

Community News

Wilkinson family history commemorated

THE latest Blue Plaque in the local scheme to commemorate Beeston's notable heritage was unveiled on Nether Street at the end of October by the Mayor of Broxtowe, Cllr Iris White.

George Wilkinson was one of Beeston's greatest entrepreneurs. He became the manager of the Anglo Scotian Mills on Wollaton Road, making lace curtains, following the premature death in 1897 of his younger brother, Francis Wilkinson, and the plaque to commemorate him was unveiled by his great-grandson, also George Wilkinson, and the Mayor of Broxtowe on the side of what is still the Wilkinson family home on Nether Street, Beeston.

When George Wilkinson took on the management

of the substantial mills in 1897, he was already responsible for building many of the Victorian and Edwardian terraced houses that survive in modern Beeston, including those on the corner of Wilkinson Street (off Wollaton Road), Commercial Avenue and in the surviving parts of the original Square.

The Blue Plaque reads: 'George Wilkinson, 1841-1919: Manager of Anglo-Scotian Mills after the premature death of his younger brother Francis Wilkinson in 1897'

In unveiling the Blue Plaque on October 31, great-grandson George Wilkinson said: "I am very proud to honour the Wilkinson brothers, George and Francis, today.

"From humble beginnings in Hucknall, where their father was a self-employed stocking-knitter, the brothers came to Beeston where Francis built the Anglo Scotian mills to make lace curtains, etc. He also built factories at Chilwell and Borrowash."

However, whilst Francis set about employing a large number of Beeston's population, George busied himself building houses for the mill workers. He was a member of Beeston's urban district council in 1895 and became the first local councillor to be elected to the County Council.

George bought the property at 43 Nether Street in 1897, rebuilding 'The White House' in 1910 for his family to live in. Previously, he had lived at 'The Towers' at the junction

of Middle Street and City Road. George Wilkinson died in 1919.

Many of George Wilkinson's properties are still in use today; what remains of the Anglo Scotian Mills, now a Grade II listed building and converted into the luxury apartments facing Wollaton Road, being a prime example. (Much of the original lace mill was destroyed by fire in 1886). And the next time you're stood looking towards The Square from the corner of Wollaton Road, look up. On the properties built by George Wilkinson immediately across the road, the characteristic brickwork just under the eaves and the distinctive small bay windows at first floor height are easy to see.

The Blue Plaque

George and Joyce Wilkinson, direct descendants of George Wilkinson, have paid for the commemorative plaque.

The couple was delighted to offer guests at the official unveiling of the plaque light refreshments afterwards, welcoming all into their home on Nether Street. They have two children, Janet (55) and Elaine (60) and three adult grandchildren – members of the family were helping with the refreshments, leaving the couple, who celebrated their Diamond wedding earlier this year, free to mingle and chat with the guests about their distinguished family history.

Beeston Christmas Lights Switch-on

THE Christmas Lights switch-on in Beeston will this year take place on Broadgate Park on Saturday, November 30.

A full programme of activity will soon be available. Look out for news of Stapleford's event soon.

Hemlock Garden Club still in bloom after 40 years flowering

BACK in October 1973, 25 enthusiastic gardeners held an inaugural meeting for like-minded souls at what was known as the Gardener's Cottage, Bramcote.

The Gardener's Cottage stood just off Coventry Lane, almost opposite that fairly well known Bramcote landmark, the Hemlock Stone – hence the reason behind the club's name for those founder members.

It's a long time since the Gardener's Cottage, which once formed part of Broxtowe Borough

Council's 'Parks' depot, was demolished. However, the Hemlock Garden Club, which met in the mess room for Bramcote Park's ground staff at the cottage, continued to bloom when the cottage came down. It will be 40 years old this year.

The Garden Club's objective was to encourage people to take an active interest in their gardens and develop a broader knowledge of plants, shrubs and vegetables that could be grown at home – after all, what tastes better than a home grown tomato or

perhaps a few runner beans freshly collected from your own garden? What better sight than delightful flowers cut from your own plants? The club planned to achieve this with a programme of talks in winter and summer as well as visiting gardens of interest, plant specialists or country estates.

Social requirements were not to be neglected and each year saw the inclusion of a Christmas party and fuddle!

From those early beginnings 40 years ago, the club continues to thrive and now has more than

50 members. A few of the founding members still join some of the activities.

The Hemlock Garden Club still aims to provide an interesting, varied, informative and entertaining programme of talks and visits for members, whatever their level of expertise.

Topics by invited speakers have ranged from garden design, gardening techniques, plant selection, growing fruit and vegetables, trees, attracting wildlife into the garden, dealing with pests and

diseases, famous and not-so-famous gardens in the UK and much more. A number of the guest speakers run specialist nurseries and bring plants for sale when they come – these are always popular evenings. In addition, raffles are held and refreshments are available, the proceeds from which go towards club funds.

Visitors and new members are always welcome at the Garden Club's monthly meetings, which are held at Bramcote Memorial Hall, Church Street, Bramcote on the third Thursday of each month at 7.30pm.

40th Anniversary

The 40th Anniversary Celebration will take place on Thursday, November 21 at 7.30pm. After a very brief AGM, the evening will include Cheese & Wine and light refreshments, a gardening quiz and other manner of jollifications. All are welcome!