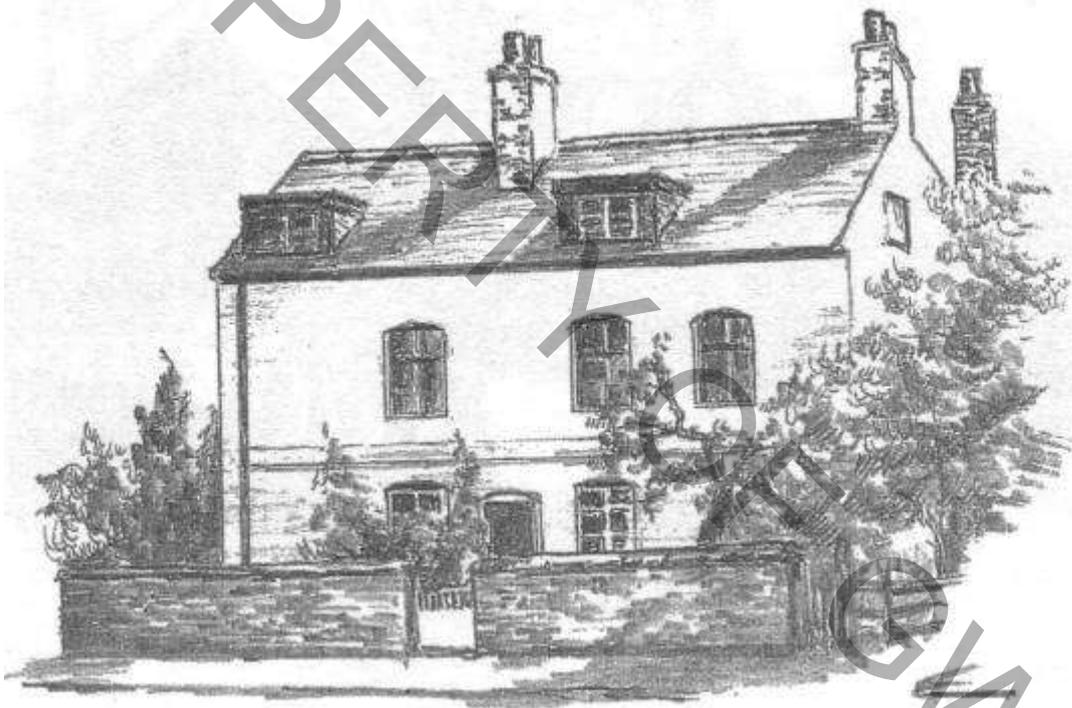




Greater Wigston Historical Society
White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna Leicestershire

BULLETIN 37



86 Bulls Head Street Wigston Magna - J R Colver

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS OCTOBER 1993 TO FEBRUARY 1994

Wednesday 20th October 1993

Leicester Through The Ages - Mr. John Banner.
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

Wednesday 17th November 1993

India's Golden Triangle (Delhi, Japur & Taj Mahal) - Mr. G.L. Jackson,
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

***Tuesday 14th December 1993**

Christmas Party with Magic Show.
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club, in large room downstairs.

Wednesday 19th January 1994

Farm Buildings -Mr. D. Smith.
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

Wednesday 16th February 1994

A.G.M. plus 4 speakers (some members) all speaking on their family history research.

* Please note the Christmas Party is on a Tuesday this year. The large room at the Liberal Club not being available on our usual meeting date.

The Friends of Wigston Framework Knitters Museum have invited the Historical Society to a return friendly skittles match. This will be held at the Star & Garter in Leicester Road, Wigston at 7.30p.m. on Friday 18th February 1994. It is hoped this will prove as enjoyable as the previous one held two years ago.

A supper will be included and those who would like to attend are asked to give their names to Colin Towell either personally or by telephoning him on 889638. Early application is advised because numbers are limited.

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

Joint Editors

Mrs. Chris Smart, 48 Evington Valley Road, Leicester.
Mrs. Tricia Berry, 7 Wensleydale Road, Wigston.

June meeting ...

On Wednesday the 16th of June 47 members of the Society went by coach to Ashley in Northamptonshire. We were given a brief introductory talk by Sid Macguire and then permitted to explore the church at our leisure.

The church is dedicated to St. Mary the Virgin and the present iron stone and grey limestone building dates back to the 13th century. The church is a fine example of 14th century architecture, with traces of earlier work.

The interior was restored in 1865 by the Rev. R.T.P. Pulteney, under the direction of the eminent Victorian architect Gilbert Scott.

The wall paintings are also Victorian and were designed and painted by Mr. Clayton and Alfred Bell during Scott's restoration. In 1973 they were cleaned and restored by Peter Larkworthy, great grandson of Alfred Bell and three assistants.

After looking at the church we strolled through the pretty village of Ashley and were invited to look at the garden of the old school house opposite the church. This was an absolute delight and contained many interesting plants and shrubs.

After this we retired to the George Inn where we had an appetizing supper before return to the coach and Wigston.

AUGUST MEETING

The indoor season started off in fine style with a most interesting talk by Mr. Tim Schadla-Hall, the Director of Leics. Museums Service. The subject title "Museums without Walls" was a puzzle until we settled down to listen. He explained that he thought the Service, when arranging displays, did not always put across sufficiently the wider historical context. To illustrate this he mentioned amongst others the Newarke Gateway with its fine examples of military history, but was enough done to explain that the building was the last remnant of the city wall and showed the marks of cannon fire from the Civil War? The Museum of Technology Building which was really the key to the future of Leicester because of its role in dealing with the sewage created by the fast expanding city. And the Snibston Discovery Park and nearby coalheads, the fact that nearby Coalville was no ancient settlement but a town created and named just prior to Victoria's reign as a result of the mining industry.

Mr. Schadla-Hall went on to explain that lack of finance was always a problem but that much has been achieved. As well as display and conservation the Service was involved in landscape features, fields and hedgerows as well as archaeology and ecology. The last two can sometimes lead to conflict when archaeological interests want to dig and search and ecological ones say leave things undisturbed!

The Service also helps preserve others peoples' buildings, for example the Sheepy Wheelwright's Workshop Complex which we were told was probably the last remaining complete example of its kind in Leics. This was dismantled and re-assembled at Snibston to prevent its total loss to a building scheme. Also advice and help to projects such as the Framework Knitters Museum here in Wigston which we were told was probably unique to the Country.

The Museums Service had 700,000 visitors last year and it stocks some 2,000,000 objects of which 20/30,000 are on display at any one time. In an attempt to make

more items accessible to more people a loan scheme has just been introduced for some of the pictures.

After a number of questions Mr. Schadla-Hall was thanked by the Chairman, Edna Taylor, and the meeting ended at approx 9.15p.m.

September meeting ...

On Wednesday the 15th of September 29 members of the Society met to hear Mr. Denton from the Mission for Deep Sea Fishermen speak on the history of the Mission.

After a brief introduction we were shown a film of the history of the Deep Sea Fishermens' Mission. The film was made for the centenary of the Mission in 1931 and was narrated by Bernard Hepton.

Ebenezer Mather founded the Mission. At that time the fishermen worked in very bad conditions; the Mission ships attempted to attend to their spiritual and physical needs. At the present time there are 18 Missions on shore and their work is devoted to the needs of fishermen and their families. In particular they offer long term support for those families where a man has been lost at sea.

It is self-supporting organization relying on voluntary contributions. Mr. Denton is a fund raiser for the Midlands region. After the film Mr. Denton went on to answer questions.

In the absence of Edna, due to a sprained ankle, Tricia stood in as chairperson and closed the meeting at 8.45p.m.

Diary Dates;

Bill Ward is to put on two of his very popular "Bygone Wigston" slide shows in the New Year. Each will contain completely different material.

They are to be held at the Methodist Church, Cross Street, on 15/1/94 and 19/3/94. Admission by ticket only will cost £2 00 for each evening with concessions where appropriate. They will be on sale nearer the date. All proceeds are to go to the Framework Knitters Museum for the central heating fund.

Wigston's Who's Who No.:6 Rev. Charles Frederic Mortlock

Charles Frederic Mortlock would have been about sixty years old when he inherited Abington House from his uncle Thomas Ingram.

He was the son of Charles Mortlock of Leicester and Thomas Ingram's sister Mary Ann. He was born about 1850. He had matriculated from Queen's College, Oxford on the 30th May 1868 when he was 18. From 1869 to 1872 Charles Frederic Mortlock was a Hastings and Rigge exhibitioner and he was awarded a B.A. in 1872 and a M.A. in 1881.

He was ordained by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1875 and was Curate of Boughton-under-Blean, near Faversham in Kent from 1875 to 1878. From 1878 to 1889 he was Curate of Ospringe, also near Faversham and from 1889 to 1909 he was Vicar of South Bersted near Bognor Regis.

Charles Frederic and his wife were presented with a silver tray by the parishioners and friends of South Berksted, presumably on their departure to Wigston. Charles Frederic and his mother were regularly visited by Thomas Ingram, who is said to have driven ' at mid-summer from Wigston in an open carriage with a pair of horses, to Bognor ...'. It seems that having inherited Hawthorn Field in 1909 Charles Frederic moved there almost immediately as Crockford's Clerical directories then list his residence as Abington, Wigston Magna, the last entry being 1921/22.

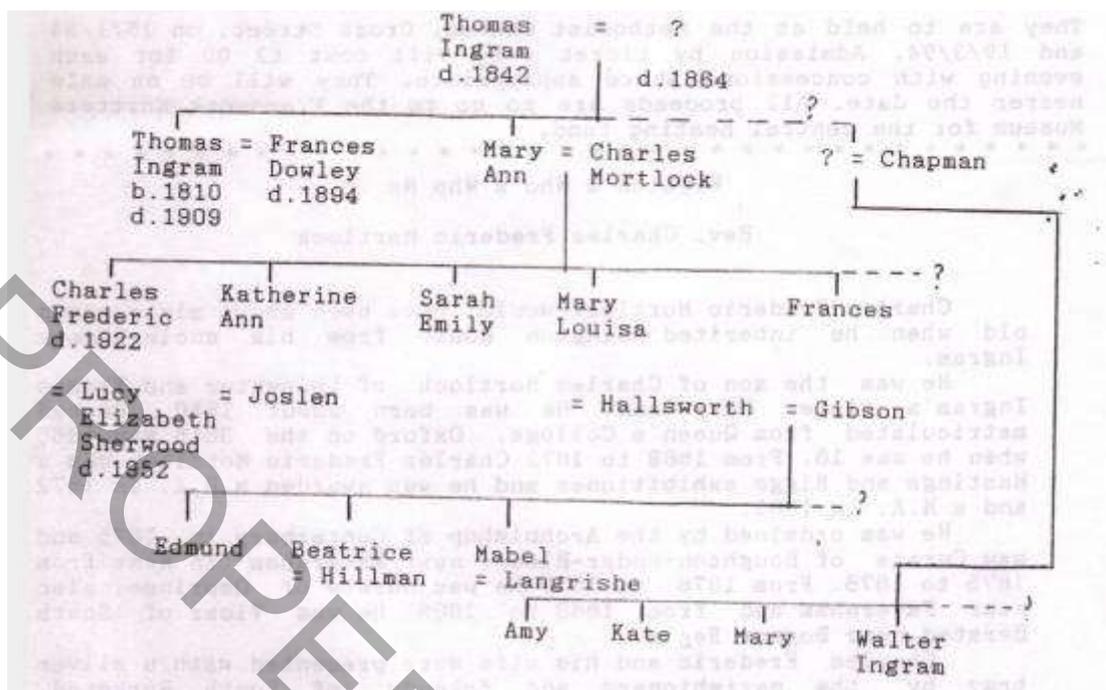
Charles Frederic Mortlock died in 1922. His wife Lucy, his cousin Rev. Edward Mortlock of St. Barnabas, Bexhill and William Brown Frearson were his executors.

He left the silver tankard presented to his late uncle by Robert Haymes to his wife Lucy and after her death to his nephew Edmund Gibson. The silver rose bowl presented to his uncle on his retirement from the Billesdon Board of Guardians, was left to his wife and after her death to his sister Mary Louisa Hallsworth then to her son and then his eldest son. The silver tray, mentioned earlier was left to his cousin Edward Mortlock and then to his nephew Edmund. Two of his sisters Sarah Emily Mortlock and Katherine Anne Joslen were left the proceeds of the sale of goods. Mention is also made of his sister Frances Gibson and her children Beatrice Hillman, Mabel Langrishe and Edmund Gibson.

He appeared to have kept an interest in South Bersted because he left the Vicarage cottage to Robert Boniface. His real estate in Sussex and income from shares in the Wigston Gas Company were also left to his wife and of course Abington House for her lifetime.

It is not until 1928 that the name Abington House appears as the residence of Mrs. Lucy Mortlock, Charles's widow. In 1932 she is given as one of the main landowners in Wigston the other being Ernest Broughton Esq. of Bull Head Street. She is remembered by many of Wigston's older residents. She continued to live there until her death on the 7th December 1952.

Probable Ingram/Mortlock Family Tree Compiled from various sources



Chris Smart

This brief account of the Mortlock Family is the concluding part of my essay on Thomas Ingram.

Leicester in the nineteenth century

An analysis of the causes and consequences of the growth of Leicester in the nineteenth century.

The nineteenth century was a period of rapid growth. All over Great Britain market towns such as Leicester became cities. As people migrated from the countryside to the town, cities such as London, Birmingham or Manchester became more densely populated. In 1801, 20% of people lived in towns with populations of greater than 5,000; by the middle of the nineteenth century this had risen to 54%.

In 1086 the population of Leicester is said to have been 1,570 people. This increased steadily over the centuries to c. 17,000 people in 1801. The population then grew rapidly from c.40,500 people in 1831 to about 211,000 at the turn of the century. Many of these people were concentrated in particular areas of the city. For instance, of the c. 50,800 people living in the city in 1841, over 30,700 were in St. Margaret's Parish. Consequently some of the worst, living conditions were to be found in that area.

Whilst, there had always been a flow of people from the countryside to the town, which had varied with the state of rural economy, disease had minimised the population growth rate. The three causes for the additional population growth rate and urban expansion were; the Enclosure, the mechanisation of industry and

the development of transport, systems.

The enclosure was a system of land reform. Large open fields, that had been communally farmed, were enclosed, and became owned by individuals. In Leicester, as in other similar towns, this meant that fields previously held in common became available for speculative building to satisfy the demands for housing an increasing population. In Leicester at least 25% of the land had been enclosed before 1607 and by 1710 this figure was 47%. After 1730 another 47% was enclosed by Acts of Parliament. In Great Britain 3 million acres were enclosed between 1714 and 1820. In Leicestershire 102 enclosure awards were made., Charnwood Forest being the last, to be enclosed.

The enclosure of these open fields transformed the physical landscape, altered farming, and changed an entire culture. It meant a change from arable, labour intensive farming, to pasture, animal intensive farming. Thus less people were needed to work on the land. At the time of enclosure 30% of the population had a interest in the land, the rest had already gone to other occupations. In Leicestershire this was mainly the framework knitting industry.

From 1700 it was clear that Leicester was to become a manufacturing centre, however, it did not develop and expand in the same way as many other industrial centres e.g. Manchester had done. It was still very much a county town with a market. Leicester's industrial development was built on the stocking frame, a machine that depended heavily on human effort to produce its goods. Framework knitting, Leicester's first industry, was established without power driven machinery and it was a home based rather than factory based industry. Home conditions were not necessarily better than those of factory workers. The home workers had some independence but paid heavily for it, having to rent their frames from a master hosier at a fixed rate no matter what price they got for the finished goods.

The development of the frame work knitting industry was not as rapid as other industries elsewhere and whilst local population had increased the widespread poverty seen in other cities did not exist in Leicester. The enclosure brought a surplus of cheap male labour onto the market and as a result the industry began to expand. White's directory of 1846 states that of the 33,000 knitting frames in Great Britain 6,000 were in Leicester. The surplus labour was absorbed by the expanding framework knitting industry. After the Napoleonic wars changes in fashion saw the collapse of the market and much poverty and hardship resulted. During the period 1870 to 1900 the hosiery industry was revolutionised.. Steam powered knitting frames had been invented in 1820 but their introduction had been resisted. Whilst labour was cheap i.e. plenty of people were coming into the town from the countryside there was little incentive to change over to steam powered machines.

The Abolition of Frame Rents Act of 1874 removed many of the reasons for maintaining a cottage based industry. Because the change from home employment to factory labour came late in Leicester the new factories were equipped to provide decent working conditions. In 1865 Corah's new St. Margaret's Works was opened to exploit steam powered knitting machines. By the end of the nineteenth century Corah's employed over 1,000 people and 95% of Leicester's output had been knitted on powered machines. During this transition to a factory system the workforce came

to depend on female labour; three times as many women as men were employed in the hosiery industry. The male labour originally absorbed into the knitting industry from agricultural employment was redeployed in to Leicester to these industries.

The second most important industry to develop in Leicester was the footwear industry. In 1830 Thomas Crick had developed a method of riveting the shoe components together and this made the way for large scale mechanisation. By 1900 the footwear industry had become the city's largest employer with approximately 24,000 people, hosiery was second with 18,000 employed, engineering third with 6,000 and the elastic web industry fourth. The engineering industry developed in Leicester to supply machinery to the hosiery and footwear trades.

The development of transport, systems is the third cause of the growth of cities in the nineteenth century. Canals and road maintenance schemes e.g. the Turnpike Trust had developed during the eighteenth century. The main development in transport technology during the nineteenth century was the railway. In 1829 some mine owners met in Leicester. They wanted a railway to bring coal from the North West of the county; the result was the Leicester to Swannington Railway, designed and executed by Robert Stephenson. In 1840 the Midland Railway came, followed by the Great Northern Railway in 1883 and the Great Central Railway in 1899. The railways brought people to the city and by linking cities together opened up new markets for manufactured goods.

The main consequence of nineteenth century industrialisation and urbanization was an eventual improvement in the environment, including housing, sanitation, water supply, health, factories, town planning and transport. Problems of drainage, water supply and poor sanitation had always existed in Leicester, but the increasing population had exacerbated them. The other consequences were improvements in education, provision of places of worship, parks and open spaces, libraries and art galleries and in the development of local government.

As the population had migrated from the countryside to the town the demand for housing had increased. In Leicester the East-Field had been enclosed in 1764 and therefore that land was available for development. The South Field, previously held by the freemen was enclosed in 1804. The Corporation sold off some of the land as building plots and some was set aside for other purposes e.g. Welford Road Cemetery (1849). Lands to the west of the River Soar saw very little new building until 1360 when two large estates, Westcotes and Dannelts Hall, were sold off for housing development, Lands to the north of the city i.e. St. Margaret's Pasture and Abbey Meadows, were kept to a certain extent as open spaces. In response to concerns about the fresh air and space needed by those people living in poorly ventilated conditions, the Corporation purchased some of the Abbey Meadows for the provision of a municipal park.

White's History, Gazetteer and Directory of Leicestershire, 1846 describes "Leicester ... is an ancient borough and well built market town., which has been greatly improved by the formation of new streets". In the eighteenth century the population of Leicester had increased from about 6,000 to over 17,000 people. Many old timber houses had been rebuilt in brick. The population explosion of the nineteenth century meant, that many old farmhouses in the town centre were demolished to make room for rows of

cottages. Because of separate freeholds and old street lines very little in the way of planned layout e.g. large squares and crescents took place. Most of the urbanization of the first two thirds of the nineteenth century in Leicester was infilling. Leicester, although small in 1800, was not densely built over, therefore there was room to build both within and without the existing urbane limits.

Joseph Dare was employed as a missionary for the Leicester Domestic Mission of the Unitarian Church and his reports to the Mission over the period 1846-1877 graphically describe the living conditions of the poor . In 1860 he reports:

In illustration: here is a building with no back opening, with two small rooms,, one down, one upstairs,, In this confined hole, a father and mother and six children herd together.

The two oldest are grown-up, one a man , the other a woman,, The youngest child is scarcely out of arms ,, They have occasionally harboured a man as a lodger.

There was very little change in the housing of the working classes until the introduction of "Byelaw houses". Byelaw housing was an attempt. to improve the living conditions of the working classes. Certain building regulations were laid down and architectural features were incorporated to relieve the otherwise regular rows of terraced houses.

The privies of most houses drained into open cess pits. The only public water supply was the sixteenth century conduit in the Market Place. The majority of people depended on wells for their water; these, however, were often contaminated from the neglected sewers or the cess pits. The water from the river Soar flowing through the town was not fit to drink. In addition many parts of Leicester are low lying, were prone to flood and were difficult to drain. Many houses had been built on land contaminated by sewage. Thus many people lived in appalling conditions.

Leicester had a very small proportion of back to-back housing (houses without any through ventilation) compared for instance to Leeds where back-to-back houses were still being built in the 1920s. However some back to-back houses were built and the infill development in the centre of the town meant that there was a profusion of courts and alleys in that, area with the resulting lack of adequate ventilation. These poor conditions meant that any outbreak of disease spread rapidly with the resulting high mortality.

Until the mid nineteenth century there was no provision for sewage disposal in Leicester. In 1839 Joseph Whetstone had recommended a sewerage and drainage scheme for the town. Whetstone's case was strengthened by Edwin Chadwick's report on the Sanitary condition of the labouring population in 1842 and by the Removal of Nuisances Act of 1846. Eventually in 1849 Thomas Wicksteed was appointed engineer to the scheme. The Local Board of Health had recommended that a sewerage scheme should go ahead without any further delay. The town's high mortality rate was seen as a direct result of inadequate sewage disposal and drainage.

In 1850 Wicksteed presented his scheme to the General Board of Health; it met with some opposition and Robert Stephenson was called in to arbitrate Much of the discussion centred on the size of the pipes to be used, and the rate at which rain water

would flow away. By 1854 the scheme was in operation but it proved to be inadequate. When the river flooded it often backed up and flooded cellars and ground floor rooms of houses in low lying areas. Where possible? new buildings were connected to the main sewerage networks the increase in population over the years soon meant that it was unable to cope. A pail closet scheme was introduced as a temporary measure and in 1886 work began on a new sewerage system and significant improvements in health resulted. In 1891 the Abbey Pumping station was opened and waste was pumped from the sewers to the new Beaumont Leys treatment plant.

Before the mid nineteenth century there was no piped water. Most peoples' water supplies came from wells which could be contaminated. The Leicester Waterworks Company was set up in 1847. Thomas Hawkesley became its engineer; he proposed to build a reservoir at Thornton, a village nine miles to the north west of Leicester. It was an ambitious project and many doubted the feasibility of bring water such long distances. However in 1847 the Manchester Corporation had successfully constructed a reservoir at Longendale 20 miles from the city, and in 1854 the Thornton Reservoir' began to supply the town. The population was growing and this reservoir was soon unable to satisfy the demands. Thornton Reservoir was followed by one at Cropston in 1870. In 1882 the Leicester Corporation took over the undertaking and Swithland Reservoir came into use in 1894.

The Civil Registration of Births and Deaths had transferred the responsibility of recording births and deaths from the parish to a central registry. One result of this was that it showed the highest mortality to be in the cities. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the death rate had been falling; subsequently it then halted and reversed. The trend was directly related to the high density and poor quality of urban living. Joseph Dare in his reports to the Leicester Domestic Mission was able to equate disease to overcrowding and poor or absent sanitation.

The nineteenth century sanitary reforms and improvements in water supply meant that the death rate began to fall and there was a significant improvement in infant mortality, which in Leicester had been very high. Death rates overall in Leicester in 1845 were 30 per 1,000 people. This was exceeded only by Bristol (31), Manchester (32) and Liverpool (35). In that period recorded infant mortality for England and Wales was about 150 per 1,000 live births, but in Leicester it rarely fell below 200 and in 1871 it was 252.4 (i.e. 25%, of children died before their first birthday). An improvement in sanitary conditions, less overcrowding and a general increase in awareness of the causes of these problems meant that by the beginning of the twentieth century the infant mortality rate had been reduced.

So far it can be seen that problems resulting from population and industrial growth could be addressed in a number of ways. Some problems can be solved by individual action e.g. a factory owner might improve the working conditions for his workforce, or by collective action e.g. the formation of Trade Unions or Working Men's Clubs, (although there was no union at this time for the framework knitters). Most problems however required corporate action at a local or national level.

By far the biggest change to affect society during the nineteenth century was the development of local government, and the expansion of its powers and responsibilities. It needed to regulate the various acts of parliament that came into

being as a result of the growth of towns. The growth of local government was in direct relation to the expansion of the town and the resulting problems of urban concentration, overcrowding, lack of adequate water supply and sanitation, and industrial growth. For example, the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 had shifted the responsibility for the poor relief of the borough from the parish to one single body, the Board of Guardians.

The population growth had brought about health and environmental problems for which the old town corporation was ill equipped, but the two Public Health Acts passed in 1840 and 1875 meant that they had to take responsibility for sanitary reform. The Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 established the principle of representation in local government. It replaced the old corporation by an elected body. The new council met for the first time in 1836, with 42 councillors and four Aldermen representing the seven wards of the town. The Act aimed to do away with any possible corruption in the old system without really enlarging its function. The new corporation had inherited debts, and the first few years after its formation were spent sorting out financial problems. The new pattern of local government emerged slowly. Certain functions were imposed by the Government. Others could be sought through private acts of parliament, for instance borrowing powers became important with the introduction of capital intensive projects.

The Guildhall, in Guildhall Lane, had been used for many years by the old Corporation. The Corporation had been administered by a Town clerk and a couple of assistants. During the nineteenth century the responsibility shifted from the parish to local government or the town corporation. Thus the building of the new town hall in the 1870s was to accommodate a growing bureaucracy, and to reflect civic pride in the achievements of preceding years.

In conclusion, each of the causes and consequences of the growth of towns in the nineteenth century cannot be viewed in isolation. The changes in the rural economy resulting from the Enclosure and the development of mechanized industry were happening simultaneously and they were interdependent. The problems of population growth resulting from this eventually led to a better environment. Many of the Victorian buildings of this period have survived later redevelopment and are well known landmarks. Leicester changed from a small compact market town to a wealthy industrial city and the framework of that development is still very evident in the city today.

Chris Smart.

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TEN YEARS OF CHANGE IN A WIGSTON MAGNA STREET
A Comparison of the Census Returns for long Street 1881 and 1891

Belief that families a century or so ago stayed for long periods of time in the same house disappears when the census figures for the two years are compared.

Of the 69 households listed in 1881, surprisingly only 13 remained in the same house ten years later. 3 other families had moved from their original homes, but remained in the same street. Less surprisingly, all the 11 inhabitants of Clark's Hospital had passed on and been replaced with other elderly folk.

7 houses were unoccupied and 4 others demolished, two of them to make way for the new Co-operative Store.

Court B which in 1881 had 5 cottages housing 22 people now contained only one person, the 63 year old widow, Martha Bennett, stated as being in receipt of Parochial Relief. The other 4 tiny dwellings were empty and due to be demolished soon after.

In recent years the small area, formerly Court A has once again become a court, albeit with a difference, it now containing a number of stylish residential homes for the

elderly. Two families had spread into two houses each. The grazier, John Cooper, now occupied No's 53 and 55, most probably to accommodate his new maltsters business with his son-in-law.

Daniel Launder described as a gardener (not domestic) also had two numbers, 45 and 47, suggesting that he too had a small business.

The second new building in the street, the Conservative Working Men's Club, had as its manager Thomas Ford, a Wigston man who was also a framework knitter. He had two daughters and a boarder living at home, all involved in the hosiery trade.

Wigston Hall too had a new occupant when Major General Archibald Betteson, an Essex man who married Isabella, a Canadian, came with their seven daughters and a four year old son. One daughter was born in Canada, three in Yorkshire and one each in India, Switzerland and Mali, where Archibald junior, no doubt with some relief, also emerged into the world.

The Manor House, ever the home of medical men, saw the replacement of James W. Hulme, M.D. Surgeon, by Dr. Arthur N. Barnley, who himself later removed to Kingswood Lodge in Bushloe End.

The Hurst's still carried on as carpenters and joiners, living in the two houses No's 2 and 4 with their workshops to the rear, though each with different branches of the family.

The total population of the street had fallen from 291 in 1881 to 254 ten years later. Only 5 people are listed as framework knitters compared with 17 earlier and the hosiery trade in general listed 31 names, a reduction of 10.

With all the changes during this period and subsequently, it is heartening to see at No. 32, the greengrocers shop of William J. Cox. An Oadby man then aged 28 who lived with his wife Mary and mother Harriet. The shop seemingly unaltered remains there today.

See G.W.H.S. Transaction No. 68 for full details.

J. Colver and S. Whyment.

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- No. 40. The Great Wigston Gas-Light and Coke Company. 18pp.
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- No. 42. Bulls Head Street, Wigston 1886, One Hundred Years Ago by J. Colver. 12pp.
- No. 43. Extracts from the Wigston & District Free Churchmen Magazine 1905-1912 by J. Colver 26pp.
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Editor's Note

According to directories of the time the residents of Wigston Hall in 1891 were named Utterson (Page 11 refers).