

Wigstons' Voice

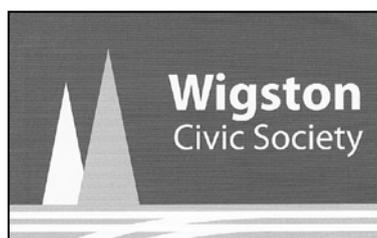
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY
REPRESENTING WIGSTON MAGNA, SOUTH WIGSTON & KILBY BRIDGE
SPRING 2015



THE JUBILEE PLAQUE

www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk
Founded In 1978

*"We strive to make the
Wigstons a better place
in which to live and
work"*



EDITORIAL

Welcome to my first full edition of the Newsletter “flying solo” without the help of Mary Essinger. Many thanks to Mary for her past time as the Editor, I am sure you have all enjoyed her previous informative issues.

Many thanks to Colin Towell for his contributions to this issue, but I would like to see more articles and submissions from you the Members. Send them by e-mail or post, addresses below.

JUBILEE PLAQUE AND PUBLIC ART IN BELL STREET

The Jubilee Plaque was unveiled on a rainy morning in early December at the same time as the revamped Bell Street was formally opened. The plaque set in its granite stone within the ‘pocket park’ looks fantastic. So far it has escaped vandalism which is good news too. There is a reported need to keep the box hedges surrounding the plaque well-trimmed and the Council has been asked to deal with this.

Bell Street itself has not suffered so well. Motorists ignore the signs and drive up the street at all times of the day. In fact only delivery lorries and vehicles for the disabled may use the street and then only before 10 am and after 4 pm. There is discussion going on between the Borough and County councils about the use of the barrier which presently is not closed at any time.

However the new paving will be cleaned to remove oil stains and sealed to assist with future cleaning.

The public art project has been on hold while Bell Street and the Jubilee plaque were being installed. However we now have a small model of the proposed sculpture and fund raising will be starting in earnest soon.

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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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our AGM is normally held on the first Wednesday of May but this year that day is the eve of the General Election and Borough Elections.

Therefore we have put the meeting back to Tuesday 9 June. We feel that this date remains in accordance with the constitution.

A new innovation this year will be a quiz on local topics that members and guests can complete at their own pace individually or in pairs while we have a coffee and chat before the formal meeting.

Following the AGM there will be presentations by the Wigston Magna and South Wigston Traders Groups and presentations of the latest Certificates of Commendation. Hopefully, we will have on display a model of the proposed sculpture for Wigston Magna town centre.

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
TUESDAY 9 JUNE 2015 AT 7.30PM
IN THE MAPLE ROOM, AGE UK OADBY AND
WIGSTON
PADDOCK STREET, WIGSTON LE18 2AN
ALL MEMBERS AND THE PUBLIC
ARE WELCOME**

Light Refreshments On Arrival

Please phone the Secretary on 07813 782899 with any
queries

MEMBERS' LUNCH

The next members' lunch will be on WEDNESDAY 13 May at 12.00pm for 12.30pm at The Leicester College. Anyone interested in booking please contact Mary Essingeer on 0116 288 2198

AWAY DAY

Members of the Committee spent a half day outside the usual committee routine discussing and reviewing past progress and future activities. This meeting took place at the Star and Garter in Wigston Magna and was followed by an excellent pub lunch when we were joined by partners and guests.

Matters discussed included a review of the constitution, the things we wanted to concentrate on in 2015, plans for the AGM and the Annual Public Lecture, a review of the main developments taking place in our part of the Borough and a short discussion on our vision for Wigston.

One of the main points to come out of the day was a clarification of the arrangements for those who are not committee members and members of the public who wish to attend committee meetings. We agreed that we should call such meetings 'open committee meetings' and that non committee members and members of the public can attend any meeting where they can speak but not vote (votes are very rare). Members of the public would be expected to join the Society on or after they had attended three meetings.

Any member who would like to see the full notes of the meeting should contact the Secretary or look on the website. This was the second year that an away day had been arranged and it was again found to be very useful.

EXTENSIONS

Have you noticed how long it seems to take for builders to complete private house extensions? There is usually a lot of mess and dust and it would appear that there are extended (sorry) periods of inactivity. Do they go off to work on another job or are they on holiday? Does the customer keep changing their mind or is he not paying the builder? Are the builders trying to keep several customers happy at the same time or are they just inadequate for the job in hand. There can be a big impact on the neighbours and visitors let alone the customer.

WELFORD ROAD PLAYING FIELDS

Although not strictly in our Borough, members may have seen an article in the Leicester Mercury indicating that the University of Leicester is looking for other uses for these playing fields (once called the domestic science playing fields), consequently they are terminating the lease with South Leicestershire College who are terminating their under lease with Wigston United Football Club. So not only will this mean a big upheaval for the club (hoping that they can find alternative pitches) but it may mean a loss of a stretch of green open land between the city and the Borough, something that has been fought over in the past.

SPEECH BY MAUREEN WAUGH, THE CHAIR OF THE WIGSTON CIVIC SOCIETY, AT THE UNVEILING OF THE JUBILEE PLAQUE IN BELL STREET.

Friday 5th December 2015

Well over a hundred years ago, the good folk of Wigston marked Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, by erecting a fountain on the Bank. It wasn't a decorative fountain, but a very useful horse trough and drinking fountain, a boon to thirsty horses and citizens alike. Four kings came and went during the next fifty years, before another monarch, Queen Elizabeth II, came to the throne and stayed the course to reach a Diamond Jubilee in 2012.

At the beginning of 2012, Duncan Lucas had the brilliant idea to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of our present Queen and to link it to the Diamond Jubilee of her predecessor, by placing a commemorative plaque at the end of Bell Street. He asked Wigston Civic Society to take the lead on this project. The Society decided to set the plaque on a granite boulder across the end of Bell Street, very near to the site of the original fountain on the Bank, and we gained the support and encouragement of Councillor Bill Boulter and of the Residents' Forum of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council, for this project.

The first problem was to find a suitable photograph of the fountain, which was demolished long ago. Many people, including Duncan Lucas, Neville Chadwick, Tricia Berry and Mike Forryan of the Greater Wigston Historical Society, as well as May Hilton and Elizabeth Ward, searched through their albums and archives, but it was Elizabeth Ward, who had access to her father's photographic collection, now held at the Record Office in Long Street, who found a good picture of the local scene and allowed us to use it. Once the Society had decided on the wording, the firm of Bowers & Freeman of South Wigston, was chosen to make an engraving from the photo. The inscription reads:

**1897 DIAMOND JUBILEE 2012
(with the names of the two Queens Victoria & Elizabeth II
on either side of the picture)**

THE BANK

Where the fountain erected in 1897 for the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria once stood and where many historic events have been celebrated.

Duncan Lucas and Colin Towell, Secretary of the Civic Society, visited Bardon Hill quarry near Coalville, to select an appropriate piece of granite. This was kindly donated by the quarry and brought to Wigston, where it was stored in Mr Pearce's farmyard. Once issues about a licence and insurance, necessary to install the stone on the footpath, had been resolved with Leicestershire County Council, it was intended to unveil the plaque in 2013, to coincide with the 60th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's Coronation.

However the Civic Society discovered that the County and Borough Councils were devising a scheme to improve Bell Street, with funds from the European Union, and it was eventually agreed to incorporate the granite boulder with its plaque in this delightful pocket park.

This has been a co-operative venture between many local people and organisations, who have given most generously of their time, labour and support. Much appreciation and

thanks are due to the following people:

Duncan Lucas for his original idea of a commemorative plaque, linking the two Jubilees, and for his support throughout;

Elizabeth and David Ward for permission to use their photograph;

John Bowers, of Bowers & Freeman, South Wigston, for his patience during the design of the plaque;

Bardon Hill Quarry for their kind donation of the stone;

Ray and Gill Pearce, for allowing the stone to rest in their farmyard for much longer than expected;

Jamie Carr, at Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, for his help in including the plaque in the Bell Street renovations, and for his research into dates for the timeline on the plinth;

Wendy Crawford at Leicestershire County Council, for her support in designing the plaque and the plinth into the mini-park;

Greater Wigston Historical Society for their help with dates and photos;

Roy Barham of Barham Stone, for his advice and assistance in dressing the stone, fixing the plaque and carving the inscription on the plinth;

Councillor Bill Boulter, for his and the Borough Council's ongoing support through the Residents' Forum, which funded the plaque itself, the licence fee, and transport of the stone.

Wigston Civic Society is most grateful for the funds and grants provided by Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, Leicestershire County Council and the European Union, which enabled the renovation of Bell Street for the benefit of us all, and for providing this attractive setting for our Jubilee commemoration;

Finally, I would like to give my thanks to the committee of Wigston Civic Society, in particular to the Secretary, Colin Towell, who negotiated a way through the myriad of tasks involved and persisted in seeing the project through from start to finish, and thanks are due to the committee as a whole, who have given much thought and effort to this project in the past three years.

It now gives me great pleasure to unveil this plaque to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II.



**Maureen Waugh, Chair Wigston Civic Society, Councillor Bill Boulter,
Chairman Of The County Council and Councillor Mrs. Sarah Dickinson,
Mayor Of Oadby And Wigston**

ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

We have had two very successful Annual Lectures, last year by John Florance on “John Betjeman, Architecture and the Conservation Movement” and in 2013 by our very own Peter Cousins on “Charles Moore, the Man and His Music”, including an exhibition and demonstration of his musical instruments by Steve Weston from the University of Leicester.

So, for our lecture in 2015 we are very pleased to announce that Rowan Roenisch is returning to give an illustrated lecture about Ernest Gimson and Stoneywell.

Rowan is a retired author, principal lecturer in architectural history and a conservation advisor to the Victorian Society. She spoke to us several years ago as part of our AGM programme on “front gardens”.

Many members will have read about the recent opening of the National Trust owned cottage at Stoneywell in Charnwood Forest. Some may have already visited and had their appetite whetted. Stoneywell was built in 1899 by the well-known Leicester man Ernest Gimson as a holiday home for his brother, Sidney, and subsequently lived in as a permanent dwelling until quite recently. Ernest Gimson was an architect who followed the Arts and Crafts movement and the cottage is a delightful example of this in a magical location. Rowan was involved in the training of the Trust’s guides and so has a deep knowledge and understanding of the subject.

The lecture will take place on: **Tuesday 29 September at 7.30pm in the Maple Room at Age UK in Paddock Street.**

Please put the date in your diary now, further arrangements will be announced in our autumn edition.



“Wigston Remembers”

**An Evening Of Commemoration
Of World War 1**

**On Saturday 31 October 2015
Abington Academy, Station Road, Wigston,
LE18 2DH
7.30pm until 9.30pm**

**Hosted By The Leicestershire & Rutland
Family History Society,
The Wigston Civic Society and The Greater
Wigston Historical Society**

**An Evening Of Music And Songs,
Poetry Readings, Talks And More.....**

**FULL DETAILS IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER
AND**

WATCH THE WEBSITES:

www.lrfhs.org.uk

www.wigstoncivicsociety.org.uk

www.wigstonhistoricalsociety.co.uk

THE “BOYS & GIRLS” OF WORLD WAR 1

THE LIVES OF THE UNDERAGED SOLDIERS AND VOLUNTEER
NURSES WHO SERVED ON THE WESTERN FRONT
WITH LOCAL WIGSTON CONNECTIONS



Learn about the lives of the thousands of volunteer soldiers who managed to enlist under 18 years of age and the volunteer nurses, the VAD's who joined up for a glamorous nursing life!



Presented By Peter Cousins

Chairman, Leicestershire & Rutland Family History Society

**Biographer Of Orson Wright, Victorian Entrepreneur,
The Builder Of South Wigston**

Friday 29th May 2015 - Start Time 7.30pm

Admission Price £2.00

Sponsored by Wigston Civic Society and South Wigston Methodist Church

Venue: South Wigston Methodist Church

Blaby Road, South Wigston, Leicestershire LE18 4PB

For Bookings Please Contact:

Ann Cousins 0116 288 4638

PLANNING BRIEFS

The Society keeps a watching brief on the following developments in our part of the Borough:

Land off Pochins Bridge Road: This site is currently under construction by Jelson's. There is some concern about the location of the pavilion and playing area.

Land south of Newton Lane: This site currently has outline planning permission and submission for full permission is awaited. Archaeological work has been formally undertaken and recently the newly formed O&W Fieldworkers Group has informally walked a field on the site searching for remains of pottery and flint.

Dorset Avenue, the Church and cemetery extension: Use of the Church is under scrutiny and the cemetery extension onto the former playing field is complete.

Moat Street former Heating Elements site: The Sainsbury's local store is complete and open. The housing site is fenced off and painted in a dull grey which the planning officer says that the Council has no control over. The site is currently up for sale.

Glen Parva, HM Young Offenders Institute: Permission has been given and the access arrangements agreed but it is thought that works will not commence until the new government has signed them off.

Newton Lane, Europa Building: It is understood that this factory has been sold but there is no information about the buyer or the use to which it will be put.

Canal Street: Oldershaws, Gambles and the Hat and Cap factory: The conversion of the Gambles factory into flats is up for an award. A further application for Oldershaws yard has just been submitted and a first application for the conversion of the Hat and Cap factory on the corner of Healy Street into flats has just been submitted. This property is to be purchased by the Council under compulsory powers.

Kirkdale Road/Station Street: An application for 56 houses for social housing has been submitted but the final use for the site has not been agreed.

Compared with Oadby, where there are many applications for extensions or demolitions with rebuilding, very few applications are received for the Wigston area and very few of these are for properties in the conservation areas. However work is progressing on the conversion of the former factory in Paddock Street into flats.

THE POST OFFICE

Members may have seen a report that the Co-op has given the post office within the Bell Street store twelve months notice to leave. What does this mean? Is the Post Office or the Co-op up for sale (see notice on the Post Office counter). Where will it go, the former doctors surgeries on Long Street or Bushloe End? Store 21? Wilkinsons? Please pass on any information you hear. One thing is for sure, we cannot manage without a post office.

“CASHIER NUMBER 2 PLEASE”

Who would have foreseen Bishop Street Post Office relocating in to W. H. Smith's basement any more than the Wigston Post Office finding itself to the rear of a Co-op grocery store. The Civic Society's interest is the present and future but perhaps it is worth from time to time taking a stroll down memory lane to see how the present has come about.

Surprise was expressed when Sainsbury's chose to open a store in Moat Street, which is only a stone's throw from a Co-op store. With a similar store at the Royal Oak and another Co-op store seeking permission in West Avenue, will they have an impact on the larger stores? Going back in time, when owning a car was the exception, along Moat Street there were 13 shops also a bakery and farm.

Dominant throughout the Urban District was the Wigston Co-op. Run by its own board with its own bank, they covered most of the trades:- grocery, butchery with slaughter house, hairdressing, shoe repairs, drapery and shoes, farm, dairy, bakery, coal and dance hall. The grocery even had a home delivery service - a lad on a bike, also bread and milk rounds and coal delivery.

So what happened for its disappearance? The Co-op thought it was impregnable and its customers would always be loyal by having the 'divi', gradually competition was too great. So will the shopping trolley become just a museum item? Will the internet be bigger than the supermarket? Just as the over the counter shops gave way to self-service and now to click and collect and the internet who knows what the future has in 'store'. Let's hope the doctor, dentist and hairdresser remain in person and a place for reassurance in banks and of course the Post Office....."**Cashier Number 3 Please**"

Colin Hames

STOP PRESS.....

An application has been received for conversion of part of a shop in Bell Street, number 34, next but one to Bell Jetty, for retention of the shop with an extension at the rear and the conversion of the rear ground and upper floors to 6 flats and 2 studios.

The Bell Fountain pub was boarded up for a short time but now appears to be subject to internal work with a rumoured reopening date of April.

Car park spaces in the Borough are to be made unrestricted but if you stay for more than three hours you must pay and obtain a ticket. Therefore all spaces will be relined in white paint.

Some bus shelters in the Borough are being repainted at last and additional seats are being installed at The Nook, Aylestone Lane and Paddock Street. If you want a timetable at your stop please let the Society know, they can be installed quite quickly by Arriva.