



# Greater Wigston Historical Society

White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna, Leicester.

## BULLETIN 83



FARMHAND 1900

J.R. COLVER

## PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS – MARCH TO AUGUST 2009

### **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2009**

Finding Uncle Cecil (the search for a WWI soldier's grave) – Peter Cousins

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

### **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009**

Thoughts on the History of Wigston Magna – Father John Green

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

### **\*Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

Visit to Willoughby Waterleys, short guided walk followed by supper in the village hall & a talk on the Millennium Tapestry – Dorothy Gurr & the Embroidery team

Meet 7.00p.m. Paddock Street Car Park to share transport.

### **\*Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

Guided walk of Lutterworth town centre – Colin Crosby

Meet 7.00p.m. Paddock Street Car Park to share transport.

### **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2009**

Life on a Tudor Manor - Alison Coates

7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**\*Please Note** – members need to book and pay in advance for the May and June visits. A list will be started and money taken at the March and April meetings. Suggestions on parking and where we are to meet, will be available at Paddock Street on each evening. If drivers have already arranged their passengers and are planning to travel direct, please telephone Tricia (2880156) the week before for this information.

The Willoughby evening will start at **7.15p.m.**, the Lutterworth one at our usual time of 7.30p.m.

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The Bulletin is published three times a year on 1<sup>st</sup> March, July and November. Articles etc. (which are always welcome) should be submitted to the Editor, Tricia Berry, three clear weeks before publication date please.

## FRONT COVER

Jim Colver's drawing this time shows a farm hand in c.1900. His shirt sleeves indicate a warm day and with a scythe over his shoulder he is heading off to the fields for some backbreaking work.

In Victorian and earlier times the farm hand was usually known as an agricultural labourer or ag lab for short. It was the most common occupation and many of us can find at least one ag lab in our family tree. However, today farm hands are a rarity and most farmers have to manage alone with their sophisticated machinery, only calling on the assistance of family or outside contractors during busy periods.

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## NOVEMBER MEETING

In November the society welcomed Geoff Smith who gave an excellent talk on Sir Frank Whittle, the jet engine, and the strong local connections to his pioneering work. Geoff and colleagues formed the Sir Frank Whittle Commemorative Trust to celebrate the life of Frank Whittle through education, public art and an archive, which is housed at the Lutterworth Museum. The Trust led the centenary celebrations of his birth in 2007 with lectures and exhibitions around the country, notably at Brooklands, Hendon, Duxford, Cranwell and the Houses of Parliament. A number of aircraft enthusiast visitors joined us for the evening some of whom had heard about the talk through the internet.

We learned that Frank Whittle was born on 1/6/1907 in Coventry. After school and college at Leamington his first two attempts to join the RAF were unsuccessful due to his slightly built frame. However, by 1923, due to maturity and a special diet, he was accepted as an apprentice. After completing this he was offered a cadetship and came to the notice of the authorities when he wrote a thesis on *Future Developments in Aircraft Design* where he argued that if aircraft were to achieve higher speeds and travel longer distances, it would be necessary to fly at great heights where the low air density would greatly reduce resistance in proportion to speed. He passed out second in his year in 1928 and by 1929 he was experimenting with a Gas Turbine as a means of power to produce jet thrust. The turbine was turned by very high pressure exhaust gasses arising from ignition of a fuel/air mixture. In 1930 he applied for a patent for this Turbo-jet engine. In 1934 he began to read Mechanical Sciences at Cambridge for which he was to be awarded a First Class Honours degree. In 1935, by then married with a young family, he could not afford to renew his patent and as the Air Ministry was not interested it lapsed and the details were published worldwide.

In 1936 he secured financial backing and, with official approval, formed Power Jets Ltd. By 1937 test runs had commenced at the BTH works in Rugby and the following year he moved to Ladywood Works, Lutterworth. Testing continued and an alarming photograph survives of a full size jet engine placed on a table in a room with its exhaust protruding through an open window! In 1939 the Government, by then realising the potential, had signed a contract for further development. On 15/5/1941 the first flight of an allied

Turbo-jet powered aircraft, the Gloster E28/39 was made at Cranwell. Further test flights followed at Farnborough, and some locally at Bitteswell and Bruntingthorpe, sometimes piloted by Whittle himself.

In 1943 the company moved to the former English Electric/Alstom site at Whetstone. Rolls-Royce were contracted to produce the new engine and by 1944 Britain finally had a jet fighter with the Rolls-Royce Welland engines designed by Frank Whittle. America asked for details and a Power Jets team and a WIX engine were flown to Washington, where the country quickly developed their Bell XP-59A Airacomet.

In 1946 Frank Whittle, by then an Air Commodore, resigned from Power Jets when it was nationalised. He retired from the RAF in 1948 and was knighted by King George VI in the same year. In the 1950s he worked as a consultant and technical adviser to various aviation companies and in 1953 wrote the book *Jet*. He later went to work in America and following his 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage to an American wife, moved his home permanently to the USA. He died on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1996.

Sir Frank is commemorated in Rugby and Coventry and at Cambridge University, and the Commemorative Trust have commissioned two full sized replicas of the Gloster E28/39 which are spectacularly displayed as if in flight, one on a traffic island at Lutterworth and the other at Farnborough.

After questions and contributions, especially from Max and Marion Daetwyler, who both actually worked at Whetstone at this exciting time, the Chairman, Mike Forryan, thanked Geoff for a really fascinating evening.

## DECEMBER MEETING

In place of the usual social evening a Christmas themed meeting was arranged instead. While enjoying drinks and mince pies members listened to Diane Courtney who gave a most interesting talk on the origins of various festive traditions. Here is a selection from the many she mentioned.

**Christingle** - services are believed to have begun in Moravia in 1747 as a way of teaching children the Christmas Story. The symbolic orange handed to each child represents the world, the four twigs stuck into it, north, south, east & west, the red ribbon tied round it, the blood of Christ & the lighted candle on top, Jesus the Light of the World.

**Christmas Cards** – date from 1843 when Henry Cole, Director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, asked an artist to design a card with a message already printed inside because he did not have time to write to everyone.

**Christmas Puddings** – evolved from the need to use up left over ingredients, 13 were used to represent Jesus and the 12 disciples. Traditionally made on stir-up Sunday, the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday before Christmas, when all the family used to stir the mixture and make a wish.

**Christmas Trees** – decorating firs from the forest was a common tradition in Europe, but it was Prince Albert who introduced the custom to England from his native Germany. Lights were first used in 1903.

**Mince Pies** – were once much larger and really made with meat.

**Father Christmas** – originated from a 4<sup>th</sup> century bishop named Nicholas from Asia Minor, who was generous to children. He was later created Saint Nicholas, patron saint of children. Adults used to dress up as St. Nicholas to give presents to children.

**Poinsettia** – thought to resemble the Star of Bethlehem.

**Turkey** – in Medieval times swan or peacock was eaten with rabbit or blackbird for the poor. Turkeys were introduced from South America in 1535 and proved more popular.

**Crackers** – Thomas Smith a London shopkeeper, got the idea from the French bonbon sweets which were wrapped with a twist of paper. He noticed his version was popular with young men buying them for their girlfriends so he started to enclose little messages and gifts, later making them suitable for pulling and with the crack for extra effect.

**Boxing Day** – alms boxes were kept in church and opened on the day after Christmas for distribution to the poor.

**Holly Wreath** – represents the Crown of Thorns. (Perhaps once Holy Wreath & Holy Tree?)

**Christmas Presents** – the Romans used to give each other presents at the time of the winter solstice.

In 1640 the Puritans banned Christmas celebrations because it did not fit in with their austere lifestyle, and Oliver Cromwell passed a law banning the eating of mince pies on Christmas Day. This law has never been repealed! When the Monarchy was restored, Charles II gave the people their Christmas back.

The Chairman, Mike Forryan, thanked Diane for her fascinating, seasonal talk and wished all members a very Happy Christmas.

## **JANUARY MEETING**

In January we welcomed Derek Seaton who spoke on a subject close to his heart, The Leicestershire Regiment. He remembers often playing with his toy soldiers as a lad and is proud to be the third generation of his family to have served with the Tigers.

The history of the regiment goes back to September 1688 when the 17<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot was raised in London as part of the first standing army. Previously regiments had been raised by their colonels as and when needed, and then disbanded when their task was completed. One of the new regiment's earliest campaigns was in Flanders in 1695, for which it earned the battle honour 'Namur' for its part in capturing a French Fort of that name. From 1701 it served with distinction during the Wars of the Spanish Succession, in Portugal and the Netherlands, and for 25 years from 1725 was peace keeping in Minorca.

In the Seven Years War 1756-1763 the regiment was sent to Canada where they helped defeat a French force nearly three times their strength at Cape Breton, and were awarded their 2<sup>nd</sup> battle honour. For service in the American War of Independence George III awarded them the unbroken laurel wreath.

In 1782 regiments were allocated districts with which to build links to assist with

recruiting, and the 17<sup>th</sup> Foot was re-named the 17<sup>th</sup> (Leicestershire) Regiment of Foot. British trade and political interests led to them being sent to India from 1804-1823. For this King George IV approved the use of the Royal Tiger emblem with the word 'Hindoostan' superscribed.

There followed postings to Aden and Afghanistan before being summoned to Russia for the Crimean War 1854-1856. Here Corporal Philip Smith won the regiment's first Victoria Cross for bringing in a wounded officer, under fire, in front of the Great Redan at Sebastopol. In 1858 a second Battalion was formed and sent to Canada, while the first returned to India and served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Afghan War 1878-1880. In 1881 the army was re-organised on a county basis and the name altered to The Leicestershire Regiment. At this time the new headquarters was built at Glen Parva, and some South Wigston streets named after places where the regiment had served.

With the outbreak of the Boer War 1899-1902 the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion was reduced to starvation rations during the Siege of Ladysmith. Throughout WWI the regiment served with great distinction in most of the battles including the Somme, and Passchendaele for which it won the Battle Honour YPRES 1917. The Regiment started the war with two Regular, two Territorial and a Militia Battalion and by the Armistice had expanded to 19 Battalions, had lost 7,271 men and won 3 VCs.

Between the great wars they served in Ireland, Cyprus, Egypt, India and Palestine. With the outbreak of WWII the Regiment served in Norway, Belgium, Holland, Dunkirk, North Africa, Italy, Crete, Algiers, Italy, Greece, Malaya, Ceylon and Singapore, where many were captured by the Japanese and forced to work on the Siam to Burma railway. In 1944 the Regiment was granted the Freedom of the City of Leicester and in 1946 in recognition of its distinguished service in every major theatre of war in WWII, King George VI granted that the word Royal be added to the regiment's name.

With the peace the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions amalgamated and together with many National Servicemen saw service in Hong Kong, Korea, Sudan, Bornio, Germany, and Cyprus. In 1964 cost cutting resulted in the Regiment being merged with the newly formed Royal Anglian Regiment and the depot at Glen Parva was closed. In its 276 year existence 'The Tigers' had served under 15 Sovereigns, received 17 Battle Honours and won 4 VCs. In 1969 the Magazine Building was restored and opened as a Museum to the Royal Leicestershire Regiment. After a period in storage the collection now forms part of the impressive newly opened displays to the Regiment at Newarke Houses Museum. Every June about 1,000 members of the Royal Anglian 'Old Boys' gather for a parade and service at the Regimental Chapel, Leicester Cathedral.

After enjoying stirring military music, and some questions and discussion, our Vice Chairman, Tony Lawrance, thanked the speaker for a most informative talk.

## **FEBRUARY MEETING**

The Society held its Annual General Meeting when approximately 40 members and

several guests were present. The agenda was as follows:

1) Apologies for absence - were received from Stella Tweed, Maurice James and Colin Hames.

2) Minutes of the February 2008 AGM - were read by the Secretary, Tricia Berry. These were proposed correct by Marion Daetwyler and seconded by Richard Carter and signed by the Chairman.

3) Matters Arising - None.

4) Chairman's Report – Mike Forryan welcomed everyone and reported another successful year with excellent speakers and trips out to Beeby and Launde Abbey. The only concern was the change in format for the Christmas meeting. In spite of a good speaker the attendance was still disappointing. The committee will look at this again and come up with suggestions. A continued drive to increase membership saw the web site launched in April and this is generating an average of 24 'interested' hits a month. It has links to other useful sites and is being used both locally and around the world. With Linda's help promotional posters featuring our programme have been placed on all 35 notice boards in the borough as well as in libraries. Mike thanked the Committee for their support during his first year as Chairman. He reminded members that suggestions for speakers or articles were always welcome.

5) Acting Treasurer's Report – Colin Towell handed out copies of the Income & Expenditure Account for the year to 31/12/2008 which showed a surplus of £144 50. He pointed out that despite a slight decline in membership, last year's decision to increase the subscriptions and dispense with the monthly collection, had brought the finances back on track. The room hire was to increase by £36 00 for the coming year, but this was fair and in line with similar venues.

6) Membership Report – Mike Forryan read Stella Tweed's prepared report. One new member was welcomed during the year but unfortunately three passed away. Also eight more did not renew, but we believe this was for personal reasons rather than any problem with the Society. The membership therefore now stands at 64 compared with 74 last year. However, determined efforts to raise the society's profile are now starting to have an effect. The largest attendance at a meeting was 42 for the Sir Frank Whittle talk in November followed by 36 for the August one on WWII memories. Further statistics are being extracted and will appear in a future Bulletin.

7) Election of Officers – After nineteen loyal years as Membership Secretary, Stella Tweed, had previously made it known she wished to retire at the AGM. Linda Forryan very kindly agreed to take her place. As no other nominations had been received the officers for the coming year will be: **Chairman:** Mike Forryan, **Vice Chairman:** Tony Lawrance, **Secretary/Bulletin Editor:** Tricia Berry, **Acting Treasurer:** Colin Towell, **Membership Secretary:** Linda Forryan, **Auditor:** Gary Davies.

**Committee Members:** Edna Taylor, Sue Woolley and Ruth Granger.

8) Any Other Business – It was agreed the subscription rate should remain unchanged at £10 00 full, and £7 00 concessionary, and that a donation for £100 00 should be made to the Framework Knitters Museum. Marion Daetwyler, on behalf of all members, thanked the committee for their hard work and particularly requested that this should be minuted. Colin Towell similarly thanked Mike Forryan for his active role as Chairman. Especially mentioning his work in raising the profile of the society through the creation of the web site, placing features in local papers and publications, and the distribution posters etc.

Members were reminded that their subscriptions were due and should be paid that evening if possible.

The second part of the evening consisted of a talk by Marion Daetwyler on Wigston during WWII. She remembered the place had a village atmosphere with more community feeling. Money would be raised to help if someone was ill, and it being before the NHS was founded, the Infirmary Parades were held to support the hospital.

Marion was in church with her family when war was declared at 11 o'clock. Being a teenager the arrival of many soldiers, some billeted in the Congregational schoolroom, made a big impression. She went out with one and wrote to him when he was sent to Norway, later to learn he had been taken prisoner. People were encouraged to write to Polish refugees, and you would enclose a stamp for a reply as they had no money. Parcels arrived from America with useful items such as soap and food. Her parents invited service personal to their home for social evenings around the piano. They were not short of basic food because they had a long garden, with orchard and chickens. Her mother attended evening classes in sewing at Long Street School (now the Record Office). Marion cycled to Leicester to work, and stayed to evening classes in typing and shorthand. She does not remember being frightened, even though the blackout made it totally dark. Her sister tragically died in 1942 of Meningitis.

Other recollections include: ATS ladies in uniform, double summer time (not nice as it was still day light and hot when you went to bed), no sign posts, the black market, factories taken over for munitions production etc., luminous badges, make do and mend, drawing seams on your legs to simulate stockings, visits to Bradgate Park and occasional holidays, gas masks, British Restaurants, taking your sandwiches when you went for a perm because it took so long, evacuees, the bus to Leicester cost 1½d return. Going to Brentford Road to see some of the soldiers newly arrived from Dunkirk.

Marion's new secretarial skills led to a job at Power Jets in Whetstone. The work was of course top secret and she had to sign a confidentiality declaration. She remembers typing up the results when testing took place. She met her future husband Max at Power Jets where he worked as an engineer.

Duncan concluded by talking about the commemorative service held annually on 4<sup>th</sup> February for the Polish crew of a Lancaster bomber which was struck by lightning and



crashed in Wigston in 1946. The plane came down on the playing field of Long Street Modern School (now the Record Office building). Amazingly no-one was killed apart from the six crew, though damage to property was extensive. The present All Saints' Church of England Primary School, successor to the Modern school, was built on part of the crash site in 1974. The school has erected a plaque in their main corridor, and a permanent exhibition and display case of artifacts, recovered during building work.

This year's event was held at a memorial area in the grounds, where a beech tree had already been planted to replace one destroyed in the crash. A wreath was laid and the names of the airmen read out by two representatives from the Polish Military Air Attache who came from London. Another wreath from the family of one of the crew was laid by two pupils from the school. An Officer from the RAF was accompanied by representatives of the airforces of Canada, Australia and India. Two benches were dedicated, one to the crew and the other to Nancy Barnett a long serving member of staff. Leicestershire Aero Club donated an original dye caste model of a Lancaster to the display and arranged a fly past of three aircraft from the club.

The Chairman, Mike Forryan, thanked Marion and Duncan very much for these so interesting and valuable first hand recollections of a most troubled time in our history.

## GREATER WIGSTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

### Receipts and Payments for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008

#### Receipts

Opening Balances as at 1/1/08:		
Unpresented chq	102.00-	
Current A/c	5.55-	
Deposit A/c	1014.67	907.12
Subscriptions		497.60
Collections		16.00
Visits		534.00
Christmas Meeting		36.00
Bank Interest		14.28
Donations		19.92

#### Payments

Lecture Fees		150.00
Bulletin & Programme		54.70
Room Hire (2008)		144.00
Secretary's Expenses		66.90
Visits		535.20
Christmas Meeting		22.50
Closing Balances as at 31/12/08:		
Current A/c	141.07	
Deposit A/c	1133.95	
Unpresented Chq	223.40-	1051.62

**2024.92**

**2024.92**

## REQUEST FOR HELP

Our January speaker, Derek Seaton, is currently working on a book on the life of William Ewart Boulter, the Wigston young man who was awarded the Victoria Cross in World War I. Derek wonders if any members can help him with additional information. 'Billie' Boulter was born and brought up in Wigston, and attended local schools before moving to Kettering to work in a Co-operative Store. His father Fred Boulter, also Wigston born, was a framework knitter, in later life progressing to be manager of Wigston Hosiers in Paddock Street.

Billie married Alice Irene Toone from Wigston Hall and moved to Wimbledon. The couple had no children but Billie had three brothers, George, Albert and Harold and two sisters Mabel and Sarah May. All survived the war and some at least probably have descendants. Billie was also keen on sport, does anyone know of any team photographs etc? The Boulter surname is very concentrated in the Wigston area, are all the branches related? Does anyone know if a family tree has been compiled? If you can help or know anyone else who could, Derek would be delighted to hear from you. He can be contacted on 0116 2470822.

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## BLUE PLAQUE SCHEME

To commemorate the lives of some notable people associated with Wigston's past, our society joined with the Civic Society to place Blue Plaques on local buildings with which they were connected. The accompanying Blue Plaque Booklet shows where the plaques are and gives a short biography of each person, with likeness if one could be traced. To date 185 of the booklets have been sold, while others are out on sale or return. There are still some available, at £3 00 each, which can be bought from the Record Office, the libraries at Wigston and South Wigston, or direct from Tricia Berry.

As a reminder the people included are: Orson Wright, Gertie Gitana, Charles Moore, Henry Walter Bates, Thomas Ingram, Hiram Abiff Owston, Samuel Davenport, William Ewart Boulter, Donald 'Don' Ross, Henry Davis Pochin, Alonzo Harry Broughton, William Eggleston, Thomas Burgess and William George Hoskins.

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## JUNCTION ROAD CAR PARK

A deed in Duncan Lucas's historical collection relates to two plots of land in Junction Road. They were situated on the west (car park) side, roughly one third the way along from the Frederick Street end. There are a number of interesting people mentioned in these deeds, which also give insight into the working of the two local building societies.

However, the story of the land on which the car park stands can be traced back to the

enclosure of the land in Wigston in 1766. At that time there was no development in this part of the parish, and the site formed part of an allotment of land, 7acres 3r 22p awarded to William Vann. Unfortunately no enclosure map survives but the boundary of this allotment is believed to be Frederick Street to the south, Leicester Road to the west, turning east on a line parallel with the north end of North Street, dropping south and then east again, before finally dropping south again to the east of Junction Road. The general area can be verified by the descriptions given in the enclosure document. In this the locations of each new owner's land can be deduced from the names of the adjoining owners, and the direction in which these adjoining holdings are situated. Thus making it fit together like a jig-saw puzzle.

The next reference occurs in the 1838 Wigston Valuation Book when an area referred to as Hall Piece had been re-measured at 8acres 0r 13p and was owned by George Davenport of Oxford, and occupied by Sophia Vann. In the same year, Bill Ward's book *Through all the Changing Scenes*, which is a history of the Wesleyan Methodist Church (now Central Pentecostal Church) in Frederick Street, gives the following information. "On 6/9/1838 a plot of land was purchased from George Davenport of Oxford, banker for £23. 6. 8d which according to the transfer document was 'part of the south east corner of a certain close in Wigston Magna called Hall's Piece measuring in front 10 yards and in depth 40 yards bounded on the south front by an occupation road, on the east by the foot-path leading from Wigston to Leicester and on the north and west respectively by other lands these belonging to the said George Davenport....'" Bill adds that "occupation road would be later named, firstly Mill Lane and then the present Frederick Street; foot-path, would be the present Junction Road". The following year the congregation built a chapel on the north side of their plot. This building was later converted to the present schoolrooms and a new church building erected at the front.

In 1846 George Davenport died and two years later his sons J.M. & H.D. Davenport sold part of the land to G. Loveday. In the 1855 Wigston Rate Book two owners were due to pay rates on land known as Hall's Piece, they were J.M. Davenport and G. Loveday. John Marriott Davenport was a solicitor, and clerk of the peace, who lived in Oxford. George Loveday lived in Leicester Road, Wigston where he was a shop-keeper and hosier, and in later life also a grazier occupying 85 acres. A third ratepayer in 1855 was William Cleaver who occupied a part of Hall's Piece to the north of Burgess Street, where he paid rates on a house and greenhouses and operated a market garden.

By the time the 1885 Ordnance survey map was published much development had taken place on Hall's Piece. There were houses along Leicester Road and North Street; on the east side of Junction Road and the south side of Burgess Street. The west side of Junction Road however was still mostly open land.

George Loveday died in 1880 and his wife Mary died in 1885. Following the death of Mary who had been left a life interest in George's Junction Road land, his Trustees, his son John Loveday of Kibworth, an auctioneer, and his friend John Heard of Wigston, a hosier, divided his land holding into plots for sale. On 29/6/1885, Lot 11 a plot of 423 sq.yds, which had a frontage of 30ft. to Junction Road and stretched back 130ft. to the

rear gardens of properties already existing in Leicester Road, was bought by Joseph Sanders of Wigston, a coal agent. Two years later the trustees sold 2608 sq.yds to William Evatt of Wigston. William was a farmer and butcher, occupying 64 acres of land and employing 2 men and a boy. He lived in Bull's Head Street and occupied three properties Nos. 25/27/29 which adjoined the Bull's Head Inn.

On 20/12/1890 William Evatt sold a plot of 478 sq.yds with a frontage of 33ft. (part of the 2608 sq.yds) to James Voss of Wigston a framework knitter. James' purchase adjoined that of Joseph Sanders' and was on the south side of it. James funded his purchase with a mortgage from the Great Wigston Permanent Benefit Building Society. This Society was established at the village hall (believed to be situated in Frederick Street) and had been incorporated in the same year (1890) under the Building Societies Act of 1874. James had to repay 1/6d per week each Saturday. He had one share in the society and had to pay a further 3d. per share each quarter to offset the society's expenses. The interest rate was 5% and was calculated each 31<sup>st</sup> December on the amount owing at the previous 31<sup>st</sup> December. After 26 weeks from the start of the mortgage the society might enter the premises and execute a contract for works or improvements and dedicate any part for highway or the exchange with neighbours. James was required to insure the property.

By May 1895 James had erected two messuages or tenements on the property, known as 43 and 45 Junction Road, he lived in one and let the other. He repaid his mortgage and the discharge was signed on behalf of the building society by Joshua Pratt. On 1/10/1895 James bought a narrow strip of land in front of his plot consisting of 14.66 sq.yds in order to form a pavement. This purchase was from William Billson & Samuel Francis Stone both solicitors of Leicester. It formed part of the 4acres 3r 27p the solicitors had purchased from J.M. Davenport in 1872. On 30/11/1895 James, now described as a cowkeeper, bought the neighbouring plot of 423sq. yds from Joseph Sanders who moved to Leicester and became a baker.

On 14/5/1918 James Voss sold both his plots, including the two houses, and the pavement area in front to A.E. Hill, of Wigston, hosiery manufacturer. Albert Edward Hill's hosiery factory was in Bell Street and stretched through to the nearby Frederick Street. Sadly the deed tells us that James "could not sign through illness, but Arthur E. Porter, clerk to Herbert Simpson & Bennett (solicitors), explained the meaning to him".

In March 1920 A.E. Hill sold the house, shop and premises known as 43 Junction Road plus 423 sq.yds of land at the side to Ernest James Facer. It appears that number 45 had been sold separately, as it no longer forms part of these deeds. In 1923 E.J. Facer sold 43, Junction Road and the adjoining 423 sq.yds of land to William Broughton, a hosiery foreman of 23, Central Avenue.

William Broughton borrowed from Wigston Magna Conservative Benefit Building Society to fund his purchase. This building society was also incorporated under the Buildings Societies Act 1874. The loan document was signed by S.A. Ross of Wigston Magna, schoolmaster, as witness to William Broughton's signature. Samuel Alfred Ross

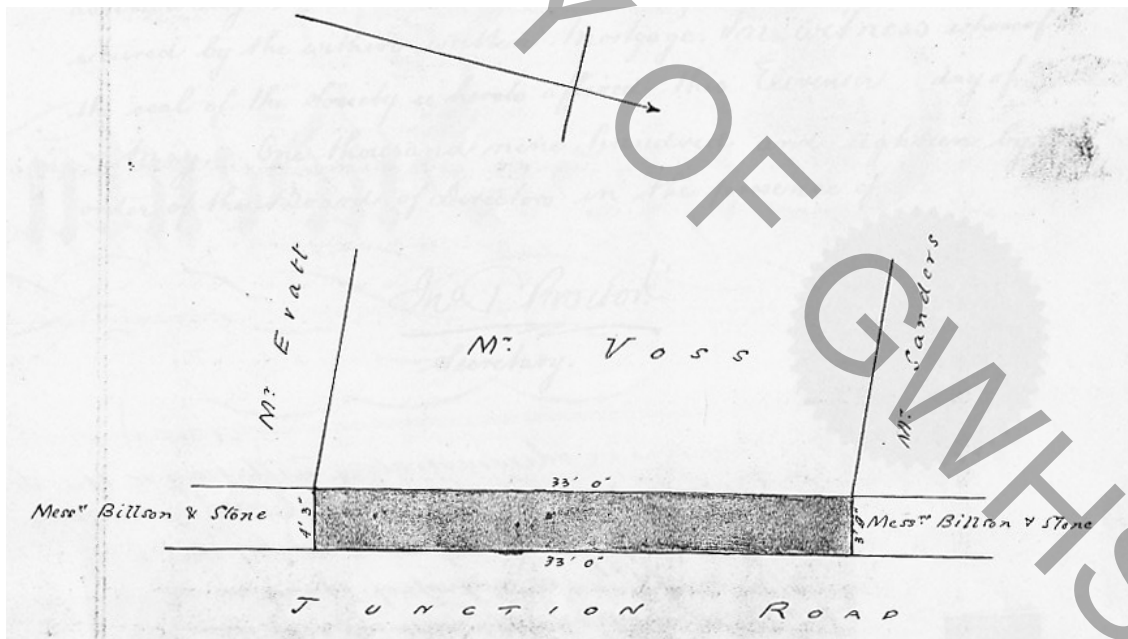
became headmaster of the National School and was the father of the well known theatre impresario Don Ross. The building society dropped the word 'Benefit' from its title in 1927. This was approved by the Register of Friendly Societies.

The mortgage was repaid in May 1927 and the release document was signed on behalf of the society by two of its directors, Philip Sampson and Harry Adams, and by the manager, K. Ross. P. Sampson was a pork butcher with shops at 22, Leicester Road and 104, Bull's Head Street. Harry Adams was a plumber who lived at 59, Long Street, a three-storeyed house which in the 1960s housed a business selling party novelties and which was known locally as the joke shop. Kate Ross was the wife of S.A. Ross.

The deeds end with the death of William Broughton in 1930 and probate of his will on 18/6/1941, probably upon the death of his wife who was the sole executrix.

Tricia Berry

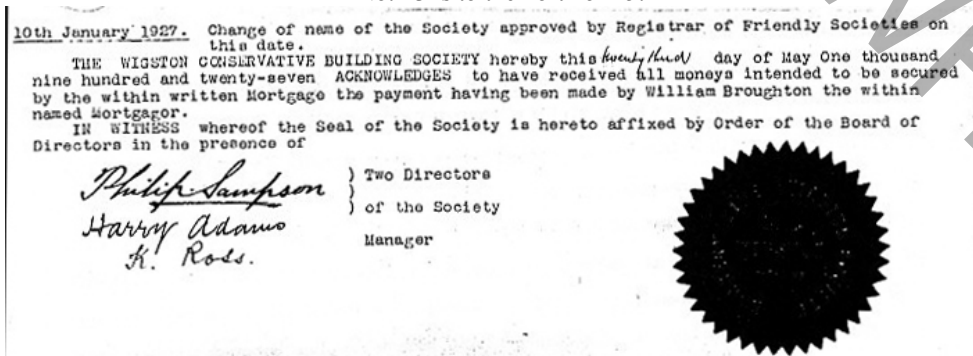
Sources: *Through all the Changing Scenes* by William A. Ward 1985, pg 5. 1838 Wigston Valuation Book, LRO: DE 384/54. 1855 Wigston Church Rate Book, LRO: DE384/44. Wigston Enclosure Award, Duncan Lucas collection. Deeds to 43 & 45, Junction Road, Duncan Lucas collection. Various Wigston census returns. Various trade directories.



Plan of James Voss's first purchase of land in 1890



1955 map showing Junction Road. Nos. 43 & 45 are the semi-detached pair, which are the 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> houses past the Methodist Church buildings.  
No: 43 is to the north of 45.



Detail from a mortgage document of 1927 showing the signatures of the Directors & Manager of The Wigston Conservative Building Society.