

# ***Wigstons' Voice***

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY  
REPRESENTING WIGSTON MAGNA,  
SOUTH WIGSTON & KILBY BRIDGE

**AUTUMN 2018**  
**40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION**  
**1978-2018**



BELL STREET SCHOOL, SEPTEMBER 1978

[www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk)  
Founded in 1978

***“we strive to make the  
Wigstons a better place in  
which to live work and  
shop”***



# EDITORIAL

Do not miss three events coming soon – details in this issue:

**Thursday 13 September – Civic Society Annual Lecture**

**Saturday 29 September – Leicester History Festival**

**Saturday 13 October – Civic Society 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Peter Cousins**

WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY COMMITTEE AS ELECTED AT THE AGM  
MAY 2018

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Peter Cousins</b>	<b>chairman@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk</b>
<b>Vice Chair</b>	<b>Maureen Waugh</b>	<b>vicechair@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk</b>
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Colin Towell</b>	<b>secretary@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk</b> <b>07813 782 899</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Val Beesley</b>	<b>treasurer@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk</b>
<b>Membership Secretary</b>	<b>Val Beesley</b>	<b>membership@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk</b>
<b>Website Administrator</b>	<b>Peter Cousins</b>	<b>webadmin@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk</b>
<b>Publicity/Events</b>	<b>Nicola Alexander</b>	<b>publicity@ wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk</b>
<b>Newsletter Editor</b>	<b>Peter Cousins</b>	<b>news@wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk</b>
<b>Other Committee Members: Roy Hughes, Peter Holmes, Colin Hames, Yvonne and John Woodward</b>		

**Committee meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month at Age UK, Paddock Street, Wigston Magna, starting at 7.15pm. All Members Welcome**

# 40 YEARS OF LOCAL ACTION

This year the Society is celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation in 1978. At that time Bell Street was a two-way street being the main A50 road from Leicester to Northampton to the south and also leading to Oadby Lane. There was a junior 'Board' school on the site which developers wanted to purchase in order that it could be demolished, and the site used to develop shops. The origins of the Society are in an action group formed to save the school. This battle was lost and Sainsburys was built on the site. The picture on the front of this issue shows the old school, well-remembered by long time Wigston residents.

The Society has continued to be a watch dog on what is being proposed for Wigston, South Wigston and Kilby Bridge with particular emphasis on planning applications in the six Conservation Areas within these settlements.

Furthermore, the Society has been working to make the area a better place in which to live work and shop by carrying out a number of projects, these include the creation of a garden at the corner of Station Road and Launceston Road, erecting a number of Blue Plaques to local people of prominence, creating the 10 mile Two Steeples Circular Walk as a millennium project, erecting the plaque to commemorate the link between the diamond jubilees of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II on Bell Street and replacing a lost plaque to commemorate the reopening of South Wigston Station in 1976. More projects are in the pipeline.

To celebrate, an Anniversary Reception is to be held, in the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough on Saturday 13 October from 3pm to 5pm at Age UK in Paddock Street. There will be more presentations on the Society's achievements over the years, a talk about conservation groups by local expert and Joint Chairman of the Leicester group of the Victorian Society, Neil Crutchley, followed by a cream tea. More details are contained in the letter enclosed with this edition of Wigstons' Voice

# **PAINT DISPOSAL PERMITS**

The Borough Council does not specify on its Refuse and Recycling guide what action should be taken when residents wish to dispose of old paint tins. However, on the County Council's card issued in 2016 detailing 'changes at recycling sites' it states that paint can only be disposed of at Whetstone and permits must be obtained in advance but are free. This can be done by phone or online.

Have you tried it? It is a long performance with many questions to be answered. These include how many tins, what was/is in them, have you bought and used the paint yourself, do you have any writing on the side of your car, where did you purchase the tins from. After trailing through this process, a resident is sent the permit which must be used within a specified time.

On arrival at Whetstone, quite a journey for anyone living on the edges of the County, the attendant takes the permit off you and without checking it or the tins in your boot, directs you to the nearby bin and leaves you to it.

The process, surely, cannot be cost effective for the County Council and it positively discourages residents (of the County and not just O&WBC) from abiding by the rules.

## **GREATER WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

### **AND WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY NEWSLETTERS**

Archived copies of the GWHS bulletins since 1980 and the Civic Society newsletter "Wigstons' Voice" from Spring 2015 are available on their websites:

**[www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk/Bulletins.html](http://www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk/Bulletins.html)**

**[www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk/Newsletter.html](http://www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk/Newsletter.html)**

# WHY CHOOSE WIGSTON?

By MAUREEN WAUGH

When house-hunting twenty-five years ago, two over-riding issues were to the fore. I would not be getting any younger, in fact, I was on the downhill slope and, as for the trauma of buying and selling a house after this, that was for the birds! I searched from Birstall to Fleckney, with Oadby and Evington in between, but settled on Wigston because:

- Its estates encircle the town centre, and most have footpaths and shortcuts to favour walking;
- There's no noisy busy A6 "bypass" cutting most estates off from the centre;
- It's compact and not very hilly;
- At that time, it had an excellent shopping centre, with a Co-op department store and a dozen independent shops (dress, china & glass, music, stationers, plus a couple each of greengrocers and butchers);
- Good bus services with two routes into Leicester, one serving the Infirmary and DMU, and the other via Leicester University and the railway station, plus the useful Circle route.

These are all very mundane and practical reasons but get the basics right and there could be time and energy over for a more exciting life. I now live five minutes' walk from the shops, Post Office and library and ten minutes' walk from open countryside. Much has changed over the past quarter century. The department stores and, with a couple of notable exceptions, all the independent specialist shops are long gone, to be replaced with the ubiquitous charity shops and cafes. A thriving town centre offers us variety and favours walking and socialising – enjoyable for us and good for the environment. If we want Wigston to continue as a very pleasant place in which to live and work, it depends on the choices we make: it behoves us to use, support and enjoy its services and facilities, or we could lose them altogether.



Proudly presents



# LEICESTER HISTORY FESTIVAL

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2018

10am-3pm



**FREE ADMISSION**

**Greater Wigston Historical Society will be there**

**Details and exhibitors list at:**

**[www.leicestergrammar.org.uk/leicesterhistoryfestival](http://www.leicestergrammar.org.uk/leicesterhistoryfestival)**

**TWO NEW WEBSITES BEING LAUNCHED**

**AT THE FESTIVAL:**

**[www.lrfhs.com](http://www.lrfhs.com)**

**[www.oadbyandwigston.info](http://www.oadbyandwigston.info)**

# **A WALK AROUND CENTRAL WIGSTON MAGNA**

Recently, members of Wigston Civic Society took an evening stroll around the central area of Leicester Road and Bell Street in Wigston Magna, particularly observing the areas behind shops.

Land to the rear of shops to the east of Leicester Road fronting onto the car park and at the rear of the Arcade, again facing a car park, is in a poor state. There was litter and rubbish overflowing from recycling banks, food waste and an old freezer. The surface treatment was very untidy.

The alleyway between Boots and Poundland and the area behind Boots was very littered although this had been later cleaned for the Britain in Bloom judging.

The former Bell Pub car park looked very untidy. Shop owners and landlords should pay attention to these parts of their properties, they are on public view and can enhance their reputation in the eye of the public.

The footpath from Bell Street to Paddock Street still has the obstructing barriers half way along its length making it difficult to negotiate for wheelchair, scooter and baby buggy users. Also, it is very weed strewn and the adjacent walls are graffiti covered especially the walls of the gym.

Members are urged to join the monthly 'litter picks' organised by Pride of the Borough, visit:

**[www.prideoftheborough.org](http://www.prideoftheborough.org)**

The overall impression while walking the two main roads was good and clean, especially now that the flower displays had been put in place.

# PLANNING BRIEFS

Planning activity has been quite lively lately with the number of domestic applications continuing to be at a high level both in Wigston as well as Oadby.

**Horse and Trumpet decking and footpath:** At the time of writing, the consultation for the diversion of the footpath has ended but we have not yet been advised of the decision. The Society strongly objected to the diversion.

**Newton Lane:** As many members will know work is well under way on the site with the foundations laid for the houses adjacent to Newton Lane. The roads are being constructed and their layout is clear, the roundabout which forms the access to the site is complete. An application to increase the number of houses on the site from 450 to 482 has been received and the Society has objected, no decision has been announced yet.

**Meadow Hill/Cooks Lane:** This site continues apace and has completely altered the feel of the area as one travels along the A5199 to and from Kilby Bridge. It is no longer rural but urban.

**Land west of Welford Road near Kilby Bridge:** Outline consent for the proposed 49 units on this land was approved in March, an application for reserved matters has not yet been submitted. Development of this site will urbanise the approach to Wigston from the south even more.

**Premier Drum site:** The opening of the two new stores on this site is imminent and the road widening was completed soon after the school term ended. The impact on traffic remains to be seen.

**Long Street WMC site:** The amended application submitted earlier this year has still not been decided. Furthermore, the site of the former Admiral Sportswear and Hubert Halls shop, opposite the WMC has not

yet seen any activity. These two sites continue to be a blight on Long Street.

**Central Avenue:** The application for 7 houses on this site was approved and work has recently commenced to demolish the old buildings and remove trees. There continues to be strong reservations about the access road to the site which a fire engine was recently unable to negotiate.

An amended application for the Nautical William site was approved as was an application for three houses at the rear of the Elms Social Club. The land has now been sold. There is no news on the compulsory purchase of the Hat and Cap Factory in Canal Street. A reserved matters application for the former young offenders site has recently been considered by the Council, but the decision is not known. It appears that Barrack Yard in Moat Street has been taken off the market.

## **SHOPS AND SOLE TRADERS**

Wigston was once a town of shops usually run by individuals or families. Many names can be recalled such as Vanns, Johnsons, Kembles, Hollyoaks, Forryans, Langhams, The Oven Door and Tilleys. These have long disappeared as the national supermarkets gradually took over and even some of those have come and gone such as Mac Markets and Kwik Save and sadly, the Co-op in all its forms. However, Wilkos carries on.

More importantly, some individual traders carry on but under great pressure with rising prices, falling customer numbers and high rents and business rates. Examples are Billy Cox's green grocers, Heaths wet fish shop and Wigston Pharmacy. We need to keep these sole traders and individual shops in our town centre to keep its integrity and attractiveness to our residents and shoppers from other areas. Please try to use these shops and encourage your friends and neighbours to do so as well.

# RIGHTS OF WAY IN OADBY AND WIGSTON

Walking is an increasingly popular activity for all age groups, but it is not always easy to find footpaths and cycle ways which provide suitable routes for rambles or allow traffic-free access to schools and local amenities. There are public rights of way such as Fludes Lane in Oadby and the footpaths in Wigston leading to the canal which provide valuable links to open space, in addition to preserving the heritage. However, there are some historic routes which are not on the Definitive Map (official record) and this could be particularly significant where new development is proposed.

Definitive public rights of way, including footpaths, bridleways and by-ways have been recorded by surveying authorities (here- Leicestershire County Council) since legislation in 1949. However, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 states that '*all rights of way over footpaths which existed before 1949 and have not been recorded on definitive maps by 2026 will be extinguished*' (Natural England). Ramblers, horse-riders and cyclists are concerned that this will mean some existing or historic routes will be lost. To find out which paths are rights of way, you can view the Definitive Maps for the local area in Oadby Library or contact the County Council at:

**[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/parks-and-outdoor-activities/definitive-map-and-statement](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/parks-and-outdoor-activities/definitive-map-and-statement)**

If you know of an ancient route which is in danger of being lost or find out that a path which is used is not on the Definitive Map, contact Wigston Civic Society, **[www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk)** who can investigate further, or the Leicestershire Local Access Forum, which is working with local groups to research key 'lost ways'.

**[www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/leicestershire-local-access-forum](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/cycling-and-walking/leicestershire-local-access-forum)**

**Helen Hay**

# WIGSTON FOR ME

My first recollection of Wigston is cycling from Leicester Forest East to Wigston Magna via South Wigston and calling at the old police station on the corner of Pullman Road. I was doing my cycling badge for the scouts and we had to describe what we saw in the police station car park (this was to make sure we actually did the whole journey). It was a bomb shaped object (in 1957) half buried in the soil. The next recollection is travelling in my parent's car from L.F.E., through Aylestone and along Aylestone Lane, Bell Street, and onto Bullhead Street, (before the bypass) to get onto the A50 (oh for the old road numbers) to go to Northampton.

My first job on leaving school at sixteen was as an accounts clerk/cashier at Leicester Temperance Building Society. On certain days we were sent to branch offices and there was one on Long Street where Chadwicks Photographers now stands prior to it moving to a brand-new office on the corner of Bell Street, now an estate agent. This is where I began to meet some of the 'big names' in Wigston. The office closed between 5pm and 6pm on Friday evenings which was enough time for a walk round the block of Moat Street, Bullhead Street and Bell Street, noting shops and other buildings many of which are no longer standing.

It was not long before I met a young lady who lived in Wigston and who was to become my wife. Journeys from Leicester Forest East on my Lambretta scooter took about fifteen minutes. Our search for a house was not necessarily concentrated on Wigston but we ended up buying one on Kingston Avenue. Our subsequent two houses have both been in the 'Wigston Fields' area.

Here is where we get to the 'what I like about Wigston' part. Our houses have all been very conveniently located within walking distance of shops and on a good bus route into Leicester city with all the useful amenities such as the hospitals, train station, sports stadiums and De Montfort Hall on 'our side' of town. We are very convenient for Fosse Park and junction 21. In the days when our children were young they could walk to school and were handy for scouts and guides which met in Wigston. As time has gone on, although we do not now have the variety of shops we used to

have, we have several supermarkets for every day needs and there are numerous organisations to which we can belong to depending upon our interests. Have you been in Wigston when the church bells are ringing? It sounds and feels like a village.

So, it's a good place to live, but we need to keep our ears and eyes open in these changing times to ensure that it remains so.

## **WIGSTON MAGNA RAILWAYS 1958**

At the beginning of the year Duncan Lucas found an old reel of 16mm cine film which was listed as Wigston Railways 1958. Duncan kindly passed this to John Stevenson a member of The Greater Wigston Historical Society and a keen Railway enthusiast. John arranged for the 16mm film to be converted to a DVD and found just over 3 minutes of footage taken at the Wigston South railway sidings circa 1958. The footage is without doubt a unique record of the sidings and of many of the people who worked there.

John Stevenson then looked at the individuals featured in the footage and wondered if it would be possible to identify them. Many would have been local people who lived in both Wigston Magna and South Wigston.

Photos from the original footage are on the historical society web site at:

**[www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk/Railways1958.html](http://www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk/Railways1958.html)**

Please follow this link and see if you can identify any of your relations that worked on the railways in Wigston.

**Mike Forryan, Chairman, GWHS**

# **WATCH OUT AN EXTENSION IS COMING TO A HOUSE NEAR YOU!**

Local builders are being kept very busy by residents who wish to extend their houses. Such works can have a detrimental effect on neighbours. Builders' vans and large delivery lorries cause congestion on the road (often an 'estate' road and not very wide); a waste skip is deposited on the front garden or on the road for the duration, this means that the householder, if still in residence, cannot park their own car on the driveway and the work seems to take an age with contractors sometimes leaving the job for a few days.

A far more long-lasting effect is the size of the extension and the materials used. Sometimes, extensions can be two storey, side and rear with a room in the roof and a porch on the front, making the original house far larger and more obtrusive. Different bricks and roof tiles can be used, and walls can be painted, in some cases completely white instead of plain brick. Attic conversions can have balcony windows rather than the previously common Velux which fit within the slope of the roof. Large extensions can dominate an estate and completely change the street scene, once so jealously guarded by planners.

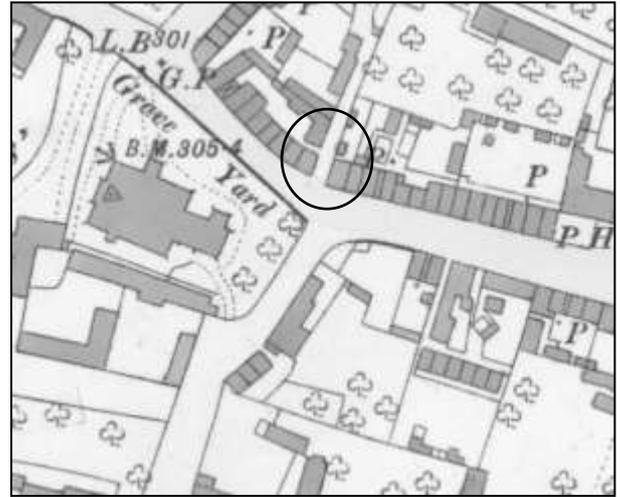
Watch out, look for notices attached to lampposts that an application for an extension has been submitted, you may not get a letter direct through your letterbox and the home owner may not have consulted his neighbours, including those whose houses are at the rear of the house in question. If you see a notice, check it out, you can do so on your computer, or go to the library or the council's Customer Service Shop in Bell Street. visit :

**[www.oadbywigston.gov.uk/pages/viewing\\_planning\\_information\\_with\\_publicaccess](http://www.oadbywigston.gov.uk/pages/viewing_planning_information_with_publicaccess)**

**(tick acceptance boxes and insert application number)**

# THE PINFOLD

The new PINFOLD memorial is now complete. It stands on the corner of Newgate End and Moat Street. In times before the enclosures when animals could wander almost at will there was a small walled or fenced area in most villages where an animal that had strayed too far from its home ground could be rounded up and kept safely until it was claimed by its owner.



The seat has an agricultural design incorporated into its back rest and is similar to the WW1 seat installed in Oadby opposite St Peter's Church. The planted trough was created from an authentic redundant cattle trough and the information board uses historical detail provided by the Greater Wigston Historical Society.



**6th Annual Public Illustrated Lecture**  
**Thursday 13 September 2018 @ 7.30pm**  
**“THE ORIGINS AND DECLINE OF THE**  
**GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY THROUGH**  
**LEICESTERSHIRE”**



**AN ILLUSTRATED PRESENTATION BY**  
**MALCOLM RIDDLE**

**Venue:**

**Age UK 51 Paddock Street, Wigston LE18 2AN**

**Admission £4.00 Per Person**

**Including Refreshments**

**BOOKING ADVISABLE**

**Contact: Colin Towell – 0116 288 9638**

**Or 07813 782 899**

# **BANK CLOSURE**

Members will no doubt have been informed by letter, or heard, that Barclays Bank is to close its branch in Wigston. Account holders are advised that they can use the nearest branch in Oadby if they cannot (or do not wish to) use alternatives such as online or telephone banking, or the Post Office inside Peacocks in Bell Street, Wigston.

The formal letters say that fewer customers are using the branch to transact their everyday banking. This is something that I have not found when I make a visit to the branch when there is almost invariably a queue, several people deep, and only one or two cashiers on duty. When HSBC closed their Oadby branch, the queues in Wigston became longer and the same will no doubt happen at Barclays in Oadby.

However, the greater implication for the Society is that another (fairly large) unit will become vacant. It is notable that the former Nat West branch in Bell Street which was closed in July 2016 shows no sign of being relet or sold. In Wigston we do not want another long-term vacant shop unit in the town to add to Nat West and the former Heard's butchers which closed in August 2015.

# **DEFIBRILLATOR**

Did you know that there are defibrillators in Wigston outside the Co-op funeral care office on Leicester Road (next to the Wetherspoons pub) and outside the Methodist Church on Cross Street? A further machine is to be installed outside Sainsburys in Bell Street in due course.

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**Reports by Colin Towell unless otherwise stated.**

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