

## Memories of Sheila Mileham

I first met Sheila not long after the inaugural meeting of our History Group. She was, like me, one of the 25 people who went along to the first meeting and who joined the new group. Not long after, we also formed a Research Group, which met in the room at the library once a month. Our main aim was to research and share information about the village of Kirby Muxloe. I first learned that although



Sheila had been living in Glenfield for many years, she had been born and brought up in our village. Sheila, together with her parents and sister Lesley, lived on Hedgerow lane. Clarence Russell, who was awarded the O.B. E. after the bombing of the village in WWII, was her uncle, a fact of which she was very proud. It soon became clear to us all at the research meeting that Sheila had been working on family history and the history of the village for a long time. Whatever subject we began to talk about, Sheila would quietly open one of her folders and produce a printed sheet of information on a host of topics. She will be well remembered as the first person to work on the histories of the people on the village War Memorial. Her research was excellent, all printed out and very methodical. Sheila carried on this research until it was no longer possible for her to do so and then with her blessing, Kate Traill took over the task of trying to put a face to the last few names.

Sheila was very reserved and fairly quiet, as I soon observed when seeing her at our regular History Group meetings. When we started to organise our trips out and about, Sheila was always one of the first to put her name down, eager to discover any new historical interests and facts. I realised that she often sat on her own on bus trips and so I started to make an effort to sit with her on our journeys to and from the various places of interest. As we started to sit together on these bus journeys, we began to talk about life in general and especially our families. Sheila was very much a family person, very close to both her son and daughter and especially her grandchildren. She was well known in her family for producing many scrumptious chocolate cakes and other delicacies. Sadly, Sheila's husband had passed away some years before and it was obvious that she missed him very much. We actually found out that we were distantly related, as her surname before marriage was Geary and the same Geary family features in my family tree. As we talked, she told me that she was in fact in remission from cancer. She had received treatment but knew that at some point it would return and that would be it! She was quite matter of fact about it, as she felt that this was going to happen at some time and when it did, she would be ready.

In 2010, we joined up with K.M. Primary School to help them celebrate the school centenary. Val and I went along to the school and produced a series of pictures and texts featuring past pupils. We also, as the History Group, accepted an invitation from the school to bring along some of the older members of the community to interact and talk to younger members of the school. Sheila was one of the people we took along to the school, together with Jan Timson, Colin Percy and Peter and Pam Cooper.

The children loved it, asking questions about the school and life in the village long ago. Sheila was unusually quiet, but I just thought she was perhaps feeling a bit under the weather. A couple of weeks later, I had arranged to pick her up and take her to see the display of Christmas trees in St. Bart's. Again, she was not like her old self, always so enthusiastic and happy to be wherever we were going. Two weeks later I heard that she was in hospital. The cancer had returned and

she was undergoing radiotherapy. I went to visit her in hospital a few times and the last time I saw her she seemed much better, but at the same time realising that she needed to be cared for. She was quite excited; her son had arranged a place for her in a lovely home near to Milton Keynes where he lived. She said he was bringing a brochure and that on my next visit we could look through together. The next week, I visited and arrived about 11am to find that Sheila had left the hospital and was on the way to Milton Keynes. Before long, an email arrived; her internet connection had been installed and she wanted some research to get on with and was back to her usual self. Unfortunately, after two or three weeks she relapsed and I received an email from her son Philip to say that she has passed away.

Her funeral was held at Glenfield church and the church was packed with people. For me, it was rather sad, as the nurses had told me that she had received few visitors in hospital. I received a lovely letter from Philip her son to say thank you for keeping her going over the past few weeks. Although Val and I had been invited to look at the research in Sheila's study and take whatever we needed, this didn't come to fruition, as the house was sold very quickly and everything was packed up in haste. However, some months later, I was able to visit Sheila's sister Lesley who passed on the hard drive to her computer. Luckily, Mike's expertise helped to download all her research and it was only then that we realised what an amazing amount of in depth research she had done.

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### The Frears Family (cont.)



Charles Russell Frears laying the foundation stone for St Andrew's Church in 1965 which was completed the following year. The Church stands on land where Farfield once stood

KT Next month:  
Frears - The Bakery

## The Frears Family

Last year the KMLHG website received an enquiry asking if we had any information on houses and land on Hinckley Road. The properties were Greendale, Farfield, Whitecroft and Applegarth. These properties, all occupied by the Frears family were interconnected through the fields and spinney. We were unfortunately not able provide much information, but during the research a very interesting family was discovered.

**John Russell Frears** was born in Eskdale, Cumberland in 1835 the son of John Frears (1806 - 1871) and Elizabeth "Betty" Russell. His father was an agricultural labourer for many years, but by the time of his death he was a farmer of 33 acres.

John had left home by the age of 16 and was working as an agricultural servant, but by 1861 he was boarding at 12 Little Lane Leicester and was working as a bobbin turner. In 1862 John married Martha, daughter of James and Mary Clarke and two years later he was a grocer at 17 Osborne Street, and by 1870 he had moved to Northgate Street and began baking and selling bread. The 1881 census tells us that John was living at 11 Frog Island where he is listed as a cake and provisions merchant employing 3 men. With him are Martha, and children John Russell, age 17 and an art student, and Mary Martha age 13.

In 1891 the family are still at Frog Island, and are grocers and bakers. Now living with them is apprentice baker Harry Cape age 18 from Hull. John and his son opened a new bakery at Frog Island which was completed in 1896 and the business became 'Frears and Son'.

The 1901 census shows him to be managing director/employer, living at 169, Hinckley Road, LFE. This property is now Abberdale House Care Home. He died in January 1910 and is buried with Martha at Welford Road Cemetery.

**John Russell Frears Junior** was born in 1863 at Osborne Street. He was educated at Trinity college Cambridge, and appears in the UK Civil Engineers lists in December 1885 as a student attached to the Institute of Civil Engineers at the Dock Office, Hull.



John Russell Frears jr. pictured in 1935 baker and grocer living with his parents.

He married Minnie Keighley Cape daughter of Charles William and Amelia of Hull in 1895. Minnie was the sister of apprentice baker Harry Cape. In 1901 the couple were living with their 2 eldest children at 207 Hinckley Road, and he was now the manager of the family business.

The 1911 census lists the family living at Hillsborough, Westcotes Drive. The substantial house was built for them in 1902. The couple now have 5 children, Elsie Mary, Charles Russell, Constance Evelyn, John Newton, and Russell Edward. John is now the 'managing director of bread co.'

John joined Leicester Corporation as a councillor in 1906 and was elected the 469th Mayor of the Borough in 1913 - 14. He became an Alderman in 1916, when he was also Provincial Grand Secretary of the Leicester Freemasons, Visiting Committee Chairman of the lunatic asylum, and education committee member of Wyggeston Girls' Grammar School.

John died in 1937. Minnie remained at Hillsborough for a while but lived with daughter Constance at Whitecroft at the time of her death in 1955.

**Mary Martha Frears** 1867-1943 the daughter of John & Martha, married a farmer, Archibald Cook, in 1911 and lived at Greendale, but by 1939 they were living at Applegarth 117 Hinckley Road.



**Whitecroft** (possibly shown in this picture) and the bungalow **Applegarth** became part of the Kathleen Rutland Home, which opened in 1967. Both are soon to be demolished in a £14 million project and replaced with a 72 bedroom care home and 12 room home for people with learning disabilities. **Greendale** is thought to be still standing but has possibly been renamed.

**Elsie Mary Frears** was born in 1896 and married Arthur Billson Pick, a director of J Pick and Sons, Dover Street Leicester, knitwear manufacturers. Arthur was well respected in Kirby and during the war he was an ARP warden. The family lived at number 121 - Greendale.

**Charles Russell Frears** was born in 1899. He moved into Farfield soon after his marriage to Dorothy May Richards in 1925.

**Constance Evelyn Frears** was born in 1902 and married George Pochin in 1930. In 1939 he is listed as a Director of a retail ironmonger and an ARP warden. They lived at this time at Whitecroft.

**John Newton Frears** was born in 1906. He joined the family business and in 1926 managed the Frears Bakery business. He married Gertrude Elaine Pochin, also from the ironmonger family of Pochins. John was a prominent member of the civic life of the city and became the 290th Lord Mayor of Leicester in 1947/48.

During the war, he was Director of Bakeries for the UK under the Ministry of Food.

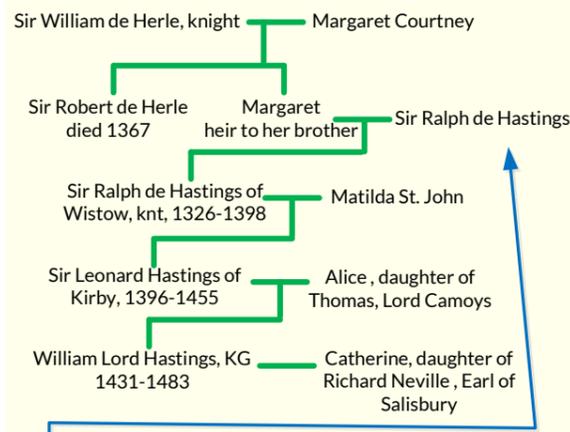
**Russell Edward Frears** married Ruth Mary Danziger in 1936. Russell was a chartered accountant and also worked in the family business.

*(continued opposite)*

## William Hastings and the Hastings Family - Part 1: 1291 - 1480

The Hastings family are one of the most important families to have been residents of Kirby Muxloe, but most of us will probably only have learned about William, the 1st Baron Hastings, from his building of the castle here in Kirby or from Shakespeare's play, Richard III, and his untimely end at the Tower of London in 1483.

The family are first recorded as living in the village of Kirby (or Kereby as it was known in medieval times) with the birth of William's great grandfather - Sir Ralph de Hastings - in 1291. They came originally from Yorkshire, hence their allegiance to the Yorkist cause during the Wars of the Roses. Their association with Leicestershire probably came about through the marriage of Ralph to Margaret, daughter of William de Herle who owned large amounts of land in the county. The De Herle family are generally said to be from Kirby Muxloe but there is nothing recorded here until 1303. They lived in the 13th century Manor House in Donnington-le-Heath - the group enjoyed a visit here some time ago and is well worth visiting again post coronavirus!



Sir Ralph died from wounds he received fighting against the Scots at the Battle of Neville's Cross in 1346 and his son, also named Ralph, born in 1326 in Kirby, became Sheriff of Yorkshire. His son, Sir Leonard of Kirby, became an important man in England, becoming High Sheriff of both Leicestershire and Warwickshire, keeping law and order in what were difficult times, with fighting between the Houses of York and Lancaster in the 'War of the Roses'. He was close to the king and a supporter of the Yorkist side.

William, Sir Leonard's son, was born in Kirby in 1431 and assumed his father's allegiance to the House of York, becoming close to his distant cousin, the future King Edward IV, whom he served loyally all his life. He fought with Edward at the 'Battle of Mortimer's Cross' in 1461 and again at the 'Battle of Towton'. Both of these battles were won by the Yorkists, after which Edward was declared King of England. William was knighted on the field of battle.

William became a very important man in the service of Edward IV, serving as "Master of the Mint" - an important role in ensuring money was minted and available during the depression in 1462. He was made Lord Chamberlain and in 1461 was created Baron Hastings with grants of land in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire. The "Calendar of Patent Rolls" documents of 1464 and 1467 record further grants of land in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Suffolk. He became an ambassador, being granted the captaincy of Calais in 1471, negotiating with the French in commercial

relations and arranging marriages between members of the royal households.

His close friendship with Edward existed throughout his life but Hastings fell out with Edward's wife, Elizabeth Woodville, who apparently had grown jealous, not only of 'the great favour the king bear him' but also for the fact 'that she thought him secretly familiar with the king in wanton company<sup>1</sup>'. A feud then developed between Hastings and one of Elizabeth's sons from her first marriage, Sir Thomas Grey, marquess of Dorset, also of Groby, but despite Edward's attempts to heal this rift between them there still survived a latent jealousy<sup>2</sup>. This becomes an important factor when looking into the reason behind Hastings' untimely death in 1483 - to be discussed in Part 2. Hastings' offices brought in considerable revenue and he thus acquired great wealth and status. He was therefore able to indulge his taste for fine buildings and his work both at Kirby and Ashby Castles demonstrated his conceptions of architecture<sup>3</sup>.

### The Building of Kirby Castle

In 1474 William received a licence to crenellate three of his properties - at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Bagworth and one here in Kirby. He was also given permission to empark large areas of land and to stock this with deer for hunting. The building began in Kirby, in 1480, of an intricate fortified house of red brick. It is important as being one of the last English fortified houses and the earliest brick-built building in Leicestershire and one of the three earliest in Britain<sup>4</sup>. The castle, by 1483, was still under construction and because of Hastings' execution by Richard III in 1483, remained unfinished.

Further information on the building of the Castle can be found in many publications and on the English Heritage web-site. The site, maintained by English Heritage, should be re-opening this summer.

Many artefacts from the Castle have been found, mainly in the moat at the castle, which show us how the Hastings family lived during their time in Kirby. These range from antlers from the many deer eaten by the family, candlesticks and Cistercian ware - a type of pottery used during this period. These artefacts are held in Leicestershire's Museum collection housed in the Eastern Annexe at County Hall.

The Hastings Coat of Arms - the heraldic symbol is a "maunch" (from French "manche" - sleeve) denoting a fashionable ladies' sleeve in 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup>C. It was common for ladies to give their sleeves as 'favours' for knights to wear in tournaments - a symbol of love! This symbol can still be seen in the walls of Kirby Castle - to the right of the gatehouse.



### References

- 1&2. Dominic Mancini - 'Usurpation of Richard the Third' a first-hand account of Richard's ascent to the throne 1485.
3. Kirby Muxloe Castle. DoE Official Guidebook 1957
4. "Old Kirby (Muxloe)" Jonathon Wilshere

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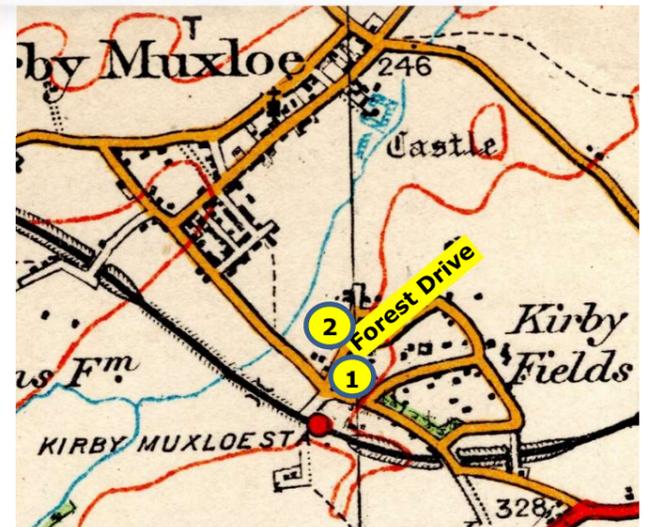
## Newsletter No. 13 May 2021

Hi and welcome to our latest KMLHG Newsletter.

**Mike Gould (Chair)**     **Val Knott (Secretary)**  
**Kate Traill (Treasurer)**     **Judith Upton (Archivist)**  
**Kerry Burdett**

① We now begin to take a look at the houses on Kirby Fields, which are here today, in 1945. We begin by turning the corner from Station Road, into Forest Drive and take a look at a pretty house named The Grove. It has already been mentioned in last month's newsletter as it has a large frontage onto Station Road. At present occupied by George Winram and his family, the house has an interesting history. It was built in around 1892 and its first owners were George and Mary Hughes. George and Mary were both born and brought up in Lancashire. Mary was born in Reddish in 1856 and George was born in Manchester in 1851. They were married in 1881, George having moved to Leicester at some time before this date. After the marriage, they set up home in Westleigh Road, Leicester, where their first two children, John and Daisy, were born. They then lived for a short time in Old Woodhouse before moving to Kirby Muxloe. Having secured a plot of land on Kirby Fields, they moved to the village and boarded with the Chesterton family at The Forge on Main Street, until their new house was completed. They moved into The Grove around 1893 and their youngest child, Alfred, was born in 1894. The house changed hands just a few years later when George Hughes purchased a much larger plot of land and built Highfields. The family moved there in 1904. The Grove was then sold to the well-known village doctor, Dr Garfit, who at the time was living at Inglewood on Station Road. Dr Garfit purchased the house as an investment and continued to live at Inglewood. The Grove was then rented out to Mrs Edith Dunbar Farewell, a widow with three children who had originally lived in County Durham. In 1912, Mrs Farewell's daughter Amy married John Hughes, son of George and Mary Hughes of Highfield. As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, John and Amy were given a semi-detached house named Lyndene on Station Road, as a wedding present from George Hughes. By 1928, Mrs Farewell, who was still living at The Grove, decided she needed to be nearer her daughter Amy and moved into Ivydene, the house adjoining Lyndene on Station Road. In 1937, George Henry Hughes died and John purchased Highfield from the family estate. According to the 1939 census and Mrs Farewell's will, at some time before her death in 1940, Mrs Farewell had moved into Highfield to live with her daughter and son-in-law. Dr Garfit continued to own The Grove and had two more tenants, Thomas Hurst, a bootmaker, and then Major Grosvenor Hodgkinson Junior, before selling it to George Winram, the present owner. Dr Garfit died in 1955.

Copies of our Newsletters are now available for anyone to pick up in Kirby Muxloe Library, Station Road, and Clan Gifts, Main Street. If there are no copies left, please email us to let us know.



② As The Grove at this time has a very large garden, the next building we reach as we travel up Forest Drive is a pair of very imposing Victorian semi-detached houses, built in around 1895. The plot of land had originally been owned by Matthew Brady, who was living at Mayfield. According to the 1901 census, Matthew Brady was a "hosiery and trimmings manufacturer". His father, John, had been a "boot and shoe manufacturer". The two houses are named Eastleigh and Westleigh. Interestingly, the house names denote the way each front door points. Eastleigh to the east and Westleigh to the west. Now in 1945, Westleigh is home to the Brown family and Tom Brown is a boot and shoe manufacturer. The house was previously owned by Ebenezer Healey Snr., of H. and A Bates, rubber manufacturers (1911-1914), E.D. Partridge of Partridge and son, cigar makers (1914-1920), and then the Brown family arrived in 1924. Next year, in 1946, the Brown's will vacate Westleigh and the house will be sold to Dr. Alexander of the partnership Jones and Alexander, Medical Practitioners. At this time, Westleigh will be registered as a "Medical Home" as Dr Alexander will be taking in paying patients, maybe to supplement his income. Eastleigh, the adjoining house has been home to the Hall family for many years. It is now occupied by Mrs Beatrice Hall, a widow, and her two teenage sons, William and Michael. Mrs Hall has taken in several paying guests over the years and during WWII has given shelter to two R.A.F. personnel and a Beauty specialist. The house was once home to the Bolton family who owned the well-known garment manufacturer, Chilprufe. Mr Bolton sold Eastleigh in 1912 and purchased Elms Farm on Gullet Lane, renaming the farm as "Chilprufe Farm".

Sources: Old Kirby "Muxloe" by Jonathan Wilshere and notes from the late Sally Pettingell, g/granddaughter of John and Amy Hughes.

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### Our Website and Email Address

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