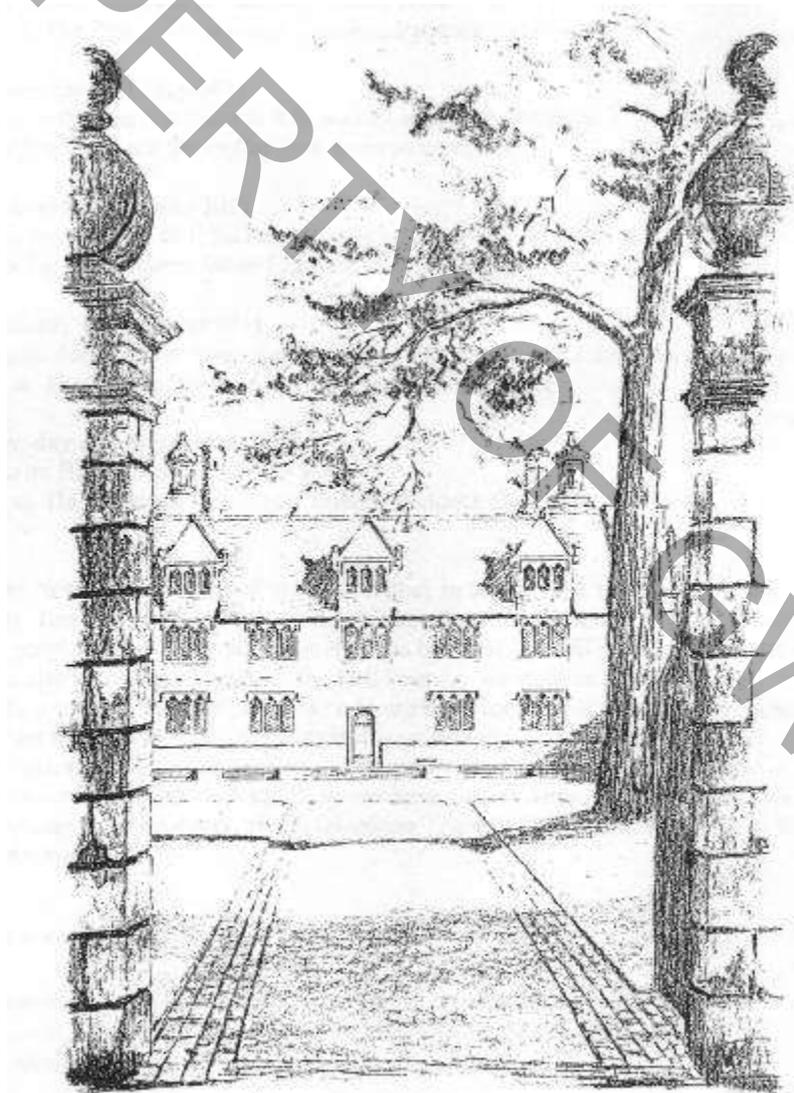




Greater Wigston Historical Society
White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna Leicestershire

Bulletin 89



Manor House, Ashby St Ledgers, Northants.

J.R. Colver

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS – MARCH TO SEPTEMBER 2011

Wednesday 16th March 2011

Newsreels from the 1940s & 1950s – Mike Forryan & Tony Lawrance
7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

Wednesday 20th April 2011

Canals, their Traditions & Painting – Mary Matts
7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

***Wednesday 18th May 2011**

Guided walk around Kibworth followed by supper at The Rose & Crown
Meet 7p.m. Paddock Street Car Park to share transport.

***Wednesday 15th June 2011**

Visit to John Taylor Bell Foundry, Loughborough
Meet 6.30p.m. Paddock Street Car Park to share transport.

Wednesday 17th August 2011

Topographical Studies: Leicester & County via paintings of John Flower – Neil Finn
7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

Wednesday 21st September 2011

Goings on Below Stairs – Wendy Freer
7.30p.m. The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street.

***Please Note** – members need to book and pay in advance for the May and June outings. There will be a list and money collected at the March and April meetings (most people have already done this for June but there are still places available if anyone else would like to go). At the Bell Foundry we shall be going into the workshop and there is a strict safety code, we have been asked to make sure members are aware that they cannot be admitted if wearing sandals or open toe shoes. Directions, suggestions on parking and where we are to meet, will be available at Paddock Street on each evening. If drivers have already arranged their passengers and are planning to travel direct, please telephone Tricia (2880156) the week before for this information.

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.

The Society's website is: www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk
Chairman Mike Forryan's e-mail is: chairman@wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk

THE FRONT COVER

Jim Colver's drawing this time shows the impressive Tudor Manor House at Ashby St. Ledgers, Northamptonshire.

The manor was gifted to Hugh de Grandmesnil by William the Conqueror, and had various occupants until 1375 when it passed to the Catesby family who remained the owners for 250 years. William Catesby was an influential councillor of Richard III and after Richard's defeat at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485 William was beheaded and the manor confiscated. It was later returned to his son John. The Catesby's were Roman Catholics and managed to retain the property in spite of massive debts caused by recusancy fines and years of imprisonment.

Robert Catesby (1573-1605) was one of the leading figures in 1605 Gun Powder Plot. He and fellow conspirators are reputed to have met here in a room above the Gatehouse which was not visible from the main house but had a clear view of the surrounding area. They also amassed arms, munitions and gunpowder at the property. Following the failure of the plot the property passed to Sir William Irving, and then to several other owners including Lord Wimborne.

The manor estate which includes an organic farm was bought in 2005 by the Crown. The house is believed to be still in the ownership of Lord Wimborne's descendants.

NOVEMBER MEETING

In November the Society welcomed Russell Hobbs of Radio Leicester, who gave us a fascinating insight into the history of the station.

Up to 1966 the BBC held a monopoly on broadcasting, but various off-shore pirate stations offering mainly pop music had begun to operate about this time. Most of us will remember Radio Caroline. The obvious demand led to Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4 being introduced by Harold Wilson's government.

The BBC also opened eight local radio stations as an experiment to test the demand. Radio Leicester was the first of these; it was launched at Epic House, Lee Circle on 8th November 1967 and Roger Matthews was the presenter that very first week. It was opened by the Rt. Hon. Edward Short, Postmaster General.

We were shown some pictures of the early days in Epic House which showed how equipment has changed over time. Early panic stories included presenters forgetting to read the news and people getting stuck between floors having forgotten the combination door code and being unable to attract attention. The biggest news story was the Kegworth Air crash. Memorable moments for Russell were meeting Margaret Thatcher in 1983 when she opened new science laboratories at the Grammar School, interviewing boxer Tony Sibson on his wedding day, and interviews with Sebastian Coe and Gary Lineker. Notable presenters include Tony Wadsworth and John Florance.

In 1981 new equipment was installed. In the same year commercial radio was first introduced and Centre Radio opened at Granville House, Granville Road. This however never became profitable and closed after three years.

By 2005 Epic House was deteriorating badly and Radio Leicester moved to their present venue at 9, St. Nicholas Place, near the cathedral.

This talk, on a more modern topic, was a change for our Society and was very well received. After some questions and discussion the Chairman, Mike Forryan, thanked Russell for a most interesting talk.

DECEMBER MEETING

This year the Christmas Meeting again took the form of a social event. 30+ members and a welcome group of young visitors settled down to enjoy the selection of wine, sherry and soft drinks, together with crisps and nibbles, brought by Mike and Linda Forryan and delicious mincepies made by Pam Woolley.

We settled in groups of four to work our way through Mike's Picture Quiz, trying to identify people and places. Some of the latter were modern images showing a section of a building, an unusual angle or were deliberately distorted. When the answers were revealed Colin Towell's team were declared the winners.

We then took a look at a selection of the latest images of Wigston and District which Mike has acquired for the Society website.

To close the evening the Chairman, Mike Forryan, wished everyone a very Happy Christmas and also announced that the Society was to move to a new meeting venue at The Dining Room, Age Concern, Paddock Street, Wigston with effect from the February meeting.

JANUARY MEETING

Most people in Leicestershire who are interested in the past have probably heard about the Green Bicycle Murder Mystery, but maybe don't know too much about it. Our speaker this month, Gerry Broughton, said he would give us the facts as they were known at the time of the trial so we could make up our own minds as to the guilt or otherwise of the suspect, Ronald Light. He would then give us information discovered subsequently to see if we had changed our minds.

The victim was Annie Bella Wright, a 21 year old single girl who lived with her parents and brothers at Stoughton. She owned a bicycle which she used to travel to her work at a rubber factory at St. Mary's Mills, Leicester. On the afternoon of Saturday 5th July 1919 she set out on her bicycle to post some letters and then go for a cycle ride. She did not come home and was reported missing by her family. Her body and bicycle were discovered by a farmer on Burton Overy Lane, Little Stretton that evening. She had been shot, and an empty cartridge was found nearby.

A number of witnesses reported seeing Bella that afternoon speaking to a man with a green bicycle. One witness with a particular knowledge of bicycles stated it was an unusual machine with a pedal operated rear brake. Local police, assisted by Metropolitan officers struggled with the case until February when part of a green bicycle with the same type of rear brake and with its serial number filed off was

found, together with some bullets, in the canal at Leicester. Ownership was traced to Ronald Light who lived with his parents in Granville Road facing Victoria Park. He was arrested and charged with murder.

At his trial Light's defense lawyer Marshall Hall used questionable tactics to flummox the prosecution lawyer and witnesses and managed to secure a not guilty verdict. No one else was ever prosecuted for the murder.

Subsequently it was discovered that Ronald Light had been expelled from his public school, dismissed from the railway and kicked out of the army for assaulting someone in France. He was a forger and had assaulted and injured a girl. His father also mysteriously died when he 'fell' from an upstairs window of his house. Was this later tragedy an accident, was he murdered, or did he jump because he could not live with what he suspected his son had done? Ronald Light lived to the age of 90 and died on the Isle of Sheppey. Guilty or not Guilty??

After some questions and discussion the chairman, Mike Forryan, thanked Gerry very much for an extremely fascinating account of a very local piece of history.

FEBRUARY MEETING

This meeting, the AGM, was the first to be held at our new venue in the Dining Room at Age Concern, Paddock Street, Wigston. A record number of 57 people attended and the Agenda was as follows:

1) Apologies for absence – None.

2) Minutes of February 2010 AGM – were read by the Vice Chairman Tony Lawrance. After a sentence in Any Other Business had been amended from "The Record Office had a magic lantern show which was available for hire" to "The Record Office had a magic lantern which was available to borrow twice per year" these were signed as correct by the Chairman.

3) Matters Arising – None.

4) Chairman's Report - Mike Forryan welcomed everyone and reported another successful year with all meetings well attended and enjoyed by all. We had excellent speakers on a wide variety of topics and enjoyable trips to the Knights' Templar Chapel with a meal at Rothley Court Hotel, and a guided walk around Gumley. The Christmas Quiz and pictures of Bull Head Street past and present also proved popular with 33 in attendance. Promotion of the Society continues with our activities featured on the council notice boards, shared notice board at the library (currently showing a selection of pictures of old Bell Street), trade magazines, the press and a recent leaflet drop. Members were asked for any other suggestions and to encourage their friends to join us. The bus trip, with commentary by Duncan Lucas raised £404. 00 for the purchase of a digital recorder. This large sum was achieved because the coach hire and raffle prize was paid for by a very generous member who wishes to remain anonymous. The website continues to grow with more data uploaded as time allows. This has attracted contacts from America and Australia as well as the UK with queries mainly about family history. It has also led to a few new (postal) members. He

thanked the Committee for their support and hard work and especially the officers Tricia Berry, Linda Forryan and Colin Towell and appealed earnestly for other members to join the committee with a view to helping with some of the tasks involved. He also put on record our thanks to the Elders of the United Reformed Church for our past use of the Boys' Brigade Rooms.

5) Treasurer's Report – Colin Towell handed out copies and explained the Income & Expenditure Account for the year to 31/12/2010. After removing items relating to 2011 this showed a profit of £522. 70, though £404. 00 of this was quite separate, and is reserved for the digital recorder. The true profit to compare with other years was £118. 70. There were no queries. He thanked the auditor, Gary Davies, and confirmed that he was willing to continue for the coming year.

6) Membership Secretary's Report – Mike Forryan read Linda's prepared report. She wrote that three members had resigned during the year and sadly two had died, while eight new members had joined. This resulted in the total being 83 at the start of the year rising to 86 at the end. The latter figure included a new category of suspended membership which caused a bit of a laugh! It has been created to cater for seven people who have not paid their 2010 subscription for any of several reasons, but have not resigned either. It is to enable them to return if their circumstances change, but their names will be removed if they do not renew during 2011. During the year we welcomed 35 visitors to meetings some of whom have now become members.

7) Election of Officers – As no nominations had been received it was proposed by Marion Daetwyler and seconded by John Standley that the present officers should all be re-elected. Namely: **Chairman:** Mike Forryan, **Vice Chairman:** Tony Lawrance, **Secretary/Bulletin Editor:** Tricia Berry, **Treasurer:** Colin Towell, **Membership Secretary:** Linda Forryan, **Auditor:** Gary Davies.
Committee Members: Edna Taylor, Sue Woolley and Ruth Granger.

8) Any Other Business – Marion Daetwyler proposed a vote of thanks to Mike Forryan for his hard work during the year, which was enthusiastically endorsed. It was agreed that a donation of £150. 00 be made to the O & WBP Trust (FWK Museum) this year. The committee had implemented a provision agreed at the last AGM to raise subscriptions by £1. 00 if it was thought necessary. Subscriptions are therefore now £11. 00 full and £8. 00 concessionary. The Chairman asked members who used e-mail if they would supply their addresses to enable more speedy communication. The proposed visit to Kibworth in May has now been confirmed, the cost will be £12 each to include supper at the Coach & Horses. Duncan Lucas has produced a new booklet *The History of South Wigston* by Frank Noble, in which the author recounts his youth in the area with descriptions of people, buildings and businesses he knew. A part of this was originally issued as Transaction 63. The Framework Knitters Museum appealed for any volunteers to act as guides at the museum. Mike said he was currently looking into suitable audio equipment for the Society to purchase and that a future meeting could be set aside to demonstration its use and the digital archives on the website. It was confirmed we would link up with the East Midlands Aural History Archive for the recording work.

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

There followed accounts my members of their early working lives – as follows:-

Morgan Squires Upholstery & Curtain making Workshop by Tony Atkins

Tony started work as an upholstery apprentice at Morgan Squires in 1950 aged 14. The workshop was a four storey building at the bottom of The Newarke quite separate from the shop premises. The ground floor was for delivery, the first floor was the upholstery work rooms, the second floor was for polishing and finishing and the top floor for materials and curtain making. There were usually four or five men and two apprentices employed at any one time.

Tony cycled into work from Saffron Lane and early tasks included going out on a shop bicycle to collect various items for the workroom and also errands for the men, such as buying cigarettes, food and even placing bets on horses! He first learned how to take off the old upholstery and prepare the bare frames, then progressed to applying the webbing, before being allowed to do the actual covering. One half day a week he attended the Technical School, but on occasions sneaked off to the pictures instead!! He learned much more at work being guided by the other upholsterers. He left before the apprenticeship was finished to join the building trade and then became a footballer.

He did however enjoy the work and now does it as a retirement hobby. He brought along an interesting selection of specialist tools used in the trade.

Imperial Typewriters by Mike Forryan

Our Chairman left school in 1964 and obtained a job in the advertising department at Imperial Typewriters in East Park Road. The Company had been founded in 1902 by Hidalgo Moya and J.G. Chattaway as Moya Typewriter Co. Hidalgo was a very talented Spanish/American engineer living in England. After first building the Moya typewriter he then set up the Imperial Typewriter Company in 1908 to launch a new machine with a curved keyboard and down strike keys. A huge breakthrough followed in 1915 with a more versatile version where the entire keyboard and typeface could be easily removed, to then be replaced with one which typed a foreign language, technical terms and characters or even music.

In 1953 the company was made public. By 1961 they employed 2,500 people and made electric, standard and portable typewriters, office machinery for invoicing, cheque-writing and other special purposes. In 1966 they were acquired by the American firm Litton Industries. By the 1970s the introduction by rival companies of the electric 'golf ball' typewriter, followed by word processors and then computers, caused the company to cease production of typewriters in 1974, to be followed by final closure in the late 1970s.

Mike arrived when the company was at its peak. He lived off Hinckley Road and caught a bus into town and then another out to the factory. There were six people in the advertising department, he worked as a clerk keeping the ledgers for all expenses, working to a budget of £90,000. After a shaky start his much respected boss Mr.

Aylott, a stickler for accurate work and training, soon showed him how to balance his books. Mike told us this job really set him up as he also learned about advertising, printing, photography, artwork, publishing and design, and how to work to a budget. There was also a good social side with a hockey team and car treasure hunts to enjoy. However, the desire for change led him, after two years, to move to Birmingham Airport where EMG Shipping had an air department. Here his job as import clerk involved dealing with the paperwork as goods were cleared through customs.

Drury's the Builders by Colin Towell

Following a spell working for Leicester Temperance Building Society, Colin Towell moved in 1970 to work for Drury the builders at their Head Office at The Grange, Wigston Fields. This was very convenient as he lived in Kingston Avenue at the time and could walk to work and go home for lunch.

The firm were general builders completing private housing estates, local examples being Eastway Road and Dorset Avenue areas, plus part of the Meadows Estate and houses and bungalows on the north west side of Oadby Road. This aspect of the business was managed from Kettering. The architects department, a landscape department, turning old mine sites into green fields, parks and playing fields, and the council house building department were all based at The Grange.

Council estates were a big part of their work, locally houses around Holmden Avenue, Rolleston Road, West Avenue and Central Avenue were Drury's and there were many other contracts with local councils in Hertfordshire, Bracknell and Nottingham as well as St. Marks and the West End Estates in Leicester. Colin worked in the cost accounts department working out profit and loss on the monthly valuations on these building contracts. All the figures were worked out manually, no machines were used. He remembers having to wrestle with Selective Employment Tax, which was introduced at this time and was not allowed for in the contract, but could be claimed back from the client, usually a local authority or council. On long contracts of over two years increases in National Insurance rates and rises in hourly wage rates could also be claimed. Another challenge was the change to decimalisation in 1974, but they were happy times in a family firm and he recalls the generous summer and Christmas parties and huge amount of whisky stacked up ready for distribution to sub contractors. A lovely workplace too, once the home of a notable Quaker, Thomas Burgess, and with graffiti in the attic left by prisoners of war.

Things changed during the late 1970s and Drury's was bought by Francis Parker, then soon after, Parkers was bought by Quinroy. Both times Colin was made redundant but continued to work at the same desk for the new company. Quinroy had an office in Huddersfield and each week Colin would drive a director there in the bosses' Daimler 4.2 automatic or more often the 'pool' Ford Cortina. The firm also owned a six seater Cessna and employed pilot to fly it. Twice he got to go on these journeys flying from Stoughton.

When Quinroy went into liquidation in 1980 there was no rescue this time and Colin then went to work for De Montfort Housing Association.

GREATER WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

Receipts and Payments for the year ending 31st December 2010

Receipts

Opening Balances as at 1/1/10:		
Current A/c	400.87	
Deposit A/c	996.09	
Unpresented chq	259.54-	1137.42
Subscriptions		556.00
Collections/Donations		63.00
Christmas Meeting		68.00
Bank Interest		.68
Sale of Books		18.00
Coach Tour, net		404.00
Visits this year		526.00
Visit next year		120.00
		2893.10

Payments

Lecture Fees		195.00
Bulletin & Programme		77.00
Room Hire (2010)		180.00
Christmas Meeting		40.47
Secretary's expenses		69.55
Library Notice Bd .33 share		16.66
Visits this year		434.30
Visit next year – deposit		25.00
O & WBP Trust -donation		100.00
Closing Balances as at 31/12/10:		
Current A/c	943.37	
Deposit A/c	996.77	
Unpresented Chqs	185.02-	1755.12
		2893.10

NEW MEETING VENUE

Our new meeting room, used for the first time for the AGM, proved very good, but there is a problem with the acoustics. A number of members had difficulty hearing, something we have never encountered before. Be assured this is being looked into.

LAUNDE ABBEY

HRH The Prince of Wales visited Launde Abbey recently to officially reopen it following major re-furbishment. Our Treasurer, Colin Towell, along with other members of staff had the opportunity to meet and talk to him during this visit. What a memorable day that must have been, well done Colin.

BOOK LAUNCH

On remembrance day last November Derek Seaton launched his latest book *This Gallant Steelback* at the Record Office. The book is a biography of William Ewart Boulter, the young man from Wigston who was awarded the VC during World War I.

The book tells his story in a most interesting and sympathetic way and is very generously illustrated, many of the images of people and places being connected to Wigston. It is available price £11. 00 from the Record Office, or Tricia (2880156) also has a few copies available.

THE ARRIVAL OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN WIGSTON PART II

SOME DETAILS OF THE 15 ELECTED COUNCILLORS

This article is a follow-up to the one in Bulletin 88 and attempts to describe a little about the first councillors on the new Wigston Magna Urban District Council, (but not the Parish of East Wigston which maintained separate records). The information is taken from the 1891 census with three years added to the given ages to reflect how old they were in 1894 when the council was founded. Any changes in personal circumstances which occurred between 1891 and the next census in 1901 are then added. This is followed by some notes on the issues the councillors had to deal with in those early days (taken from the first Wigston Magna UDC Minute Book).

St. Wolstan's Ward

Thomas Henry Johnson, 78 Bull Head Street, farmer age 44, had a wife Elizabeth, 1 son and 2 daughters at home. All the family were born in Wigston. In 1901 a third previously absent daughter is listed and Elizabeth's birthplace is given as Oadby. William Goodwin Forryan, 8 Bell Street, butchery assistant age 35, had a wife Louisa and 3 sons at home. WGF and the children were born in Wigston, Louisa was born in Wytham, Berks. By 1901 the address is 4 Bell Street & WGF is a butcher/shopkeeper/farmer with 3 more sons and 1 daughter also born in Wigston. John Snowden, 11/13 Bull Head Street, needle maker age 68, had a wife Lucy and 1 daughter at home. JS and the daughter were born in Wigston, Lucy was born in Ashley, Northants.

Central Ward

Hiram Abiff Owston, Bushloe House, Station Road, solicitor age 64, had a wife Ann, 1 son and 1 daughter at home. The children were born in Wigston, HAO was born in Snarestone and Ann was born in Braunstone. In 1901 a second previously absent daughter is listed.

Francis Hickling Freckingham, 16 Long Street, butcher age 27, had a wife Edith Helena, and 1 son at home. Edith Helena and the son were born in Wigston, FHF was born in Earl Shilton. By 1901 FHF is a butcher/grazier and another son and 2 daughters were at home.

John Walker, Cherry Street, grocer age 47, had a wife Emma and 1 daughter at home. Emma and the daughter were born in Leicester, JW was born in Arnesby. The family has not been found in 1901, it is believed they emigrated to South Africa and that JW died there in 1903.

All Saints' Ward

John Daykin Broughton, 88/90 Welford Road, Hosiery Manufacturer age 41, had a wife Ann, 3 sons and 4 daughters at home. All were born in Wigston. By 1901 the family had moved to Bull Head Street.

John Cooper, 53/55 Long Street, maltster/grazier age 77, widower, 1 daughter and son-in-law at home. JC and daughter were born in Wigston, son-in-law James R Smith was born in Knighton. By 1901 JC had died but James and Esther Smith now with a son John were living at this address.

George Ross, 29 Moat Street, baker age 53, had a wife Stella, 2 sons and 3 daughters at home. The children were born in Leicester, GR was born in Littlethorpe and Stella was born in Bruntingthorpe. By 1901 GR had retired and the family had moved to 48 St. George Street, Leicester.

Fairfield Ward

Orson Wright, 52 Blaby Road, builder age 40, had a wife Ada and 4 sons at home. Ada and the two older children were born in Leicester, the two younger ones in South Wigston. OW was born in Dunton Bassett. In 1901 OW is a builder/boot-shoe manuf/hotel prop/hat-cap manuf, and a previously absent son is listed who was born in Leicester.

Henry James Barwick, Blaby Road, elementary schoolmaster age 38, was single, born in Leicester and his mother and a sister lived with him. By 1901 he was headmaster at the Board School, had moved to Inslow House, Saffron Lane, married Edith and had 1 son and 1 daughter at home. The children were born in South Wigston and Glen Parva, and Edith was born in Broughton Astley.

William Dunmore, Blaby Road, biscuit manufacturer age 45, had a wife Caroline and 1 son and 1 daughter at home. Caroline and the children were born in Leicester, WD was born in Market Harborough. By 1901 the family had moved to The Cedars, London Road, Leicester and his daughter, by then married, and son-in-law William Parker and their 3 children lived with them. William Parker born in Friskney, Lincs, was manager at the biscuit factory.

Bassett Ward

Arthur Moulds, Blaby Road, leather merchant/boot factor age 64, had a wife Elizabeth and 1 son and 1 daughter at home. The children were born in Leicester, AM was born in Barwell and Elizabeth in Measham then in Derbyshire. By 1901 the family had moved to 23 Abingdon Road, Leicester.

John Bruce, Sherwood House, Orange Street, elastic web foreman age 45, had a wife Sarah Ann and 3 sons and 3 daughters at home. JB and the children were all born in Leicester, Sarah Ann was born in Wigston. By 1901 JB had remarried to Mary and had 2 more daughters. Mary was born in Peterborough and the two daughters in South Wigston.

Richard Henry Warren, Blaby Road, iron foundry manager and secretary age 34, had a wife Clara and 1 son at home. All three were born in Leicester. By 1901 the family had moved to Fernleigh House, Saffron Lane.

SETTING UP THE NEWLY FORMED COUNCIL

The council members agreed to meet fortnightly, and during the first three months of 1895 the structure of the new council was established. It was decided that the Clerk should be a solicitor, and the salary be £80. 00 per annum, and that the office of

Surveyor, Sanitary Inspector and Inspector of Nuisances should be combined with a salary of £150. 00 per annum. These two posts were advertised in the Leicester Daily Post and Advertiser. A sub committee was formed consisting of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, H.A. Owston, W. Dunmore and J. Snowden who were to reduce the applications to not more than five for each post, and then to submit them to the next full meeting.

Six applications were received for the post of clerk, five of which were whittled down by vote until Alfred Howard Burgess (a member of the family that had lived at The Grange for many years), was chosen, subject to his entering into an agreement on terms and termination, and made no extra claim if the Burial Board (which had been established in 1880 when the cemetery was opened, and of which he was already the Clerk) was merged with the council.

Seven applications were received for the Inspectorate, five of which were also whittled down by vote until William George J. Clark was chosen. His remuneration was broken down to £120. 00 for Inspector of Nuisances and £30. 00 for Surveyor.

It was decided that Mr. James Lawford, General Manager of the Leicestershire Banking Company Ltd., should be appointed Treasurer. Mr. Bodycote, Clerk to the Guardians of Lutterworth Union, was to be asked if Wigston could join the Association of Unions and secure the services of the Medical Officer. This was granted and Dr. John Andrew Turner of Queniborough Lodge was appointed for three years at £450. 00 per annum including travel, the cost to be shared by all councils in proportion to their ratable value. Dr. Turner reported on 2/4/1895 that during the quarter to 31/3/1895 there had been 6 cases of Diphtheria, 1 of Membraneous Croup, 7 of Scarlet Fever and 3 of Erysipelas. Total 17 notifiable diseases.

Two people had tendered for the job of scavenging, Harry Posnett £150. 00 per annum for Wigston and Samuel Buckby £120. 00 per annum for South Wigston, these were accepted. Cleansing houses where notifiable diseases had occurred was one of the unpleasant duties this job entailed.

Mr. Heard was to be requested to continue the duties of Rate Collector and the Chairman and Vice Chairman were authorised to arrange remuneration with him, which was later settled at £50. 00 per annum.

It was decided to form four permanent sub committees under the headings:

Finance: with Messrs: Cooper, Owston, Snowden, Warren and Wright.

Sanitary: with Messrs: Barwick, Broughton, Bruce, Owston and Snowden.

Highway, Sewerage, Watching and Lighting: with Messrs: Dunmore, Ross, Walker, Warren and Wright.

Farms and Sewage Works: with Messrs. Cooper, Forryan, Freckingham, Johnson and Walker.

Three members were also chosen to represent the council on the Hospital Committee of Blaby Rural District Council, namely Messrs: Dunmore, Walker and Wright.

It was moved that the Clerk be requested to prepare Bye Laws with regard to buildings, nuisances and other matters, and that the Surveyor be requested to report on the following subjects:

- 1) The condition of sewer and drains and safety to health when flushing.
- 2) Scavenging and cleansing the streets, footways and pavements, removal of refuse and providing receptacles for depositing rubbish.
- 3) Cleansing privies, water closets, ashpits and cesspools and the time of night it should be done.
- 4) Existence of offensive ditches especially between the two railway stations.
- 5) Any houses with insufficient water supply.
- 6) Any animals kept on premises which might be a health danger and any regulations necessary as to slaughterhouses.
- 7) Overcrowding in houses.
- 8) Any noxious trades such as boiling horse flesh, etc.
- 9) Any common lodging houses.
- 10) Present condition of the two sewage farms & suggestions for control and management.
- 11) State of roads in the district and prepare a plan distinguishing main from ordinary roads and the mileage.
- 12) Furnish in conjunction with the Clerk the estimate of probable expenses of the Council for the next twelve months.

H.A. Owston and the Clerk were authorised to obtain all plans relating to the district and the report on drainage from Mr. W. H. Simpson. Mr. Simpson responding that the plans would have to go to Blaby and Mr. Shires (Clerk to Blaby RDC) should be approached for them as Wigston was still officially a part of Blaby Sanitary District. A request was sent to Wigston Gas Company to enquire if the Council could have a special cheaper tariff for the gas for street lighting. It was agreed the Burial Board would be transferred to the Council on 1/6/1895 and Messrs. Bruce, Cooper, Johnson and Owston were elected on to the joint Cemetery Committee. A scheme was agreed for the joint operation of the Blaby Fever Hospital.

Other duties of the new council recorded in the minutes include making an arrangement with Leicester Corporation for the supply of water for the Fire Brigade and flushing purposes (drains). (The Brigade was actually paid by insurance companies and others at this time). Dealing with planning matters i.e. conversion of closets into water closets for properties in Station Street belonging to Mr. J.T. Biggs. A new house, workshop and premises on land at the junction of Countesthorpe Road and Orange Street owned by Orson Wright. A request from Rev. W.H. Pochin for permission to provide water closets at his property in Moat Street. Licensing matters i.e. a licence for the sale of petroleum held by Mr. William Whyatt, of 49, Bell Street, grocer, was renewed on condition he did not store more than 10 gallons. Highway maintenance i.e. the Council planned to 'take over' Station Street, Glengate, Kirkdale Terrace, Manor Road, Clarkes Road and Cherry Street.

After a few weeks of meeting at Bell Street School the Council requested more space and a large table be made available, soon after they moved again to the Board School in Long Street, the present Record Office. They still held every third meeting at the Board School in South Wigston.

At a meeting on 16th April the business included electing a new Chairman for the ensuing year. It is not recorded why this was necessary so soon after the Council had been established. J.D. Broughton proposed and J. Snowden seconded that H.A. Owston be elected Chairman. J. Bruce proposed and H. J. Barwick seconded that J. Moulds should continue. J. Moulds declined to stand, so H.A. Owston was duly elected by a majority of 12 to 1, Messrs. Dunmore and Ross being absent. J. Walker was re-elected as Vice Chairman. A vote of thanks was recorded to J. Moulds for the manner in which he had discharged the duties of Chairman for the last three months.

On 7/6/1895 J. Moulds resigned his seat on the council without giving any reason in his letter. He enclosed one shilling, a fine imposed by one of the bye laws. Thus a new election had to be held and on 2/7/1895 William Atkins was duly elected to represent Bassett Ward. He lived at 12, Blaby Road, was a shoe laster aged 43, and had a wife Annie, 3 sons and 2 daughters at home. WA and Annie and the three eldest children were born in Whetstone, the younger two in South Wigston. By 1901 the family had moved to Bassett Street and had another two daughters also born in South Wigston. The unsuccessful candidates were Charles Burdett, Granville House, Blaby Road and Arthur Daws, Westminster Houses, Fairfield Road.

It is difficult to image how the councillors managed to deal with all this business from just rented meeting rooms at two locations. A permanent office must have been a priority. Certainly by 1904 they had secured their own premises, the Council Offices being at 28, Station Road opposite the present swimming pool car park. In 1942 the Council moved to H.A. Owston's old home at Bushloe House, also in Station Road.

Some key dates are:

12/9/1928 part of the parish of Glen Parva in the Blaby Rural District Council was transferred to the parish and urban district of Wigston.

On 30/7/1930 the name was shortened to Wigston Urban District Council.

By the 1935 County of Leicester Review Order part of Wigston (42 acres) was transferred to the Borough of Leicester.

By the same order in 1936 the parish of East Wigston and parts of Blaby, Coutesthorpe and Lubbenham were added to Wigston Urban District Council and other parts of Wigston Magna were transferred to the parish and urban district of Oadby.

As a result of local government re-organisation on 1/4/1974 Oadby Urban District Council was merged with Wigston Urban District Council to form the new Borough of Oadby and Wigston which is still at Bushloe House today.

Tricia Berry

Sources:

Wigston Magna UDC Minute Book LRO Ref: DE6335/1. 1904 & 1936 Kelly's Directories.