

# *Greater Wigston Historical Society*

White Gate Farm, Newton Lane. Wigston Magna, Leicester

## **BULLETIN 76**



.R.COLVER

**PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS - OCTOBER 2006 TO FEBRUARY 2007**

**Wednesday 18\* October 2006**

Notable National Trust Gardens - Barbara Hewitt  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006**

The Life & Times of Cardinal Wolsey - David Baldwin  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2006**

Christmas Social with supper, quizzes & raffle  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 17th January 2007**

Foxton Locks, Past, Present & Future - Mike Beech  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

**Wednesday 21st February 2007**

AGM followed by 1950760s photographs from the Bill Ward collection - Elizabeth Ward & John Gillam  
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

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**QUIET PLEASE.**

We have noticed that some members begin to talk quite audibly among themselves during question time following a talk. Please could we ask that you do not do this. We know you don't mean to be rude, but we do feel it is a bit discourteous to the speaker, and also annoying to other members who may wish to hear and join in these discussions.

The Bulletin is published three times a year on 1st February, June and October. Articles etc. (which are always welcome) should be submitted to the editor three clear weeks before the publication date please.

Editor: Tricia Berry, 7 Wensleydale Road, Wigston. Leics. LE1 8 3RX.

## FRONT COVER

The front cover this time features Jim Colver's drawing of a 1920s ice cream salesman, complete with attractive purpose built handcart. When ice cream was first invented is uncertain, but it is believed to have had its origins in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. when various cultures enjoyed iced wines and fruit juices. Marco Polo is said to have introduced the dairy version into Europe from China in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century, where it became a popular dish at the French and Italian courts, but there is no proof of this. The first recorded use in England was when Ashmore noted 'iced cream' as served at the Feast of St. George at Windsor in 1672. An English recipe survives published by Mary Bales in London in 1718. American colonists adopted the shortened phrase 'ice cream' and opened the first parlour in New York in 1776.

There were five main stages in the development of ice cream.

- 1) Cooling food and drink with snow and ice.
- 2) Discovery that salt in water produced cooling.
- 3) That salt added to snow and ice was even more effective.
- 4) Invention of the ice cream maker in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century.
- 5) Development of mechanical refrigeration in late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries.

The invention of the ice cream maker, a wooden bucket freezer with rotating paddles, improved manufacture, and in 1846, a hand cranked freezer was patented by Nancy Johnson, establishing a method which is still basically the same as that used today. The development, in 1926, of the first commercially successful continuous process freezer by Clarence Vogt revolutionised storage, and ice cream became really popular in the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century when cheap refrigeration became common.

People who made a living from selling ice cream from carts were known as Hokey Pokey men, this name derived from the Italian O che poco (Oh, here's a little). Italians are, of course, well known for the high quality of their ice cream. Five families spring to mind, who settled in Leicestershire and founded successful ice cream businesses, they are Brucciani, Massarella, Rossa, Esposito and Alonzi.

## JUNE MEETING

Although our June outing to Bruntingthorpe Proving Ground took place on the longest day in the year, it was incredibly cold out on the airfield, and we were very thankful that for part of the time we were indoors. Forty six members and friends had come to see the collection of veteran aircraft, mostly of the 'Cold War' era, assembled over time by the Walton family. We were welcomed on arrival by Denis Parker, visitor manager to the Vulcan to the Sky project, which was set up to get XH558, the only surviving Vulcan Bomber, airworthy again. Raised high above the ground in a giant hangar, it was indeed an awesome sight.

After a short introduction by Denis, half of our party went to view the other aircraft with Geoffrey Pool, Chairman of the Project, while the rest remained in the hangar. We heard some technical details about the Vulcan and the effort and dedication of the Project Members in their fond raising and applying for a Lottery Grant. The Vulcan is totally British in design and manufacture, and was commissioned, with its nuclear capability, to provide defense against the Soviet threat during the volatile 1960/70s. It was very successful at this, its presence being enough to keep the peace without any casualties. Its last active service was in the Falklands campaign when it was the only aircraft capable of flying such a long distance even with a refueling stop en-route.

The plan is to get the plane ready for June 2007 when the Queen wants it to fly down The Mall leading other aircraft in a fly-past to celebrate the 25\* anniversary of the end of that conflict. It will then complete about 10 years flying at air displays before being 'retired' to Duxford. Other items in the hangar were a scale model of a Vulcan, 14 feet long, made for a James Bond film, when it was sunk in a tank of water, to simulate a real one sinking in the sea! Also a sobering electronic map showing towns and sites in Britain earmarked by Russia to be knocked out.

We then changed places with the other half of our party and inspected some of the 28 planes parked outside. Highlights and contrasts came in the shape of the huge transport plane, the Guppy, and the tiny homebuilt Cricket autogyro. We were allowed to board a de Havelland comet. This plane was the first jet propelled passenger plane to fly to America, commencing service in 1949. It was developed in great secrecy because jet engine technology was still highly confidential at that time.

After this we gathered in the on-site canteen to enjoy a buffet supper kindly provided by Geoffrey Pool's wife Olwen Hughes. Edna Taylor then thanked our hosts for a most unusual and interesting evening.

Since our visit the Project has been much in the news being initially unable to raise extra funds to keep up with escalating costs. Staff were given redundancy notice and the future looked bleak indeed, when following huge publicity in the national press and TV, a pledge system was set up and some substantial help materialised. A celebration Roll-Out day was held on 31<sup>st</sup> August, when the Vulcan was lowered to the ground and towed out of its hangar, emerging through a cloud of smoke amid much applause. The only remaining airworthy Lancaster Bomber gave a celebration fly past coming low over the site four times. Did anyone spot it?

## **AUGUST MEETING**

This month's booked speaker had to call off when his work schedule was altered and he was no longer available on Wednesday evenings. We are very grateful to John Oakley for agreeing to step in at fairly short notice.

John and his wife, our member Jackie Oakley, are serious holiday makers who take their car abroad and are therefore much better placed to explore, learn and record the places they visit. This evening the subject they chose was a taste of the history and

culture of Italy. The country has had a very turbulent past. In earliest times the north part near the Alps was occupied by the Ligurians, the middle section by the Romans, most of the south by the Etruscans and the Naples region and Sicily by the Greeks. After the fall of the last Roman Emperor in 476 A.D. Italy was overrun by successive waves of barbarians, but over time these became integrated and the country came to be ruled by Charlemagne as part of his empire which also included France, Germany, Austria and part of Spain. At his death this empire fell apart and in 961 A.D. Otto the Great of Germany was crowned by the Pope as Emperor, however, his rule was incomplete with some of the merchant cities declaring themselves independent city states. In the south from the 11<sup>th</sup> Century Naples and Sicily were held by the Normans. In the 15<sup>th</sup> Century there were French invasions of Italy driven out by Emperor Charles V. Austria, France and the Papacy divided the country between them until the rise of Napoleon who crowned himself King of Italy in 1805. After his downfall North Italy went back to Austria, Rome and the district around came under the rule of the Pope, and Naples and Sicily went to a Bourbon monarch.

The union of all Italy was finally achieved in 1870 Under King Victor Emanuel. In 1882 Italy joined Germany and Austria in a triple alliance but in 1915 she entered WWI against them. Under Mussolini she declared war on the side of Nazi Germany in 1940, but in 1943 surrendered to the Allies. In 1946 the King abdicated and Italy became a republic.

In spite of this unsettled past and perhaps in some respects because of it, culture and civilisation has thrived, the Renaissance began here and art, music and literature flourished in the leading cities. The architecture, largely medieval in style, reflects the various cultures that have occupied the country.

We enjoyed some excellent slides, notably the actual balcony said to be the setting for Romeo and Juliet, Venice and the gondolas, St. Marks square, The Bridge of Sighs to the Jail, Rialto Bridge over the canal and many wonderful churches, cathedrals and palaces.

After some questions and discussion, the Chairman, Edna Taylor read out a few items of news, she then thanked Mr. Oakley for a really excellent evening.

### **SEPTEMBER MEETING**

Vicki Priest from the University of Leicester Archaeology Section was our speaker this month, her subject, the South Leicestershire Hoard. It was discovered near Market Harborough in the year 2000 by Ken Wallace, a member of a recognised archaeology field walking group. He was using a metal detector on an area he had already identified as likely to prove interesting. The find was reported to the correct people and excavated in great secrecy, news only being released to the press three years later when the work was completed.

5,187 silver and gold coins have been found, buried in fairly small groups, probably in containers which have long since rotted away. They are mainly Iron Age dating from

40 B.C. to 50 A.D. and were minted in Kent. Other items discovered were some later Roman coins, many animal bones, some complete carcasses suggesting ritual sacrifice, a ceremonial Roman iron helmet gilded in silver which predates the conquest, an early Roman roundel, silver bowl and ingot, crucible and Roman gold jewellery clasp.

The find has caused huge excitement and is regarded as the most important in Europe. English Heritage and the B.B.C. have been involved as well as teams from Leics. County Council and the University, the landowner, finder and some local people. The interpretation is that it was a religious site where people gathered regularly to feast, and to offer their wealth and sacrificed animals to their Gods. The helmet, also an offering, suggests a Briton went abroad to fight in the Roman Army and brought it back as a souvenir. Later, after the invasion, a Roman settlement was established close by which has been identified by the presence of pottery, some Roman coins and evidence of ditches and the foundations of buildings. It is believed the Romans were aware of the importance of the older site and left it alone.

With the work finished, at least for the present, the landowner has been persuaded to lay pasture on this previously arable field as the best way of preserving the site. The artefacts are being preserved and catalogued at the British Museum. They have been valued at £300,000 and will be divided between the Museum and Leicestershire County Council, which will need to secure funding to create the necessary secure storage and display facilities.

After some questions, Vicki was thanked for a really fascinating talk by Chairman, Edna Taylor.

### **OLD PARISH DIARY**

Some further entries from Thomas Burgess's diary:

1855

Mrs. Rhoda Scott died Nov. 26<sup>th</sup> aged 79 years.

Great Wigston - The unproved state of this village arising from the sanitary measures that have been adopted has been very apparent during the last summer & autumn in the diminished amount of general sickness, and the advance of malignant diseases during that period. On Thursday the 22<sup>nd</sup> ult [November] a meeting was convened in the Vestry of the Church for the purpose of the further carrying out those measures under the powers of, and in conformity to, the Act passed during the last sessions of parliament. At that meeting the following gentlemen were chosen as a committee: Messrs. T. Burgess (Chairman), T. E. Blunt, A. Fry, S. Seddon, C. Baddeley, J. Langham, J. Cooper, G. Loveday, W. Eggleston, S. Pochin, J. Hassall, G. Foxton, J.A. Pochin, & J. Pochin. This committee held their first meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> at which meeting they appointed Mr. J. Newton, Inspector of Nuisances. The committee were

all present but one, and as it is composed of the parties among whom so much contention and opposition was formerly manifested, there is every reason to hope that in future the two parties will act in harmony, and by their united efforts carry out those further improvements which are necessary to the comfort and well-being of the inhabitants. The greatest and most apparent nuisance now is the roads and causeways, which a more frequent use of the broom and scraper would soon eradicate.

On Sunday night last about seven o'clock an attempt was made to rob the house of Mr. Thomas Asher, Leicester Road, Great Wigston. There is no doubt but the burglar thought that Asher and his wife were both gone to chapel, if it had been so their house would most surely have been ransacked; but Asher being ill was in bed, and at the time named heard a noise at the door, he at first thought it was his father but hearing a more violent rush at the door he got up and went to the window, and saw a man with his shoulder against the door trying to force it open. He called out to him and the fellow ran away, when Asher got down stairs he found the door open, it had been sprung so as to force the bolt of the lock out of the socket.

Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 1855 - married, John Wright to Mary A. Briggs.

Same day - Gregory Pawley to Mary Ann Cook.

Sudden death on Saturday the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. J. Gregory Esq., held an inquest at the Durham Ox, Gt. Wigston on the body of the child of Wm. Franklin aged 6 months. The girl that nursed it took it out on the previous day about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, the child then appearing in good health. On returning home the child seemed as if going asleep, and she laid it across her arms the usual way of carrying infants in that state, in a few minutes the babe's countenance began to change and before she arrived home it was dead. Medical aid was obtained and it was put into a hot bath but to no effect. Verdict - died by the visitation of God.

Died at G.W. on 31<sup>st</sup> Jany, [1856] Jane the wife Lewis Russell aged 53 years.

Feby. 7<sup>th</sup> [died] Mr. John Capendale aged 78 years. Married Feby. 10<sup>th</sup> 1856

Thomas Chance to Mary Hewitt. Eliza Cawthorn died Feby. 13<sup>th</sup>, 1856 aged

36 years. Daniel Herbert & Alice Noble married Feby. 24<sup>th</sup> 1856.

Great Wigston - Late on Thursday night Feby. 21<sup>st</sup> or early on Friday morning the 22<sup>nd</sup> a lamb hog belonging to Mr. Thomas Tebbutt was feloniously killed by stabbing it in the side, the felons opened the sheep and took out the heart, liver & kidneys, they also cut off a part of both legs, and then threw it into a ditch where it was found on Friday morning. No clue has been obtained of the parties who did it, altho. the Police have used every endeavour to find out the perpetrators, and have searched the houses of several suspected persons for that purpose.

March 9<sup>th</sup> 1856 Thomas Mason died aged 20 years.

March 15<sup>th</sup> Elizabeth the wife of C.H. Hames died aged 30.

Married March 27<sup>th</sup> Richard Craven to S. A. Meekins.

March 31<sup>st</sup> died James Dand in his 85<sup>th</sup> year.

April 2<sup>nd</sup> married Samuel Shipp to Mary A. Levesley.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> died Elizabeth Measures in 73<sup>rd</sup> year of her age.

April 25<sup>th</sup> died Edw. Willey aged 72 years.

April 26<sup>th</sup> [died] Hannah Newton aged 25 years.

May 3<sup>rd</sup> died Sidney Stanyard aged 28 years.

May 4<sup>th</sup> Sophia Vann died aged 18 years.

May 4<sup>th</sup> married Wm. Findley to My. A. Folwell.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1856 married Wm. Heard to Alice Grant.

June 3<sup>rd</sup> died Martha Susan the wife of Chas. Baddeley the only surviving daughter of Mr. Wm. Underbill of Newport, Shropshire aged ? years, the native place of Capt. Baddeley. [Captain Charles Baddeley was uncle to this man].

June 15<sup>th</sup> 1856 Wm. Martin married to Ann Collier.

20<sup>th</sup> July 1856 Thos. Freeman married to Elizabeth Cawthorn.

The annual sermons for the benefit of the Sabbath School belonging to the Primitive Methodists was preached Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup> by Mr. Goodrich.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aug. the infant child of Geo. Herbert was found dead in bed by the side of its parents.

On Sunday August 10<sup>th</sup>, two sermons were preached in the Parish Church, for the benefit of the Day and Sunday Schools, that in the afternoon by the Rev. T.G. Gallwey, curate, in the evening by the Rev. Gregory, Vicar of Oadby, the collections amounted to £20 6s 5d.

Aug. 31<sup>st</sup> died John Wm. Johnson aged 4 years.

Married Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> James Bullock to Ann Herbert.

Died Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Sarah Perkins in her 50\* year. Married

Sept. 23<sup>rd</sup> Thos. Homer to Eliza Ann Yates. Married Oct.

16\* J. Robinson to Emma Is. Clarson. Died Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>

1857 Elenor Storer aged 65 years. On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Oct. [died]

Wm. Dawkins aged 33 years. Married Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Chas.

Stanyon to Maria Warner Foster.

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## HOUSE HISTORIES

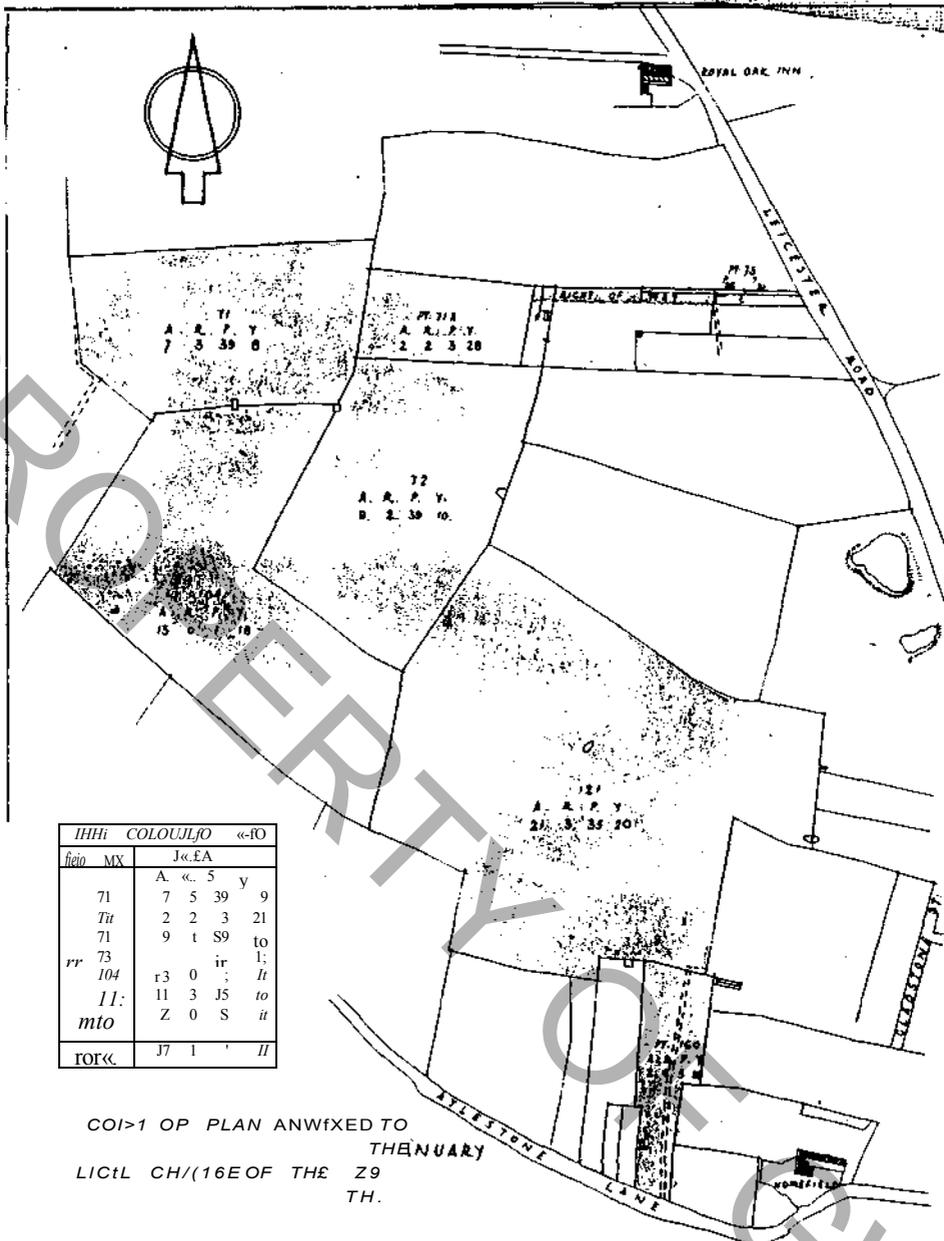
### 5, ALFRETON ROAD

This is a continuation of the article in Bulletin 75 and looks at the history of the remaining approximately one third of the plot, forming the far end of the rear garden, of 5, Alfreton Road. It was a tiny part of field no: 72 on the Ordnance Survey map (1930 Edition). This field together with 71A measured 12a 1r 2p and was referred to as Laws Meadow in a 1939 schedule within the deeds..

At enclosure in 1766 this land is believed to have formed a part of the 29a 2r 7p allotted to Elizabeth Horspool, and a part of the 1 1a 3r 33p allotted to Alice Law. It was subsequently, like the other two thirds, bought by John Ragg and became part of his Home Farm belonging to the Manor House in Long Street, and was inherited by the Hames family. In October 1920 it was sold by the executors of Richard Hames to Albert Edward Hill a prominent hosiery manufacturer who at about this time also bought The Grange house and estate on the other side of Leicester Road.

Albert Hill raised money on this land and when his business failed during the mid 1920s trade depression, Francis Greenwood, gentleman who lived at Sunnybrae, London Road, Leicester, who had lent the money and held the deeds as security, became the owner.

In December 1939 Francis Greenwood, by then living at The Grange, sold 19a 2r 13p comprising fields 71 A, and part of 72 & 121, to the building partnership James Herbert Jelley & Florence Christine Jelley for £4503 16s 6d. The builders became a limited company, Jelson Ltd, in December 1953 and by April 1956 when No 5 Alfreton Road was completed and sold to its first owners, a tiny portion of field no: 72 formed part of the rear garden.

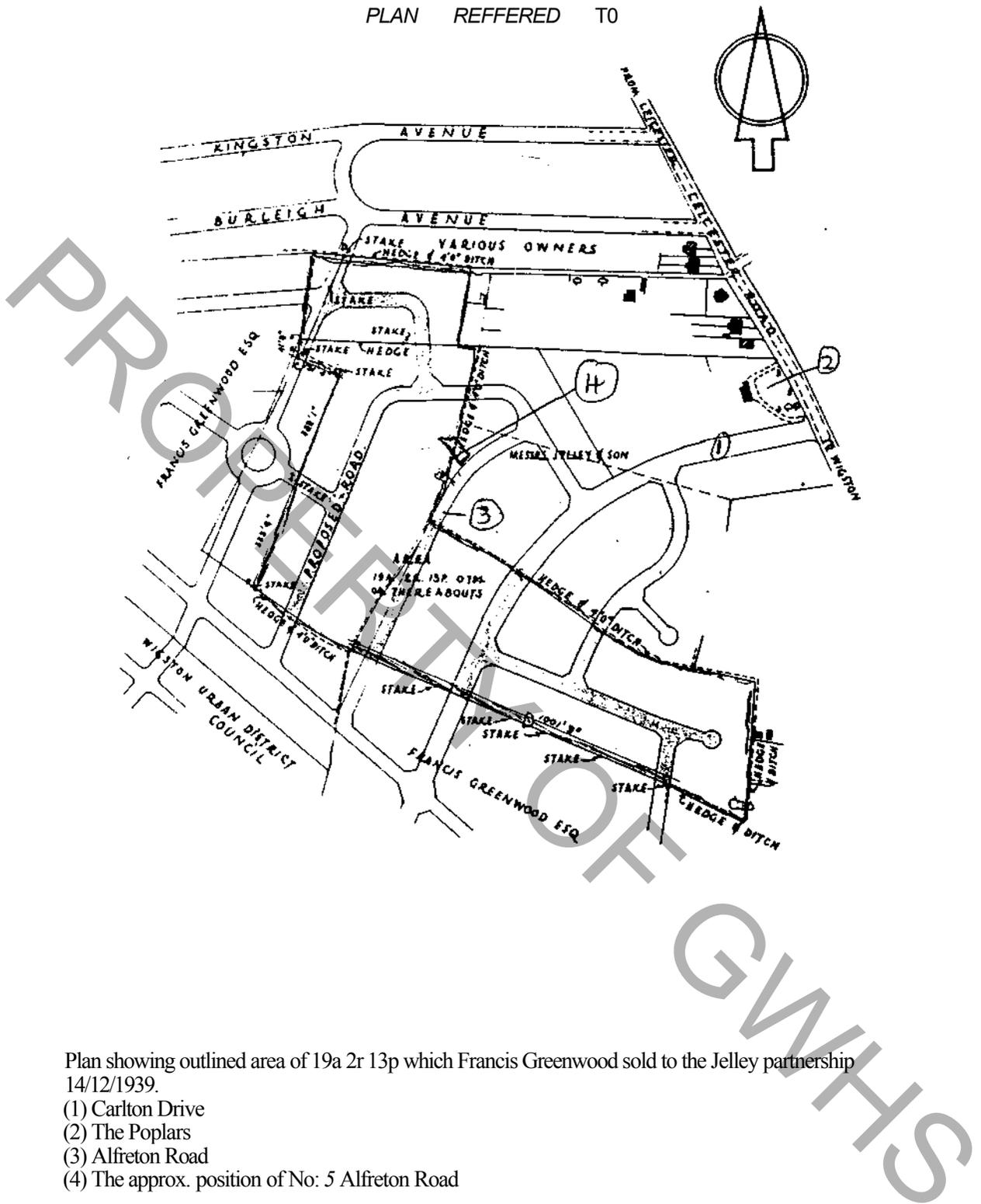


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Plan with shaded area showing the 57a 2r Ip owned by Francis Greenwood on 29/1/1929.

PLAN REFERRED TO



Plan showing outlined area of 19a 2r 13p which Francis Greenwood sold to the Jelley partnership 14/12/1939.

- (1) Carlton Drive
- (2) The Poplars
- (3) Alfreton Road
- (4) The approx. position of No: 5 Alfreton Road

## 24, GRASMERE ROAD

The land upon which the Mere Road area came to be developed was awarded to John Darker (1722-1784) at the time of enclosure in 1766. It was a farm of approx. 51 acres and lay between the Oadby Lane (south east side) and the land of St. Wolstan's Farm. It stretched from St. Wistan's Church as far as the Oadby parish boundary at one point. John Darker came from a Stoughton family and became a prosperous oil man/hop merchant in London. He was an M.P. for Leicester and was one of the main subscribers to the building of Leicester Infirmary. He owned estates in Derbyshire and Northamptonshire as well as Leicestershire. He lived mainly in London but had a country house, Gayton Park in Northants.

By 1838 a Parish Rate assessment states that this Oadby Lane farm was owned by the 'late Loudham' and let to Ann Willson. Caleb Loudham was a Leicester solicitor. An 1870 Poll Book gives the owner as William John Blake who lived in Danesbury, Hertfordshire.

The earliest date in the deeds to 24, Grasmere Road is 15/9/1875 recording the death of W. J. Blake. In his will he had set up a complex family trust which in time resulted in his son Reginald William Blake, also of Danesbury and a Lieutenant in the Royal Navy, having a lifetime ownership. In 1918 R. W. Blake sold the property to the Great Wigston Industrial & Provident Society Ltd of Long Street, Wigston for £1840.

In 1924 the society changed its name to the Wigston Co-Operative Society Ltd of Great Wigstoa "Sometime since" this 1924 date the Co-op Society entered into an agreement with Albert Henry Hamp of Wigston Road, Oadby and Alfred Edmund Hayes of 'Walden' Shanklin Drive, Leicester, a leather merchant. The society agreed to sell 43.506 acres of the land to them in the future but retained title. Hamp and Hayes started to develop the land, laying out and naming Hayes Road and being responsible for the distinctive block of three pairs of semi-detached houses in that road among others. As the newly built houses were sold, the new buyers were instructed to pay the purchase money over to the Co-op, not the builders. By 1/10/1938 Hamp and Hayes had in this way developed 11.655 acres of land and the Co-op, having received the proceeds of the sales, agreed to release the remaining 31.851 acres to them. Among the covenants was that the partners should lay out the roads and sewers, and that none of the houses built, including land value, should have a selling value of less than £400.

By July 1954 Hamp, and Hayes who then lived at 'Green Gates' Wigston Road, Oadby, had sold some of the land for allotments and the little park, and they then agreed to sell the remaining 15.146 acres. The purchasers were Tom Edwin Bambury of Granville Road, Norman Charles Bambury of Hillcrest Road, Leicester and Harold Frank Bambury of Highfield Drive, Leicester. This 15.146 consisted of parts of fields 140,132, 134 & 137 and came to be developed as Eastway, Thirlmere and Grasmere Roads.

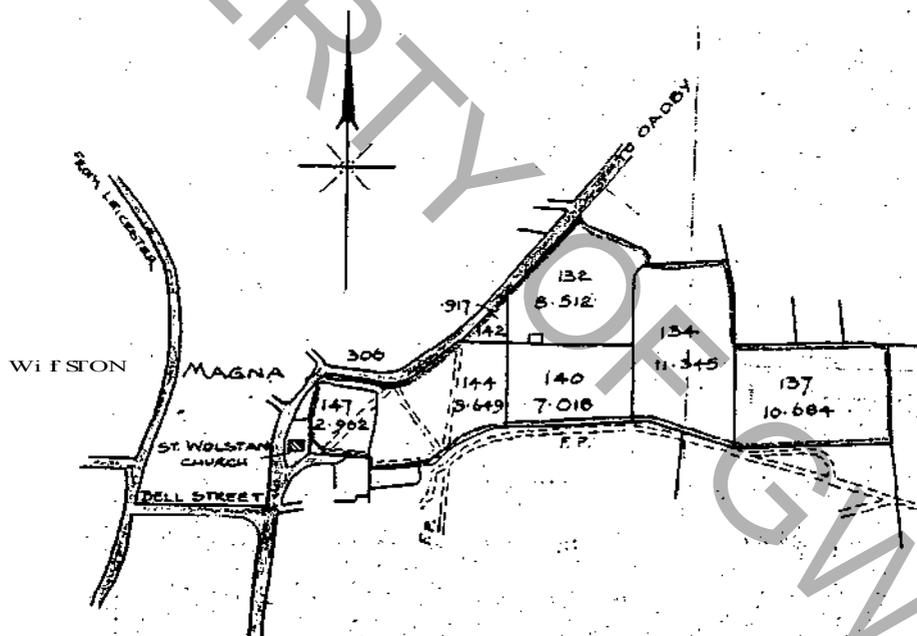
In June 1963 Roy Freestone bought Plot 77, later to become No: 24, Grasmere Road

from Bamburys the builders.

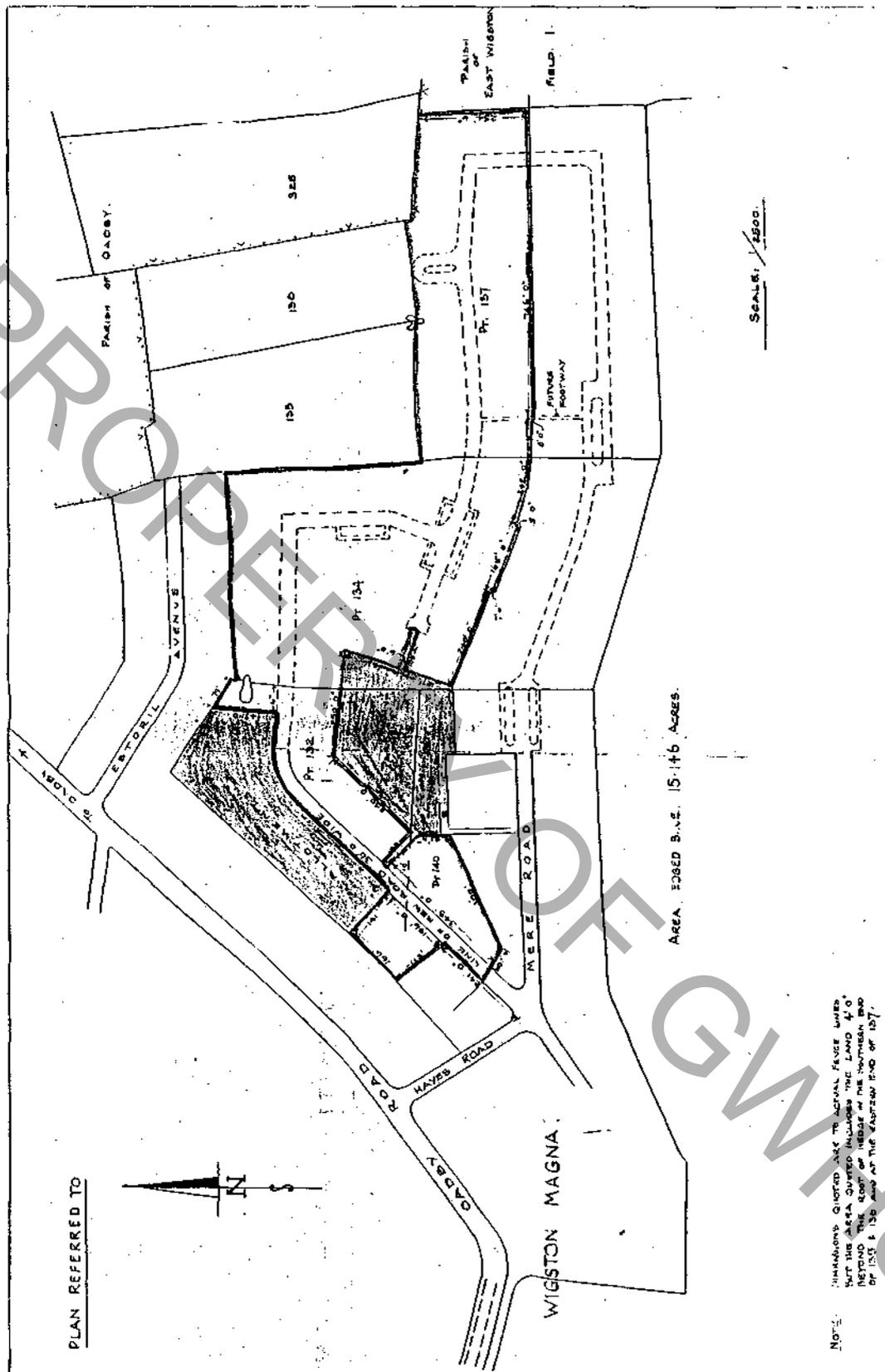
Tricia Berry

**Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank Mary Freestone very much for lending me the old deeds to her property. Other sources used: the Wigston Enclosure Record Book & Will of John Darker, ODL Collection, 1838 Wigston Rate Assessment book & other information on John Darker from 'People Files' at LRO, Nichols History of Leicestershire.

COPY PLAN ON CONVEYANCE: DATED 5th NOVEMBER. 1918



Plan showing outlined area of 50.333 acres which Reginald William Blake sold to the Great Wigston Industrial & Provident Society Ltd on 5/11/1918.



Plan showing outlined area of 15.146 acres which Messrs Hamp & Hayes sold to Bambury Bros. 6/7/1954.

24, Grasmere Road is in Field 137, four plots along to the east of the 'future footway'.