged 52 and was buried in Wigston. He also has a similar memorial plaque next to his parents' one in the Chancel.

William Seddon (Member in 1813). William was born in London in 1746 and is described as a threadman. He moved to Cromford, Derbyshire most probably to work with or learn from the famous inventor of the spinning frame Sir Richard Arkwright. He moved to Wigston in later life purchasing The Elms in Bushloe End with its accompanying land from the Davenport family. He was buried in Wigston in 1816, aged 69.

Richard Seddon (Member in 1835-1843). Richard, born c.1791, was a son of William Seddon (above). In 1835 he was running a lace manufacturing business in Charles Street, Leicester with his brother also named William. He continued to live at The Elms and in later life was described as a farmer. He died in 1847, aged 57, and is buried in Wigston.

Thomas Siddans Williams (Member in 1838-1842). Thomas was born c.1818 in Wigston, and trained as an auctioneer, surveyor and valuer. He lived in Church Nook with his family until c.1855 when the family moved to The Bell Inn, Husbands Bosworth, though he still continued as an auctioneer etc. In 1881 they were living in Penarth, Glamorgan, then returned to Husbands Bosworth before moving to Leicester where he died at the Infirmary in 1883.

Thomas Spencer (Member in 1790). Thomas, a grazier from Stoughton, married Mary Almey of Wigston at All Saints' Church in 1781. Quarter session records indicate that he moved to Wigston at this time or shortly afterwards. He acquired much land and property however all went terribly wrong in 1801 when he was declared bankrupt. A list of the properties he owned in Wigston and which had to be sold is quite amazing: The Bell Inn, Bell Street, (described as a neat, new built house, which he probably had built), 5+ acres of land with two lime kilns at Kilby Bridge, The Black Horse (earlier name for Queen's Head?), The Old Crown, a bakehouse occupied by George Ross, a butcher's shop, a large divided house occupied by himself and Benjamin Ingram, a Malt Office. Thomas probably left the district after this but his whereabouts are not known.

William Tabberer (Member in 1830-1843). William Tabberer was born c. 1781 in Derbyshire, and became a farmer and timber merchant, but sadly was declared bankrupt in 1830. Following this the family moved to Wigston where William rented some land and also became landlord of the Bell Inn, Bell Street. He was thus responsible for hosting and providing a dinner for the members of the Prosecution of Felons meetings every alternate year, which must have been quite a challenge. There could be up to 70 people present and included the likes of John Clarke Esq., of Peatling Parva Hall, Clement Winstanley Esq., of Braunston Hall and Henry Halford Esq., MP of Wistow Hall. William's youngest son Osmond married George Tealby's daughter Eliza (see below) and became a director of the hugely successful hosiery company Pool Lorrimer & Tabberer of 3 Welford Place, Leicester. William Tabberer sold up his brewing items and left the Bell Inn in 1847, which may have been the time when it ceased to be a public house. He died in 1854, aged 72 and is buried in St. Wistan's churchyard.

Andrew Taylor (Member in 1830). Andrew was born in Leics. in 1786 and occupied a farm at Kilby Bridge, known as Wigston Lodge, on the west side of Welford Road for a few years, before moving to Peatling Magna. He died in 1843 and is buried in Peatling.

George Tealby (Member in 1838-1843). George was born in Walcote, Leicestershire in 1809 and baptised at the Lutterworth Independent Chapel the following year. He came to Wigston to rent a farm of 126 acres from a Mrs. Smith (Widow). The land is described as in Fullwell and Goldhill areas and the farmhouse is likely to be the one on Long Street now occupied as a veterinary practice. George died in 1846 in Blaby RD, his wife Mary continued to run the farm until her own death in 1872.

King Vann (Member in 1813). King was baptised at Wigston in 1780. He kept the Bell Inn, Bell Street from c.1802 to c.1815 before moving to the Bull's Head from c.1816 to c.1829. He later moved to Leicester and died at a hospital in The Newarke in 1859, aged 79.

Joseph Wilson (Member in 1790). Joseph was a farmer who was baptised in Wigston in 1756. He married Catherine Mitchell in Billesdon in 1783. One at least of their children died in a small pox epidemic which hit Wigston in 1789. The child's mother Catherine then died in 1792. John was buried in Wigston in 1809, the entry in the church register describing him as 'Mr'.

Thomas Willson (Member in 1813). Thomas was born c.1785 and was a farmer and grazier. He bought some land in Church End (now Church Nook) and built his own house there. Sadly he died in 1825 aged only 40 leaving his wife Ann nee Kirk to bring up their children and continue running the farm. Ann was a daughter of William Kirk, one of a family of very talented builders, architects, stone masons, engravers and artists (The Wigston Feast) who used to live in Wigston.

Tricia Berry

ASSOCIATION FOR THE PROSECUTION OF
FELONS, &c.

Bull's Head Inn, Blaby, May 3d, 1841.

AT a Meeting of the Members of the GREAT WIGSTON AND BLABY ASSOCIATION for the Prosecution of Felons, &c.

J. GREGORY, Esq., in the Chair.

Resolved that Mr. GREGORY be Treasurer, and Mr. SHEPPARD, Solicitor for the ensuing year.

Also, that a new Subscription of Ten Shillings each, be entered into by the old Members of this Association, to be paid into the Hands of the Treasurer, within twenty days from the time of this Meeting, and that every defaulter be excluded from the benefit of this Association.

Also, that new Members to be admitted this year, pay Ten Shillings each, on admission.

Also, that any two of the Committee have power to admit new Members between the Annual Meetings.

Also, that the next Meeting of this Association be held at the Bell Inn, in Great Wigston, on the first Monday in May next, at eleven o'clock, and that Dinner be on the table at two precisely.

Also, that all claims of the Members of this Association be laid before the Committee, before one o'clock on the day of the Annual Meeting, or that the same be disallowed for that year.

NAMES AND RESIDENCES OF THE MEMBERS.

*Those marked * are the Committee.*

- *Brewin, Mr. Richard, Blaby.
- Blackwell, Mr. Thomas, Arnesby.
- Barston, Mr. William, Blaby.
- *Baddeley, Captain C. H. Great Wigston.
- *Catcheside, Mr. Robert, Lubbethorpe.
- Clarke, John, Esq., Little Peatling.
- *Cooper, Mr. Joseph, Great Wigston.
- *Flude, Mr. William, Blaby.
- Flude, Mrs. Rebecca, Great Peatling.
- *Franks, Mr. J. B. Little Glenn.
- Forryan, Mr. Abraham, Great Wigston.
- *Gregory, Mr. John, Leicester.
- Gregory, Mr. Mansfield, Ditto.
- Halford, Henry Esq., M.P. Newton Harcourt.
- Hobson, Mr. John, Great Wigston.
- Jackson, Mrs. Mary, Blaby.
- *Knight Mr. E. W. Newton Harcourt.
- Law, Mr. Benjamin, Blaby.
- Morris, Mr. Simeon, Stretton.
- Mason, Mr. S. M. Great Wigston.
- *Pochin, Mr. J. A., Ditto.
- Parsons, Mr. Thomas, Blaby.
- *Painter, Mr. William, Ditto.
- Phipps, Mr. Samuel, Great Wigston.
- Reynolds, Mr. William, Thurecaston.
- *Reynolds, Mr. Joseph, Lubbethorpe.
- *Stone, Mr. N. C. Rowley Fields.
- Seddon Mr. Richard, Great Wigston.
- Simpkin Mrs. Joanna, Little Glenn.
- *Tabberer, Mr. William, Great Wigston.
- Tailby, Mr. George, Ditto.
- *Winstanley, C. Esq. Braunston Hall.
- Williams, Mr. T. S. Great Wigston.
- Whattoff, Mr. Thomas, Lubbethorpe.

