Sept/72. Norman Barons connected with Leicester, Newbold, Bosworth etc. Upon the death of the Conqueror (1087), there was much quarrelling and fighting over the succession. Among many barons who wished Robert of Normandy to be the king of England, rather than William 11 (Rufus), was Hugh de Grantmesnil, the Lord of Leicester and of many manors in the county, including Newbold, Bosworth, Kirkby, Lutterworth etc. Part of Bosworth was the territory of Robert de Beaumont, Earl of Meulan , whom Rufus sent to destroy Leicester Castle; the church and greater part of Leicester was also destroyed. However, Hugh made amends and soon after retired to a monastry in Normany. His son Ivo was allowed to retain the offices of Sheriff of the county and Governor of Leicester.

These were the times of the beginning of the Crusades (wars in the Holy Land against the Saracens). Duke Robert pledged the Duchy of Normandy to William 11 for money to equip an amry to join the first Crusade. Ivo de Grantmesnil was one of his companions. They met with many disasters, the worst being at the seige of Antioch. From there, Ivo returned home. He made war on his neighbours and plundered the property of the inhabitants of Leicester.

Rufus died in the New Forest (1100) and Henry seized the English throne while Robert was absent at the Crusades. The new King fined Ivo so heavily that he was unable to meet it and he applied for help to the Earl of Meulan, who agreed to lend him money to go to Jerusalem, taking over Ivo's lands as security. Among these lands of the Earl of Meulan, Newbold is not included. Could it be that at this time Newbold passed into the hands of the Ferrers? The writer of these notes can find no record of any such transaction; but history tells us that William de Ferrieres was a trusty friend of the Duke Robert. His young son, left at the castle of Falaise was to be given up to no one but de Ferrieres.

Oct/72. Bertam de Verdun and the Third Crusade. Bertam de Verdun was married twice, his second wife being Rohesia, of whom much more is to be written later. They had two sons, Thomas and Nicholas. In 1176 he was sent to Spain as ambassador of Henry 11.

Henry died in 1189 and the new king was Richard 1 later knwon as Richard 'Coeur de Lion' or the Lion Heart, whose great desire was to lead a Crusade to the Holy Land.

In 1190 Bertram attended the king to the Holy Land (Third Crusade) and was present at the Siege of Acre, 1191. After Acre was taken Bertram was placed in charge as the queens of England and Sicily were then resident; also the daughter of the Emperor of Cyprus. (1) Queed Eleanor Richard's mother; (2) the widowed queen of Sicily, Joan, Richard's sister and (3) Berengaria, Richard's wife. They were newly married, and it is interesting to note that Richard was the only king of England to be married abroad. In 1192 Bertram died at Joppa and was buried at Acre.

The historian Burton tells us that Bertram founded the Abbey of Croxton Kyrial, one of whose abbots was physician to King John. He also bestowed on the monks of St.Mary's, Axby York the church of Bosworth and two hides of land.

It was at this period that the knight's coats of arms were prominent. Bertram de Verdun's was described as 'gules fretty or'. This means a red fret on a gold background. The probable significance was 'hard to cross'.

Another comrade and crusader was Robert Parnell, Earl of Leicester, and he carried on his shield a cinquefoil on ermine which was the coat of arms of Robert Beaumont. It was afterwards used by the citizens of Leicester as the centre device of the city coat of arms. The griffin was added later.

Nov/72. Lady Rohesia de Verdun. The second wife of Bertram de Verdun was Rohesia, sometimes spelt Royhesia. No dates are given of the death of his first wife Maud de Ferrers who brought Newbold to the Verdun family, nor the date of his second marriage. Neither is there any indication to which noble family Rohesia belonged. No children are recorded of the first marriage, but Rohesia had two sons, Thomas and Nicholas. Thomas held his father's position only for four years and was followed by his brother Nicholas who in 1199 was head of the house. It is thought that Nicholas was at some time Abbott of Burton. Younger sons were often trained for the church. Rohesia de Verdun is particularly remembered as the foundress of Gracedieu nunnery of which she was the first Abbess. At that time wealthy heiresses had no choice in the selection of their husbands, often going into religious seclusion as an alternative to a marriage planned by the king who would receive a considerable amount of money from the alliance. She was also (jointly with her son Nicholas) foundress of the hospital of St John near the town of Lutterworth. It was built on a piece of land at Misterton called 'the Warren'. It was intended for one priest and six poor men to keep hospitality for poor wayfarers; a mediaeval refuge for the destitute. Her effigy was placed over her last remains in the church at Gr cedieu but subsequently moved to Belton Church probably at the time of the suppression of the monastries. In course of