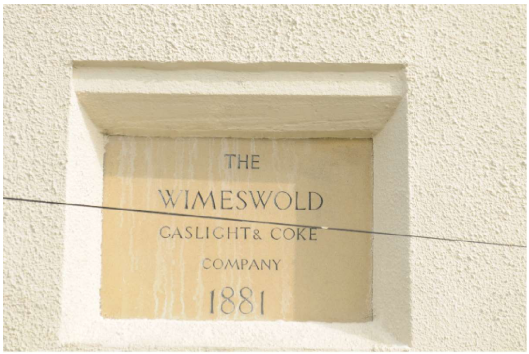

The 'date stone' in the wall of 93 Brook Street in 2008. The black 'line' is a telephone wire.

'The Wimeswold Gaslight and Coke Company'

Bob Trubshaw

In his booklet *A Walk Around Wymeswold* published by the WHO in 1994 Alec Moretti wrote:~

> An interesting piece of Wymeswold's history may be seen in a notice in the gable end of 93 Brook Street which records the site of the Wimeswold Gaslight & Coke Company 1881. The history of this is not clear but it produced gas for street lights, distributed through asbestos pipes. James Monk lived there as 'gas man' for about twenty years (1861–81) and then it was sold to a Loughborough banker. It seems to have been closed fairly soon after that and its loss was recorded in a piece of verse:-
>
> Alas, alas for Wymeswold Gas,
> Its lights no longer burn;
> Its meter is now 'gone to pot'
> And dark in every turn.
>
> And so on for nine more verses!
>
> An early postcard of the Stockwell shows a gas light there.

The photograph of The Stockwell by Phillip Brown which shows the gas light.

However the dates given by Alex – and the 'date stone' – don't fit! According to a gazetteer and directory dated 1863 gas works were established in Wymeswold in 1850. The cost was £1,000, raised in shares of £5.

Detail of a different photograph by Phillip Brown showing the gas light out of use. Other photographs by him of the Stockwell were taken after the light was removed.

Top: *Another photograph by Phillip Brown showing another gas light, this time at the eastern end of Brook Street, a little way beyond the gas works.*

Centre: *Far Street also had a gas light, outside the White Horse.*

Bottom: *Detail of the Far Street photograph.*

The poem is in the style of T.R. Potter. He died in 1873 so presumably the gas works operated from about 1850 until around 1870. Presumably the 1881 'date stone' was added at the time the property was converted to a house.

Around 1995, when British Gas were installing polyethyene pipes in every Wymeswold street, I was informed that they repeatedly encountered fragements of the nineteenth century asbestos pipes.