MARKET BOSWORTH SOCIETY

October 2024

Dear Member

As we are well into the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness it was appropriate to have a lecture about the Market Bosworth Country Park. The Country Park and Beau Pool have both been influential in young lives and we heard earlier in the year how a field trip started a love of all things arachnid and propelled a young student onto great things. How appropriate to have a lecture about the Country Park from a man who knows it best. After the meeting report, which as usual does not do justice to the speaker or his subject there are a series of articles supplied from the Wolstanian from 1962. I find it hard to believe that Acker Bilk was playing Stranger on the Shore, the bestselling single of 1962, that is 62 years ago. Does anyone know if he visited the shores of Beau Pool? Surely not.

Meeting Report – 'Market Bosworth Country Park' – David Luther, Head Warden.

I had heard quite a lot about this lecture from David, Senior Ranger and was eagerly looking forward to it. I

was not disappointed. David (shown left) brought with him a colleague, Katie Goddard and Paul Tunnicliffe, a long standing volunteer to help with the lecture. We began with a look at the 'famous Red Tree' which is near to the wildflower garden in the park. Quercus rubra, the northern red oak, is an oak tree in the red oak group. It is a native of North America, in the eastern and central United States and southeast and south-central Canada. The decision was taken some time ago to include the tree in the park and it is a spectacular site in the autumn. Below left is a photograph I took of this beautiful tree on the 25th October 2013. Hard to believe that is now 11 years ago. If you have yet to see the tree do have a walk around the park. Earlier this week it was making its spectacular change to its leaves ready for the Autumn and Winter.

David explained that there are other teams, similar to the Market Bosworth Country Park (MBCP) team which care for other Leicestershire County parks, they are Beacon Hill, Watermead and Snibston. All are managed and owned by Leicestershire County Council.

As well as looking after Market Bosworth Country Park he and his team of three (supported by volunteers) look after Bosworth Battlefield, Shenton Cutting (probably better known as Shenton Station on the Battlefield Line and operated by the Shackerstone Railway) Donington le Heath Woods, and Bagworth Heath. That is quite a lot of ground for the three of them to cover. A day in the life of a Park Ranger includes Health and Safety, compliance checks, habitat management, bins.

General enquiries, public communication, litter picking/ fly tips, organising events, site risk assessments, overseeing contractors, volunteer management, environmental monitoring, budget management, tool maintenance, memorials maintenance and any other event that crops up such as fallen trees. Quite a lot for just three people working across 7 days per week. So do say a quick hello when you see them at one of the places they look after.

Being a Society lecture David alluded to the history of the Market Bosworth Country Park. David admits that his knowledge of the Market Bosworth Country Park's history could be improved and we will work together on this. We may organise a meeting with David and members wishing to share information so watch this space for future details. As we know Market Bosworth was a Bronze age funeral landscape and the Parkland has been on this site since Medieval times. Once owned by Leofric, the Anglo-Saxon earl of Mercia (from 1023 or soon thereafter), one of the three great earls of 11th-century England. The Harcourt family owned the land from around 1193 and The Dixie Family acquired the original estate in 1589. It is said to have been around of 32,000 acres covering Market Bosworth, Carlton, Cadeby and Sutton Cheney.

The park was owned by Tollemache Scott at the end of the 19th Century, following the departure of the Dixie family and then by Delius until 1918 when it was sold, and became much fragmented.

Opened to the public during the 1960's by the Dixie family, the Market Bosworth Country Park was then passed into the ownership of Leicestershire County Council (LCC) from 1970 and bought in two lots.

LCC first opened the park to the public in September 1970.

The park, now known as Market Bosworth Country Park (MBCP), consists of:

Maturing arboretum woodland (5 hectares), New woodland plantations (4 hectares). Parkland (10 hectares). New rough grassland area- previously grazing land (13 hectares).Wildflower meadow (1 hectare) .Rough grassland (2 hectares). Beau Pool (1 hectare). Buildings: Ranger's hut, Boat house and toilet block and three Official Public Footpaths that cross the park

The Arboretum was originally planted with 192 species of tree between 1973 and 1977 (see Archives and search for Arboretum) for full details of all the trees planted. Since then lost trees have been replaced with a variety of differing species to maintain the numbers and diversity as first envisaged.

David, Katie (shown below) and Paul went on to discuss the Wildlife Ponds, The Boathouse, Beau Pool, The Stew ponds (desilted in 2023) Wildflower Meadow planted in 1999 with Cowslips added in 2009 together with Alder buckthorn shrubs to attract butterflies. In fact this Spring a Butterfly Transect was started and works with County Butterfly recorder Richard Jefferies and Butterfly Conservation. The data captured is used for National Records to watch trends and patterns amongst butterfly populations. This could not have been achieved without the volunteers who gave over 50 hours to the project. The data collection runs from April to September for a total of 26 weeks and involves counting butterflies on the same route each week and then recording time, temperature, wind speed and direction together with sun percentage. This helps with the Market Bosworth Country Park's habitat management plans, and is a great opportunity for the local community to become involved. This year 17 distinct types of butterflies were recorded including Brimstone, Orange Tip, Peacock, and Speckled Wood. Future plans will be to plant more caterpillar food plants such as Lady's Smock and Birds foot-trefoil and create a butterfly bank , similar banks are already held at other sites, Donington, Bagworth, Beacon and Lount.

David also explained about the need to replace ageing and veteran trees before they are lost. Recently John Oakley has been collaborating with the community who have donated trees to the Park. The donated trees have now all been carefully planted by John and the Ranger Team. These trees will eventually replace the ageing trees. If anyone wants to donate a tree, they can contact the Society, and we will pass on your details to John or David. Market Bosworth Rotary Club has also planted trees and is creating a Community Orchard. The first trees have been situated near to the car park and there are plans for more fruit trees in the coming years.

Visitor numbers to the MBCP have continued to grow from 20,661 in 2016 to an amazing 47,402 last year. There is an incredible amount going on at Market Bosworth Country Park, and it is hard to believe that there are just three full time rangers in post. Levi Sutton, Rangers and the third team member, not present at the

lecture is shown right. David shared with us his five year plan for the future which includes developing the Community Orchard, extending the Car park, particularly necessary when the grass is too wet to allow cars to park on the grassland. Even more tree planting, to replace ageing trees and those that die but also increasing the varieties in the Arboretum. Further improvement of pasture/grasslands to attract even more species of birds, insects, butterflies and bees, the positioning of new and additional interpretation boards. Plans to iincrease of species on the site (flora and fauna). Tony Gardner (pictured left) has completed many carvings, and it is planned to create a Sculpture Trail by adding even more carvings. Beau Pool restoration and Island improvements and there is also a restoration plan for the Victorian Boat House. Other improvements include the playground. David and his team are also planning more Ranger Led activities and Park events. A busy five years ahead.

It was a fascinating talk and whilst I have missed out a lot of David's words, I am also surprised at the amount I have managed to remember. As usual I have missed large parts of the lecture but hope to have given you a taste of the vibrant activity taking place at Market Bosworth Country Park. Thank you to David, Katie, and Paul for a brilliant and fascinating lecture.

Nelly a Passionate Life the Soundtrack

Graham Hopkins has been in touch and sent this to me. It is good news! The soundtrack is about to be made available on CD. I have pre-ordered my copy. If you do not have a CD player let me know and I will ask Graham if there are to be any download portals. I am looking forward to hearing the songs, sung by the lovely Emily Jane Brooks and the fantastic Winter Wilson again.

Trust all is well
Just to let you know the Nelly soundtrack is as imminent as the Earl of Rochester's sobriety!
And is now available for pre-order
https://www.dothewritething.co.uk/nelly-soundtrack
Please feel free to share with those at the play and the lovely Finding Nelly afternoon…

Best
Graham

Next Month's Lecture –

Autumn Visit to the 1620's House

Dear Member

You may have been to the 1620's house before, but you will not have experienced it like this! Your Committee have arranged a special evening visit to the house. The itinerary is expected to be:
Arrive by 5:00 PM (17:00) on the 21st November 2024 Purchase tea/coffee/cream tea(**cream tea must be pre-ordered**)/cake/sundries/cold drink.

Lecture by Richard Knox about the history of the house and its inhabitants whilst drinks and/ or food are consumed. Followed by a:

Lantern lit tour of the house led by expert guides. Cost £9.50 per adult Seniors £8.50. (To be collected on that evening – please have correct money)

Extras (also to be paid on the evening):
Tea and Filter Coffee £2.20 per pot/cup
Cream Tea (Scone, jam & Cream plus pot of tea or cup of filter coffee) £ 8.**50 Please Pre-Order**
Sundries (Cakes, crisps, biscuits also available and individually priced) £ Various

If you would like to take part please let me have your name and if you would like to book a cream tea

Closing date 10th November 2024.

Nigel

info@marketbosworthsociety.com telephone 07930149408

Over to the Wolstanian: A little History of Market Bosworth Country Park

As promised above here are some excerpts from various copies of The Wolstanian of 1962 and I have Walter Baynes to thank for providing this information. Walter is the Archivist for the Dixie Grammar School Association and much of the content is available on-line here: http://www.thedgsa.co.uk/ Don't worry about the unsafe warning as you are not able to make any purchases the 's' and the padlock are not required. Simply press on to the website.

Again, almost unobtrusively, a major development has taken place in establishing a Field Centre at Beau Pool in Bosworth Park and we are sure that benefits to come therefrom will evoke our warmest thanks to our hereditary Governor, Sir Wolstan Dixie, for his generosity in making the site available and to Mr. James and his 6th Formers for the immense amount of care and labour they have subscribed to make the centre something of real importance in our small world

FIELD STUDIES IN BIOLOGY

". . . the investigation of the life and conversation of animals is not to be attained but by the active and inquisitive, and by those that reside much in the country."

Gilbert White (Letters from Selbourne).

The ecological approach to the study of Biology, i.e. the study of plants and animals in their natural environment, is very much in fashion at the present time. More and more University departments and schools are realising that that aspect of Biology is of fundamental value. Considerable interest is being shown in the work of Nature Conservancy bodies, County Trusts and Natural History Societies. Local Education Authorities are trying out schemes whereby pupils at all schools obtain some firsthand knowledge of "Nature."

Here at the Dixie, we are fortunate in being in the country and the out-of-doors aspect of Biology has long been prominent. Last autumn, a great impetus was given to this work, when Sir Wolstan Dixie gave permission for the full use of the Beau Pool and the surrounding ground for Biological work. The School is indeed fortunate in having such a beautiful as well as interesting piece of ground to work over and we are very grateful to Sir Wolstan.

During the past year bi-weekly treks to the site have been taking place. Bosworth people have by now become accustomed to the group of curiously clad students carrying strange items of equipment to and from "The Site." Seldom has the weather been allowed to interrupt the work and on one memorable occasion, when the ice was four inches thick and an Arctic wind was blowing, this devoted band braved frost bite and immersion in freezing water for the sake of finding out what other animals besides themselves could exist in such conditions.

The boat house has become our field laboratory and the punt our means of transport on the lake. Unfortunately the punt leaks, in spite of time, money and energy spent on it, but providing its occupants stand barefooted and do not sit, no great harm befalls.

We have been greatly encouraged by the interest shown by the Headmaster and the Governors, who made a grant to cover the cost of some collecting gear, and by Mr. Ian Evans, Keeper of Biology at Leicester Museum, whose help in identification and otherwise has been most valuable.

For those unaware of this biological gem in our midst, the site consists of about 20 acres of land, enclosing the Beau Pool and the string of pools, at one time used for fish breeding. The trees were felled several years ago over the greater part of the site and now tree seedlings and saplings are trying to re-establish the woodland against the competition of the handsome but domineering Rose Bay Willow Herb and its associates which tend to "take over" when the light increases. However, many of the typical woodland plants, some cultivated at one time but now naturalized, are holding their own. Some of the finest groupings of foxgloves to be seen anywhere make a magnificent showing at this time of the year, and from early spring onwards there has been a wonderful succession of flowering plants.

Undoubtedly one of the glories of the site is the giant Hogweed, Heracleum mentegazzianum, a towering plant with enormous umbrellas of small white flowers. This is one of the plants introduced from the Caucasus, and one has almost to cut one's way through what appears to be subtropical jungle. Many other alien plants lend excitement to the scene.

The water provides an endless variety of plants and animals. Skimming (if that is the right word!) over the surface of the lake, one looks down on the underwater carpet of the Stonewort, Chara hispida, rooted in the deep mud which lies on the bottom. The plant provides food and shelter for numerous Invertebrates, including Argyroneta, the Water-Spider. This is a large spider which "builds" an air bell under the water. Apart from this beautiful example of adaptation to an aquatic environment, spiders being air breathing, Argyroneta has the distinction of being the only spider where the male is larger than the female. It is probably for this reason that, unlike other spiders, the female Water-Spider does not eat the male after mating!

In the smaller pools a number of other completely aquatic plants have established themselves. It may be of interest to recall an investigation carried out in the Autumn. The object was to compare the animal populations living in association with three different water plants, viz, the Stonewort (Chara), the Canadian Pondweed (Elodea) and the Floating Pondweed (Potamogeton). Samples of the three plants were collected in buckets, taken back to school and individual counts of the different species of animals taken. Some of the animals, the little freshwater shrimp, Gammarus, Water Snails, the water Louse (Asellus), were present in their hundreds and it says a great deal for the investigators of the Upper Sixth, that they were still sane after two days almost continuous counting. Altogether some nineteen different species of animals were found. Each had to be identified, counted and then returned to its habitat. Histograms were then compiled, presenting the arithmetical information in a form convenient for interpretation. Finally, an attempt was made to interpret the results in an ecological sense. Why were there more of one kind on a particular plant? Was it something about the animal or a particular feature of the plant? The answers to such questions provide an exercise calling for a high degree of ingenuity and biological "know how." Even when the right answer is forthcoming, it is often the starting point of another question.

One of the first investigations was commenced by some of the more energetic members of the group. (It is mere coincidence that they were all girls). They cleared and dug over a piece of the woodland ground—this in the cold, wet month of November. Half of the cleared ground was wired around and deep into the ground. The other half was left open. This kind of ecological experiment is one of the most interesting to carry out. The results are slow in coming and records must be kept continuously through the years. It shows on a small scale the idea of colonization and succession; the woodland gradually rebuilds itself through a series of annuals and perennials, the smaller plants having to give way to larger until at length the trees dominate the whole environment.

An interesting aspect of Field work with beginners is that, at first, their attention is captured and held by the animal life. Later on, however, many become more interested in plants. It may be of course that one is reasonably sure that the plant one is studying will be in the same place week after week!

Rarely does a pupil, who has had several years of mainly indoor Biology, reject Field work. In the field they can see their textbooks come to life. There is something for everybody. The "lone wolf" can spend hours watching the insect visitors to a particular flower as part of a study in pollination. The socially minded student can take part in a group project such as the one already mentioned involving quantitative work on a large scale. Male aptitudes for active collecting in difficult places naturally ally themselves to female aptitudes for a careful observation and recording —a useful blending of skills in a coeducational school.

There is a lifetime of work at the site, work which is very largely original work in the true sense. Natural History in West Leicestershire has been very badly neglected. The records for the whole county are somewhat sparse and a great deal of searching, collecting, identifying and recording needs to be done. n the brief time the school has been working on the site a number of "first record in Leicestershire" have been marked up. We can feel that we are contributing to Biology in its wider aspect. The mere finding and identification of species, while exciting, is not an end in itself. The ecologist is concerned with trying to work out the pattern of life, its occurrence in the multitudinous forms and diverse environments. Apart from the intrinsic interest, it is the ecologist who will supply the answers to the problems of over population in various parts of the world of that most curious of all animals, Homo sapiens.

H. I. James.

News from the County Council -Waste site updates & Road Works

From 1 October all of our sites will close at 4pm (on the days they're usually open, last admittance 3.55pm). In addition, changes to the opening days of some recycling and household waste sites (RHWS) in Leicestershire will come into effect from the first week of October:

From the week beginning 30 September, the following changes to waste site arrangements will take place:
Somerby RHWS will close permanently
Market Harborough RHWS will open three days a week
Shepshed RHWS will open two days a week
Kibworth RHWS will open four days a week

Planned Roadworks

How to find details of road works:

- By using one network
  One Network is the UK's single source of truth for information about roadworks and traffic disruption. It is a single live and interactive platform that Highway Authorities (including LCC) and Utility companies use to share information on their roadworks. It allows users to easily identify the reason for the works, the timescale and details of who is responsible and how to contact them.

- By using LCC' s planned roadworks reports
  A list of planned roadworks is available via our Parish webpage https://resources.leicestershire.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/parishes-and-communities/useful-links. These lists are split into District/Boroughs and show planned works in progress over a period of 10 days, the lists are updated each Sunday. Please note these are only as up to date as of the time they are created, they will not contain information on emergency works and start and finish dates may alter. The information provided on these lists show the description of the works, the street/location, the contractor carrying out the work, estimated start and end dates and the traffic management due to be installed.

- Details of weekly planned roadworks throughout Leicestershire can be found here. This is updated every Monday and shows the following 10 days, please note this is only up to date at the time of creation and will not contain information on emergency works, however you can find this on the one.network site. If you need help or guidance on one.network please contact the Special Projects team.

Market Bosworth Parish Council

Bosworth Vision Planning Group

At last we are seeing tangible progress on the proposed changes to Market Bosworth Town Centre.

LCC Highways Department has started its consultations on the proposed changes and comments are invited from members of the public. Comments must be received by 13th November.

See the Town Centre Traffic Management Consultation page on the Bosworth Vision Website for an explanation of the various documents, together with information on how to view them and make comments.

Time for a Quiz!

This month we have as our subject King Henry I who was the youngest son of William The Conqueror. No cheating now!

1. How many elder brothers did Henry I have when he was born in 1069?
    1. 1
    2. 4
    3. 2
    4. 3

2. What was the name of Henry I's mother?

    1. Matilda of Flanders
    2. Constance of Brittany
    3. Adela of Blois
    4. Sybilla of Conversano

3. Why was Henry I given the nickname "Henry Beauclerc"?

    1. It was because he was a friend to the Church.
    2. It was because he was a good horseman.
    3. It was because of his handsome appearance.
    4. It was because he could write.

4. What was the name that was taken after her marriage by Henry I's first wife?

    1. Matilda
    2. Isabella
    3. Margaret
    4. Hilda

5. Henry's first wife is considered important for which of the following reasons?

    1. She was descended from the Saxon English royal family.
    2. She brought a huge dowry as part of her wedding settlement.
    3. She managed to bear Henry several sons.
    4. She was closely related to the man who was the Pope.

6. In which county of England was Henry I born?

    1. Lancashire
    2. Yorkshire
    3. Kent
    4. Lincolnshire

7. What was the first action that Henry took when he heard of the death of his brother, King William II?

    1. He ordered his eldest brother to be locked in the Tower of London.
    2. He went to London to be prepared to be crowned as King.
    3. He went to Winchester to demand the crown and the other royal treasures.
    4. He organised a hunt for those he believed had killed his brother.

8. Where was Henry I crowned King of England?

1. The Tower of London
2. Winchester Cathedral
3. Westminster Abbey
4. Canterbury Cathedral

9. What part did Robert de Belleme, the Earl of Shrewsbury, play in the dispute between the two brothers Henry I and Robert?

1. He assisted the invasion of England that was made on behalf of Robert.
2. He remained loyal to Henry and fought Robert's invasion.
3. He supported Robert and stayed in Normandy to rule there while Robert invaded.
4. He was loyal to Henry and defeated the Scots at York.

10. Henry I's son and heir was married to the daughter of which person?

1. Count Odo of Poitiers
2. Duke Stephen of Montferrat
3. Duke Richard of Brittany
4. Count Fulk of Anjou

11. What was the name of Henry I's only legitimate son who was killed in the tragedy of "The White Ship"?

1. Henry
2. William
3. Richard
4. Edward

12. What part did Adelicia, daughter of the Duke of Lower Lorraine, play in Henry I's life?

1. She was one of his mistresses.
2. She was his second wife.
3. She was married to one of his illegitimate sons.
4. She brought a charge of rape against him before the Pope.

13. What happened at the Battle of Tinchebrai in 1106?

1. Henry won the battle and let his brother go back to the Holy Land.
2. Neither side won but Robert agreed to let Henry remain King of England.
3. Henry defeated Robert and became Duke of Normandy as well as King of England.
4. Henry won the battle and had his brother executed.

14. What was the name of leading churchman with whom Henry I had a protracted dispute?

1. Lanfranc
2. Anselm
3. Coutances
4. Aymer

15. How many illegitimate children was Henry I known to have fathered?

1. Between 13-20
2. Between 1 and 5
3. More than 20

4. Between 6-12

Market Bosworth Free Church

Lynne and I were delighted to be invited to the Free Church on Saturday 5th October as they celebrated their 75th year. We were in good company as Dr. Luke Evans MP and his wife Charlie had also called in to see the many displays and photographs laid out for all to see. Luke as you may know has undergone surgery for a ruptured disk in his neck and was resplendent in his surgical collar, his two dogs appeared to be enjoying the irony. After looking through the timelines and the photo albums we sat and enjoyed a cup of coffee and a slice of cake and chatted to Molly, Nicola and Marion where we reminisced about what we could recall of Market Bosworth and the Free Church.
Marion has looked out a page from Aspect 1993, written by Maurice Harris. It makes interesting reading.

April 1993

FREE CHURCH SCENE

When we purchased Chapel House, 1 Barton Road, we were extremely excited by the prospect of having new meeting rooms for our church. Little did we know of the wonders the old house hid beneath its domestic facade. When we took down a dilapidated ceiling in the bedroom we discovered quite a bundle of reed which indicates that the building was once thatched. The deeds give no indication of its use prior to the late 19th century because until then it was part of the Dower House complex. Peter Foss indicates in his book that the Dower House was built on the cellars and foundations of a considerable building which included the George Inn. If this is true then Chapel House too was built on the curtilage of this famous inn. The premises are on close inspection several buildings butted together to form one cottage. At the rear of the chapel can be found a room which is four feet above the ground level, with a room over the top, of a later construction.

The ground floor room was obviously used as a store and the loading bay height gives proof of this. In the bedroom above there is a concrete floor mounted on wooden beams and this too was obviously part of the original building. Builders and supposition date this part of the building as around 1590 - 1600 and would certainly have been part of the old George Inn buildings.

The central main part of the building too gives great interest. Clearly at one time this building was built for some special purpose. Firstly, as mentioned, it was thatched. The chimney is massive within the house and has interesting alcoves which are cupboarded and also a small inbuilt cupboard in the upstairs room.

There were windows on all four sides of the upstairs room and what appears to be a loading bay presumably for windlassing goods to the upper floor.

The doorway into this part of the building was four feet wide, again indicating the need for wide access.

Was this a brew house or a laundry or stables with living accommodation over or something else? We still seek to find out. The end kitchen and staircase were again added at a later date, which we feel was mid-18th century, whilst the centre block is early in that same century. To add even more interest, at the opposite end of the premises is a part built in the early 20th century.

If this article has whetted your appetite to know more, then please let me know and I will arrange for you to come and see for yourself.

We still await final planning permission to continue our work but already we are busy coming to know the building in order that we can carry out very sympathetic restoration work. Our excitement however does not end with the building, it also includes the good use we can put the building to as we make it ready for God's work. The plan to make the property part of our church has been laid for many years and many prayers have been said and will continue to be said in order that we may do God's will.

Our services of worship and praise for April are as follows:-

Sunday, 4th April

Family Service at 10.30 a.m.
Led by Pastor Colin Haddon

Evening Service at 6.00 p.m.
Led by Pastor L. Childs

Sunday, 11th April - Easter Sunday

Morning Service at 10.30 a.m.
Led by Rev. Dr. A. H. Kirkby

Sunday, 18th April

Evening Service at 6.00 p.m.
Led by Dr. S. A. Greenalgh

Sunday, 25th April

Evening Service at 6.00 p.m.
Led by Pastor Colin Haddon

Each Sunday morning at 10.30 a.m. our Junior Church meets for an exciting programme of activities for boys and girls.

You are all welcome to come along and share our joy in the praise and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ.

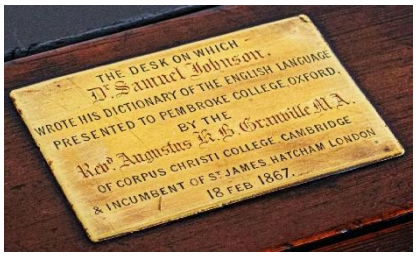
MAURICE HARRIS
Hinckley 637257

Dixie Grammar School Old Boys and Girls

Whilst many of our members will know that Walter Baynes is the Archivist of the Dixie Grammar School Association not many will know that Walter is a Patron of the current Grammar School, a position he takes most seriously, or as seriously as Walter can, there is usually to be found a little humour in what he writes and speaks. At the Open Day in October, Walter had put together a piece about Dr Samual Johnson. Dr Johnson spent some time at the Dixie Grammar School as an Usher around 1731. He did not enjoy his time there as he found the 4th Baronet, effectively his employer an obnoxious bully, however it was whilst living at the Hall he did catalogue the library which was then housed in the Great Hall. *"It was here that the incentive was born to catalogue the words and eventually give to the British people their First English Dictionary"* Lady Penelope Dixie 1989. I thought you might like to read what Walter had put together in his pamphlet. Whilst not strictly an Old Boy or Girl I still think he should be included as the experience set him on a road to success, which is what is hoped for all Old Boys and girls of any educational establishment.

DR. JOHNSON'S OLD DESK

"It's from the right era, but is it the actual desk?"



Sean Coughlan, BBC News. 16/06/2024

The desk of the writer Dr Samuel Johnson is to be returned to his former London home for the first time in more than 260 years. Except, in a strange twist, its owner is now uncertain whether it really is the desk of the famous 18th Century dictionary author.

It's been suggested that despite many years of being treated as a literary relic, it could have been part of a Victorian hustle to make money.

It will be the star attraction of a new museum exhibition, but visitors will be asked whether they now believe it's authentic.

Dr Samuel Johnson was an 18th Century literary giant, remembered for compiling in 1755 what was then the most comprehensive dictionary of the English language.

In the TV comedy Blackadder the Third, Dr Johnson was portrayed by Robbie Coltrane, with the painstakingly researched dictionary ending up on the fire.

What's now in dispute is the fate of the desk on which he wrote the dictionary when he was living in Gough Square, in a house which is now a museum to his memory.

Since the 19th Century the wooden desk has been in Pembroke College Oxford - and the college is lending this prized possession to the Dr Johnson House museum.

But when Lynda Mugglestone, professor of the history of English at the college, (pictured below left) began to check out the provenance of the desk, there were some unexpected questions. "The real story is that we don't quite know if it's the real desk," she says.

It had come to the college through a clergyman who had been close to Dr Johnson's god daughter, Elizabeth Ann Lowe, and her sister. A plaque was attached to signify its historic importance.

But the puzzle is whether those sisters ever really had the desk or whether they used their literary connection as a way of guilt-tripping some famous writers of their era for money. Prof Mugglestone (photograph below left) says that as the centenary of Johnson's dictionary was being marked in 1855, the Lowe sisters began

writing asking for cash, describing themselves as in penury and with nothing left but a desk which they said had been left to them by the great writer.

It is worth pointing out at this stage the strong links between the Dixie Grammar School and Dr. Johnson, who was an usher (Tutor) at the School from sometime in 1731 until July 1732. He attended the local grammar school in Lichfield, where he was born in 1709, and went on to Pembroke College, Oxford. However, he left after just 13 months as his parents could no longer afford the fees. Between 1943 and 1969 one of the four "School Houses" was named after him. Several former pupils had success at Pembroke including Dr. John P. Dougherty, who was appointed a Fellow of the College in 1963. Dr. Dougherty is featured in one of the Dixie Grammar School Association's numerous articles on the lives of famous former pupils.

WRB

The sisters said they were "living in poverty" in Deptford in south London, says Prof Mugglestone, and they made clear that "donations were welcome". Writers such as Thomas Carlyle and Charles Dickens, who had just written Hard Times, began to fund raise for the sisters. Literary London was mobilised to help the sisters who were the surviving connections to Dr Johnson. The desk became part of that story.

Dickens wrote of the sisters being in "great poverty, but undemonstrative and uncomplaining, though very old - with nothing to speak of in the wide world, but the plain fir desk on which Johnson wrote his English Dictionary".

Such pleas from Dickens helped to raise large donations for the sisters, with the desk being saved as a "proud possession to the English nation".

But Celine Luppo McDaid, director of the Dr Johnson House, says it now seems unclear whether this desk was actually Johnson's. The case for it being authentic, she says, is that the sisters could have been thinking: "We've sold everything else, but we still have this treasured desk, it's the last thing we have." Or else it might have been a chance to turn a bit of spare furniture into a financial lifeline. "They might have seen an opportunity and decided that the knackered old desk in the corner was 'Johnson's desk'," says the museum director Ms McDaid.

Prof Mugglestone says women in this era could be extremely financially vulnerable, with few ways to support themselves and such attempts to get money from rich connections might have been their only chance. The Lowe sisters did have a link with Johnson through their father, an impecunious painter Mauritius Lowe, who had lost a grant from the Royal Academy after some rather murky "misconduct".

Ms McDaid says the painter and his children were living in "abject poverty" and Johnson, often broke himself, was sympathetic and helped them with money.

But the so far unanswerable question is whether the Lowe family really ended up with the famous desk and had kept it for more than 70 years after Johnson's death. It's from the right era, but is it the actual desk?

Researching the desk's origins revealed records of other petitions for money by Elizabeth Ann Lowe and her sister, essentially begging letters - with stories that were not always consistent. The prime minister and the royals were among those getting requests for support. "She is lying to someone," says Prof Mugglestone.

But that doesn't ultimately prove either way the authenticity of the desk. The exhibition will have to embrace this ambiguity and accept that even though this has been seen as Johnson's desk for generations, it might not be. Visitors to the exhibition next month will be asked to give their views on whether it was the desk where Dr Johnson's dictionary was written. "I'd love it to be authentic," says Ms McDaid. "Nothing is more evocative than a writer's desk... But there's no way we'll know."

The exhibition, Desks, Drudgery and the Dictionary: Samuel Johnson's Garret Lexicography, opens on 3 July 2024 at Dr Johnson's House, 17 Gough Square, London EC4A 3DE

DR. JOHNSON'S HOUSE

17, Gough Square, City of London

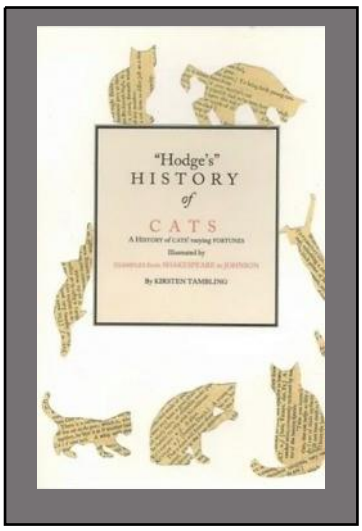
Dr Johnson's House (shown below left) was built at the end of the seventeenth century by a City wool merchant, Richard Gough. The timber-framed, brick townhouse, was part of a development in Gough Square, of which Dr Johnson's House at number 17 is the only one to survive. The four-storey building has retained many of its period features, which include historic panelling, a fine open staircase, wooden floorboards, a quirky cellarette cupboard, coal holes and even the original door handles. The eighteenth-century front door still has its original anti-burglary devices intact, including a heavy chain with corkscrew latch and spiked iron bar over the fanlight. Visitors can enter all the rooms in the House and sit down on the chairs and window seats to soak up the atmosphere.

Dr Johnson was only a tenant at 17 Gough Square, and following his departure in 1759, the house went through a variety of different uses. It had other lodgers, was used as a small hotel and bed and breakfast and was even a printers' workshop and studio. By 1911 it had fallen into a sad state of disrepair, with water leaking through the roof. At this point it was saved and restored by Cecil Harmsworth, a Liberal MP. During World War II, the then Curator and her daughter were granted permission to run an informal canteen at the House for the Auxiliary Fire Service. The House later become a social club for the Auxiliary Firemen - known as 'the heroes with the grimy faces' - giving many a tired fireman some respite from the bombing during the Blitz and other air raids. The servicemen also used the building as a watch tower for the neighbourhood as one of the tallest buildings in the area. Dr Johnson's House was struck on several occasions: the Garret was badly damaged and a new roof had to be constructed after the war but, remarkably, the fires were always put out in time and the House survived.

HODGE, DR. JOHNSON'S CAT

The statue facing 17 Gough Square commemorates the house's most famous quadruped resident, Hodge, Samuel Johson's cat, pictured left. Hodge lived with Johnson during an important time for cats more generally, it was during the eighteenth century that domestic animals first began to be kept as 'companions' - as 'pets' - in a context comparable to one we would recognise today, and what we know of Johnson's relationship with Hodge shines a light on both the language-history of 'cat' and pet-keeping trends among Johnson's intellectual companions.

Amongst the tails and whiskers of contemporary references to Hodge, the most quoted is one by Johnson's close friend and biographer, James Boswell: “I shall never forget the indulgence with which he treated Hodge, his cat: for whom he himself used to go out and buy oysters, lest the servants having that trouble should take a dislike to the poor creature. I am, unluckily, one of those who have an antipathy to the cat, so that I am uneasy when in the room with one; and I own, frequently suffered a good deal from the presence of this same Hodge. I recollect him one day scrambling up Dr Johnson's breast, apparently with much satisfaction, while my friend smiling and half-whistling, rubbed down his back and pulled him by the tail; and when I observed that he was a fine cat, saying *'why yes, Sir, but I have had cats better than this'*; and then, as if perceiving Hodge to be out of countenance, adding, *'but he is a very fine cat, a very fine cat indeed!'*.



James Boswell, The Life of Samuel Johnson

Hodge's History of Cats A History of Cats by Kirsten Tambling

Hodge the cat has developed a cult following to rival his owner, Samuel Johnson. His likeness stands outside Johnson's house in Gough Square and attracts visitors from all over the world.

This book covers what we know for sure about the enigmatic Hodge, and then moves on to expertly assess what else we might surmise. In the process it tracks an anecdotal history of cats and cat keeping up to Johnson's day - when our relationship with cats stood on the threshold of a profound change.

Published: 2014

Publisher: Tyburn Tree

ISBN: 978-0-9926224-1-1

As anyone who has read 'Hodge's History of Cats' will know, the Age of Enlightenment had brought about a radical shift in feline fortunes. In earlier centuries, cats had folkloric associations with the devil and witchcraft, and were thought to have otherworldly qualities, being active at night and appearing and disappearing at will. Suspicion of cats was not simply popular tradition: it had received papal sanction in 1232, when Pope Gregory IX urged the court of the Inquisition to keep an eye on (specifically black) cats, which he said were the favoured companion of the devil. The pronouncement was seen as a licence to cull....

STEPHEN FRY - Patron of Dr Johnson’s House

Stephen Fry has been announced as the new Patron of Dr Johnson’s House. Fry has long been an admirer of Samuel Johnson, the writer and wit, who lived and worked at the house in the middle of the 18th century, compiling his great Dictionary of the English Language (1755) here.

Our new Patron said: “I have long admired the work, life and achievements of Samuel Johnson: the single-handed production of a comprehensive – and often hilarious – dictionary stands, among many other notable works, as a high point in our literary history. I am delighted and very honoured to become Patron of Dr Johnson’s House.”

Celine Luppo McDaid, The Hyde Director of Dr Johnson’s House, said: “To have Stephen Fry join us as our Patron is an immense honour, and it is thrilling that he has joined at a moment when we’re on the cusp of exciting and ambitious development plans. This information has been constructed by collating details taken from the website of BBC Television News and The Johnson House Museum. For more information please visit https://www.drjohnsonshouse.org/ info@drjohnsonshouse.org

Can You Help

We have received the following email and are looking through the Archive to see if we can help. Do you have a photograph or information which may be of assistance?

Hello.

My name is Simon Roots and I live in Nottingham. I am contacting you to ask if you are able to provide a little information about Back Lane, Market Bosworth c1911? I am researching my family. I have a cousin who worked at Higham Hall, Higham on the Hill in 1911 (1911 census.) My cousin, Lewis Peter Funnell, would go on to live with a lady born in Sutton Cheney, as husband and wife all their adult lives. The lady in question was Emma Parsons born 1896.

In the 1911 Census, Emma Parsons is recorded as general servant to James and Emma Coleman and their two sons Thomas and John Holloway Coleman. The address on the census is only recorded as Back Lane, Market Bosworth, Nuneaton. Thomas Coleman is recorded as a groom. Would you be able to help me with where on Back Lane the Coleman family may have lived does the property still exist, and are you aware of any photographs of Back Lane around the beginning of the 20th century?

I would be very grateful of any assistance or advice you may be able to give.

Many thanks.

Simon Roots.

I emailed this to Simon in response:
Hi Simon

I Believe that James Coleman was the groom for Sir Thomas Cope at Osbaston Hall. It was he who looked after Sir Thomas's electric car. I have this about it:

The Electric car

I was contacted by a lovely lady (who does not want me to give her name) with a fantastic memory of the grey car.

"We used to wait for the school bus at Stapleton, me and my brothers. Whilst we waited, we played whip and top in the road. It was perfectly safe as there was little traffic, and we could hear the bus coming. Occasionally this grey car would appear from nowhere!" Being electric it was almost silent, and I can imagine them all scattering out of the way. I don't think it wise to play whip and top on the Ashby Road these days or even marbles their alternative entertainment.

Whilst we were chatting, she mentioned a stick of bombs that fell from what is now Dobbies Garden Centre and hit the A447 on the bend causing a large crater. She went on to say that a lamp was found tied to the hedge nearby with another tied to a tree in the wood. Does anyone remember this? I would love to hear more.

The lady gave me a lot of detail about Market Bosworth, and we shall be following this up to preserve the memories in the Market Bosworth Society Archive.

Also

Osbaston Estate – Roger Payne

I recently had a lovely, interesting call from Roger Payne who had been prompted to call me following Alan Eames lecture about Hall Farm. Hall Farm as you will recall was part of the Osbaston Hall Estate and was the only farm which remained with the estate whilst all the other farms were sold to the tenants.

Anyway, this is what Roger Told me.

"*I didn't remember Sir Thomas or Lady cope as I lived in Osbaston only from late 1964 and Sir Thomas died in 1966. I remember Sir Thomas was a hunting man and the Hunt often met at the Hall. After his death, the estate was sold up and bought by Jonathon Guinness, a distant relative of the famous brewing family, who was a Merchant Banker in London. After the death of Sir Thomas Cope Lady Cope went to live in a care*

home, I think in Nottingham or Northampton. My earliest recollection of the Hall was that things were a bit fraught. Both of the Copes were elderly, and they had one employee, Thomas Coleman. It is my belief that he started as a groom and went on to be a general factotum to them. Doing the shopping, mowing and other chores to help them out. They relied upon him almost entirely and Tommy kept them going by looking after them.
I recall a local farmer Godfrey Wood, who farmed at Osbaston Lodge Farm, upon meeting Tommy one day asked about the health of the Copes. He was told that Sir Thomas was gravely ill. Asked if a doctor had attended, he was told no as Lady Cope would not call a doctor. Godfrey told Tommy that if she would not call for a doctor he would. When a doctor was summoned, they found Sir Thomas barely alive. He died shortly afterwards. Lady Cope had been in her mourning clothes for several days by that time. Lady Cope then moved to a care home.
The Hall was semi-derelict with a leaking roof and only two habitable rooms. There were so many leaks in the Lead roof that there were countless chamber pots set out to catch the rainwater as it dripped through. Tommy's son Paddy also helped at the Hall, and it was he who took Lady Copes belongings to her on his motorbike.
Lady Cope did not like Tommy mowing the grass she preferred to have a few pathways cut into it so she could observe the rabbits in the evening.
After Sir Thomas had died and Lady Cope had moved away the Hall was put up for sale. Before it was sold, I was invited by Paddy to have a look around inside the Hall. It was in a very poor state of repair, almost derelict as I said. The roof leaked and the wooden panelling was all green with rot and damp. We had a good look around and went up onto the roof. On the roof were the maids' rooms also leaded roofed. You could not see these rooms from below as the parapet hid them. Paddy told me that if it snowed, they all had to set to on the roof to shovel the snow off to prevent the roof leaking even more. I think it was sold for around £10,000.
As previously noted, the hall and remaining properties were then purchased by Mr Jonathan Guinness, Hall farm was still then part of the estate. In the 1950's and 60's many of the tenant farmers asked if they might buy their farms. Heath farm was the first to be sold off to the tenant. Lady Cope liked that idea and so many were sold off to tenants. The only one left was Hall farm where the Eames lived.
A local Builder Bill Dawson became acquainted with Jonathon Guinness and di much of the renovation work for him. The Hall was gradually restored. Much of the rear of the Hall was demolished. It seems that every generation had added a new courtyard after roofing over the previous one. These were all demolished as were the maids' rooms at the top of the house. I think a new flat roof was installed. Bill bought the cottages and renovated them before selling them on individually. The Hall was sold, plus Hall Farm which was sold off in separate lots to different purchasers as fields and buildings for barn conversions, etc.
Lady Cope was a generous woman and hosted parties for the village children. I was told that the Woodhouse family who lived in an estate cottage she helped very much. They had several children and Lady Cope helped to keep them going, the father having health problems. she was very generous. I met one of the children, by chance many years later when he was a rep for an oil company. I happened to be in the premises of my employer, and he asked me where I was from. I told him that he would not know of it, but he did. Turns out he was one of the children and he recalled the generosity of Lady Cope.
The hall now is close to how it was originally built with all the additions removed. Mr Peter and Mrs Leanda Delisle now own the Hall.
The farms that were previously part of the estate (which I was told) were tenanted or bought by:
Osbaston Lodge (Alec Forman and later James Wood)
Home Farm (Philip Vernon)
Heath Farm (Mr Cantrill – the first to be sold to a tenant)
Deeping Farm (Trevor Jackson)
Hall Farm as previously mentioned, Alec Forman, Fred Eames.
Roger Payne.

Not entirely what Simon was seeking but I hoped it might add a little context. I have contacted Ken Coleman who has offered to look into the question. Simon replied:

Hello Nigel.

Thank you very much for this information, I am very grateful. Reading through the accounts is fascinating, and puts a lot of excellent detail into the story. There is nothing better than this kind of fine detail, It really helps to paint a great picture. Thank you. A little more of my cousin Lewis Peter Funnell and Emma. Lewis served throughout WW1 with the Royal Artillery Regiment as a driver, which I am sure you will be aware of would have been driving the gun carriages. His father, my 2 x great uncle, had been a coachman in London and then Maidstone in the late 1800 and early 1900's, so Lewis had clearly got good knowledge of working with horses. He was wounded, but remained in the RFA until the end of the war. He died in 1935 and was given a full military burial.

Lewis and Emma had two children. His son, Peter Patrick Funnell joined the Royal Air Force Voluntary Reserve during WW2 and was attached as a Flying Sergeant to 179 Squadron, Coastal Command, at RAF St. Eval in Cornwall. On the 31st December 1944, 21 year old Peter and his six crew mates were killed when their Vickers Warwick aeroplane crashed near the village of St. Columb Major, during a test flight. Lewis and his son Peter are buried, along with Emma, in Storrington, a few miles outside Bristol. Emma died in 1970 and is buried with Lewis and Peter.

I am very grateful for your time in sending me the information, and am intrigued to read anything else you may find. Please forward my thanks to those who contributed with information.

Very best wishes.
Simon.

I do hope we can help further; I am sure someone will have a photograph or know something which would be helpful.

I received this from Richard Brookes

Hi Nigel

I received the attached and email below from Paul which may be of help to you.

Richard

The photograph on the right of these two images is entitled ‘Bosworth Square, after 8th July 1920, so is this photograph to celebrate the erection of the War Memorial? Whilst the images are not of Back Lane I thought you would like to see them. The Square hasn’t changed much at all. If the second photograph was taken in 1920 then the first must be some 10 or 20 years or so earlier judging by the size of the tree behind the War Memorial and much smaller in the first image. I am very grateful to Richard and Paul for sharing them.

An interview with Stan Crane – Part Three

In this part we hear about Herbert Black, ex Dixie Grammar School pupil and Battle of Britain Pilot. The only Battle of Britain pilot to be buried in Leicestershire. We also hear of a Flying Fortress crash nearby to where Stan was living at the time and some members of the Rural District Council, which ceased in 1974 to become Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

Mr Crane - And I was a Choir Boy, but I can distinctly remember Herbert Black being killed because it was... well, you know, you got a lot of it at the Church at the time and it would be early in the war because I think it was... The Battle of Britain. Yes and I know there's a plaque on the pub in Ibstock. But the Black family... there's obviously another part of the family used to live on Chapel Street in Ibstock opposite the... I don't know whether it's a Methodist Chapel or a Wesleyan Chapel but opposite the Chapel anyway in Ibstock and there used to be an off-license there and they used to have a small transport business there. And the member of the family I remember mostly is a lad called John Black. So he must have been... well, I always thought he was Herbert Black's brother but I might be wrong there. But I knew John Black, he was older than me but I knew him quite well because I used to be in the scouts. So John Black was in the scouts. So yeah, I was in the scouts for years.


Herbert Black

Questioner - What was the road they lived on; did you say? What was the road opposite the Chapel?

Mr Crane - It was Chapel Street. They've recently... It's all gone now but they've recently built a load of new houses where Blacks used to be.

I remember the American airplane that came down in the village here, just outside the village. I lived in Ibstock at the time and this... there was an airplane.

Questioner - So, sorry, where did it come down?

Mr Crane - It came down, if you go from Nailstone, out of Nailstone, towards Ibstock, on the right hand side about half a mile out of the village, on the right hand side is the Leicestershire Council dump. On the other side of the road, there's a stream. You come down the hill, the council dumps there, there's a stream runs across and at the time, the stream was there. The council dumps weren't there. It was just an open road. But the airplane came down there. Just off the road and there was some very, very tall, popular trees. They're not there anymore but it came down just before those popular trees just about on the brook where the water crosses. As a kid as soon as there was an airplane crash, so everybody, yeah, but my parents strictly forbid me to go anywhere near airplane crashes or anything military. But as a kid, you know, you just had to, didn't you?

Questioner - Well, all your mates were there, weren't they? You don't get any trouble, could you?

Mr Crane - So, so soon as I knew about it, I walked from Ibstock up to Nailstone but by the time I got up to Nailstone, you couldn't get anywhere near it. It was guarded, there were soldiers there. It was guarded, there was police there but I got as near as I could and I can remember looking really through the hedge. Like top of the hill and there was a tall hedge. I can remember looking through the hedge where the airplane was and I could see it lying there on the ground. The wings out, it was all like in one, it looked to be in one place, but it was flat on the ground. Years, years later, the farmer, Crawford's on the corner, they'd recovered most of the airplane but they couldn't find one of the engines. And the farmer and a chap out of the village, they, got together and got a digger down there and they dug and dug and dug and eventually came up with the engine. It was in Crawford's barn for quite a long time. I think it was eventually taken away to some museum, actually. But yeah, that was on the training flight. It was on the training flight and there were about 12 people on it, actually. Because they were training on actual radio operators or something like that. So there was the crew, the normal crew, but two or three more people on training. Evidently it was foggy I think they lost the way or something like that. I don't quite know what happened, really. But it went in.
Questioner - Did they all die?

Mr Crane - Oh yeah, yeah, 12 people. There's a memorial in the village for it and we had some of the relatives. The memorial used to be where the crash was but they moved it. We got a little park in the village so they moved the memorial up there. So it's called a Memorial Ground, and one or two of the relatives came over from America when they did the opening ceremony.

But there was also another plane crash at Odstone on a farm. And on the farm, the farmer was a chap called Richardson and his son (possibly Peter) was also a fighter pilot who had been killed in the Battle of Britain. Now, I've tried to follow this up and I've got nowhere with it. I've been told there's no record of this airplane crashing at Odstone but I saw it with my own eyes. I know it crashed. I saw it. Now, what I don't know is, was it a RAF plane? Was it a German plane? Was it a civil plane? I just don't know.

Questioner - When do you think that happened?

Mr Crane - Well, it was before the Lancaster because, it had been, I'm not sure when the Lancaster... not the Lancaster, the American one. The American one, The Flying Fortress.

Questioner - There was one or two... I mean, during the war there was one or two flights that just weren't recorded because they were either doing something that perhaps they shouldn't quite because the pilots used to borrow planes to go to visit people and things
They've always got to be tested, haven't they? They just have to test them near where they used to live and of course Peter Churchill used to use his hurricane to go and have a look at progress of the building of the factory so that was another one, but there was other flights where if they were flying across to deliver or to collect agents that wouldn't ever be recorded because they were frightened that if ever it was somebody would get to hear about it and the *walls have ears* and they'd be waiting for them at the other end so there was lots of very secret things going on at the time so it could well be that, that, plane was taking part in something like that so it was never recorded. I would have thought there would be a record somewhere of the crash unless the pilot got away uninjured, in which case there would be a hospital record or a mortuary record. They wouldn't record the lorry going out and picking the bits up of them. It would be interesting to find out on that, we'll see if we can dig anything up on that, we'll obviously let you know if we find anything. There was another plane crash more recently wasn't there?

Mr Crane – There was another one. I was with my son building a tree house in the garden, we actually saw it, this plane coming down and we were up in the tree and it came from over there somewhere and we could see it going like that, we were both interested in airplanes at that time and we knew, you could tell it was going to crash or land and the door had come off. It was a mail plane and the red door came off and they lost pressure and it came down and killed, there were Royal Mail workers on it and it killed them.

Questioner - where did that happen?

Mr Crane - oh, early 80s, 70s yeah. I think it belonged to something like British European Airways, BEA or something like that, but it was a mail plane. There were Royal Mail workers on it,

I was just thinking while I was outside some of the names I can remember from Market Bosworth. There was Troutbridge, he was, I don't know what he was he was the R.D.C. Surveyor I think. Walton, Cecil Walton, Beckett, somebody called Beckett they were all to do with the C.D.C.. Council. Savage's, Savage that rings a bell with me the Market Bosworth name, Ensor, John Ensor his dad, what was his dad's name? Ah Harold. They lived in the Square, next door to the entrance to Becks' Yard yeah,

Questioner - he was a carpenter wasn't he?

Mr Crane - no, he was a bricklayer

Questioner - was he a brickie? Because he had a carpentry shop built on his house, didn't he?

Mr Crane - who John did?

Questioner - not John, his dad? oh he was a bricklayer.

Mr Crane - When Becks finished he came to work for us,

Questioner - he was a bricklayer, was he? I used to walk up there sometimes because there was a garage next to the cottage, wasn't it? I'm sure we've got woodwork stuff in there.

Mr Crane – Well he might have but he was definitely a bricklayer. We'd be able to build a few bungalows at New Verdon and I worked on the site with him.

Questioner - on the main street? Yeah, my grandmother moved into that in about 1973.

Mr Crane – Yeah it was at the time a Labour government was in power and they were chucking money at councils to build council houses and we, we were, I remember my brother, pricing for these jobs. We didn't really want them, but to keep in with the council and to keep flow of work and kept pricing and we were pricing, we didn't really want them so we didn't put the keenest price in and we were getting them, we were getting jobs you know, we couldn't cope we were setting people on. It's never a good time for the building industry when things like that happen because you get all the, I'll call them riff-raff, you get people pretending to be carpenters and plumbers and plasterers and they are not, they mixed a bit of plaster once or something like that and we were setting people on mostly from Leicester, they were coming out of Leicester. Some of the people that you got were just awful they lasted about a week or something like that.

Questioner - But I remember those days because my father had moved to F. E. Downes and he went from Becks to Orton and Co in Coalville. He'd go there and then he left there and went to F. E. Downes and they got involved in that big council estate just on the right of you going to Leicester, Braunstone and some parts, some new parts and they decided to do this direct labour scheme so they trained all these people in the prison how to do woodwork, carpentry and bricklaying and all the rest and plumbing and all the rest of it and then set them to build these council houses. Because I thought what a wonderful idea, because we're getting council houses built, we are getting them built cheap and we're giving these people a chance to earn a decent living and go straight and we've given them a trade to do it. You've never seen anything like that.

Questioner - You haven't seen anything like that that's right

Mr Crane - I think that sort of thing you get it by experience, don't you? You know we used to serve five years apprenticeship and eventually it all comes to you. You don't do it in three months or whatever.

Questioner - they don't have three months for the college and they go out and get on with it and you've got to do it for five years for the trust you to do anything at all.
Mr Crane - that's right

Questioner - hot water flushes, so the first thing you notice is when you flush one of the toilets it's got hot water, we'd have our Japanese toilet and it's council housing. So they went to open the door into this room the door wouldn't open so the site foreman says oh wait, it must come round to the other side. They walked round to the back door went in and the radiator pipe got for one radiator crossed the door to another radiator on the other side.

Mr Crane - really?

Questioner – yeah, apparently the guy that put the pipe in said well I thought the door opened the other way. So they got the job of well they didn't they turned it down actually they did two or three of these houses and then they said no because they realised that the bricklayers were also people that were taught how to lay bricks in the exercise yard lay four or five bricks on top of each other knock it down, start again. Well none of these houses were true they got so many layers of bricks on that side before the window so they had bricks on this side the roof trusses were a bit like that because they had not built them right. So they said no we really don't want to get involved in this at all I think they came down and it was left for a year or so and then eventually they decided to get a private company and let them build other houses. That's a nightmare

Mr Crane - what we're talking about? Ansley and he was... who else can I remember? Oh that chap that was friendly with my Uncle Jim, Proudman. I think his name was Walter Proudman. yeah what was it?

Questioner - Crowman Glen Crowman does that ring any bells?

Mr Crane - no

Questioner – Cheshire, the Cheshire family

Mr Crane - oh yeah, Cheshire came from Shackerstone. John Cheshire he worked for Becks. He was an apprentice at Becks. He came to work for my dad and he lived, actually, my dad rented the house that he got, that my granddad took a loan out to buy when my dad got married. So John Cheshire lived there actually, he was a good lad, a good carpenter. As a matter of fact, windows aren't here anymore, we had them all out, but I think he made all the joinery work for this place, absolutely John Cheshire yeah and he had a brother well he had

Questioner - there were three of them

Mr Crane - yeah and the brother worked at the big house in the park that used to be Sparrows, was it Sparrow? I think the name was Sparrow you know.

Questioner – before it became The Inn on the Park?

Mr Crane - no, you know where the road forks as you come into the Park from Bull in the Oak and the one way system starts, there was one house stood on its own for a number of years. Wilson's eventually bought some of the land and built the rest of the houses it's to the right of it.

Questioner - Sir Wolstan Dixie lived there

Mr Crane - yes he did but before Wolstan.

Questioner - he bought it off somebody else probably was Mr. Sparrow

Mr Crane - yeah I think the name was Sparrows and this Cheshire married the daughter or one of the daughters, I think and they're split up, what was his name? Cheshire?

Questioner - there was Joe. yeah Joe Cheshire there was John, Joe I keep trying to say Charles but I'm sure it wasn't a Charles
Mr Crane - what do you think it was?

Questioner - I said I keep wanting to say Charles but I don't think it was Charles, I think it was Charles, definitely not a Charles I think it was somebody else because they had a business in the Cheshire, Cheshire and Kirk. I can't think of another one

Mr Crane - this one of the Cheshire's one of the Cheshire's that I'm thinking of lived in the Oval and I think his name was Joe but his brother, John was the youngest I think Joe possibly was the middle one and the one I'm trying to think of was the older one and he worked for this chap called Sparrow as a handyman, gardener or whatever and he came to when Sparrow sold the house he was out of work he came to work for my dad as a tractor driver. Why can't I remember his name? Cheshire it was a big fellow he was very slow moving.

Questioner - yes I can remember him vaguely, he didn't join the building firm did he?

Mr Crane – No. I can remember the dad's name, the dad's name was Jarvis Cheshire yeah Jarvis lived in the cottage, one of the Crown Cottages in Shackerstone and he used to keep bees. How I got attached to him I don't know? I used to go and visit him at times. He was very old, very old school and he got great big bushy sideburns and he had a beard coming down there and he used to keep bees and every time I used to go and see him he used to give me a glass of mead and it was as sweet, as sweet, as sweet, this mead, yeah, Jarvis. They were a lovely couple him and his wife I can't remember his wife's name but there were lovely people, Jarvis I think he used to work up at the Gopsall Hall as a gardener or something like that. I can't remember his blooming name Cheshire. Bill? Don?

Questioner - We've got somebody we know that will probably know that don't we? So we can follow that one up. We'll let you know.

Mr Crane - Fletcher's, Trivett's, Hatton's.

Questioner - Yeah, Hatton's lived in the Square didn't they?

Mr Crane - I used to take Rosemary I think a name was, I used to date Rosemary at one time. Rosemary Hatton

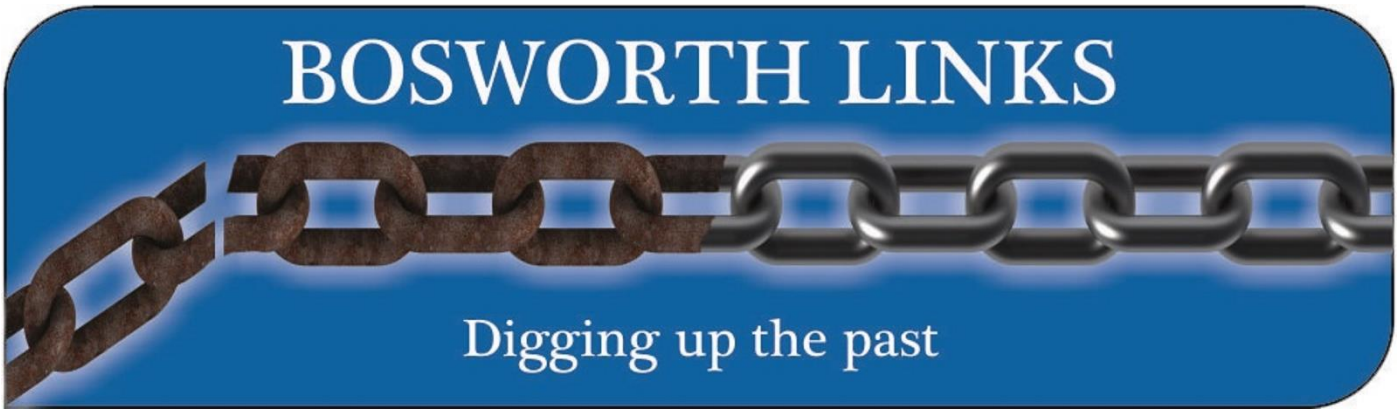
Questioner - We got chatting as you do and we went down to the cellars. There's some cells underneath it you can see all the big chunks of Carlton stone where they've not bothered to tidy it up too much, they've built the cellars out of this stuff. Huge big stones It was a lovely summer's day when I went down there freezing cold down these cellars and you said the temperature never changes I said how have they ever changed it down there? It's a beautiful house.

Mr Crane - Just thinking back, I'm thinking about names I know. I think I mentioned this before. We're talking about fighter pilots during the war. There was a chap, called I'm sure his name, his surname was Walton. He was a fighter pilot, and there was a family of butchers in Market Bosworth was called Longs. They used to have a butcher shop up opposite Church Street?

Questioner - Yeah, that was Longs

Mr Crane – Well, one of my mother's friends was a nurse called May Long and this fighter pilot, chap Walton was courting her during the war and he used to fly over Market Bosworth in his either Spitfire or Hurricane. I'm not quite sure which it was but he used to come in over Market Bosworth and zoom over and do a couple of passes and disappear. He used to get criticized because it was dangerous practice but he was a wild boy and he came back to

Part four will be available in the November Newsletter. If you simply cannot wait till then, go to www.marketbosworthsociety.com and select the MBS Archive tab (in between What's On and Virtual History).



I have just received a preview copy of the Shackerstone dig video and it is every bit as good as the previous videos. I don't know how Bill Newsinger does it. There is no scripting and Bill simply asks people to tell the camera about their experiences and what they have been doing. It is another wonderful example of a community coming together to invite others to help it discover its past. Early indications are quite exciting and I eagerly await the reports. The film is not available to view at the moment as it is not fully complete and will be premiered at the feedback meeting

The Shackerstone feedback meeting will be early next year once all the finds have been identified and catalogued and the reports written.

The Shenton Feedback Meeting will take place on the **23rd of November 2024** at the Market Bosworth Parish Hall) in Park Street, commencing at 2:00 PM (14:00. This is a different date to the one first planned. Even if you did not take part in the dig I would encourage you to come along and see the video and hear what has been discovered about Shenton. These sessions are usually very enlightening and entertaining.

The Bosworth Links project is now drawing to a close. Originally the brainchild of Peter Loseby, it has continued beyond its original planned term as I wanted to explore the nearby villages. Peter originally wanted to fill in the gaps in our knowledge of the history of Market Bosworth between 410 AD and 1086 AD and as you know we managed to fill in gaps over the last 5,000 years. I wanted to discover if the nearby villages, Carlton, Shenton, Sutton Cheney, Coton, Cadeby often called the satellite villages, to the hub of Market Bosworth, had shared a similar of different history. I was also interested to learn about the Saxons and the Vikings as there are Saxon villages and Viking villages not far apart. It is unfortunate that we were unable to dig in Sutton Cheney but Shackerstone proved to be a perfect alternative and will present some exciting revelations.

The last ever dig of Bosworth Links will take place in May 2025. We have yet to confirm a date and whilst we know where we want to dig we have not made any plans and so it will be wrong to make announcements prematurely. I will have mixed feelings at the next dig. Pride in what we have achieved and sadness that it is now ended. This will be your last chance to volunteer so please do not let it slip away from you. If you have not previously taken part, simply go to the website and click on Bosworth Links to complete a volunteer form. As for the rest of us, come on, let's go time travelling!

Contact Details Please see the website www.marketbosworthsociety.com for information or email on info@marketbosworthsociety.com or if you would like to call MBS then 07930149408. Correspondence can be sent to Market Bosworth Society, c/o 29 Warwick Lane, Market Bosworth, Leicestershire CV13 0JU.

Membership subscriptions (single £14.00 joint £21.00) can be paid by BACS/Bank Transfer using the following Details. Market Bosworth Society, Virgin Money Sorting Code 82-11-07 account number 00452350. Please place your surname (and the last three characters from your postal code – if permitted) in the reference section. For example mine would be palmer0ju.

If you have any items you would like to preserve for future generations, please contact MBS, or any Committee member.

Nigel Palmer

Chairman

Quiz Answers

1. 4
2. 1
3. 4
4. 1
5. 1
6. 2
7. 3
8. 3
9. 1
10. 4
11. 2
12. 2
13. 3
14. 2
15. 3