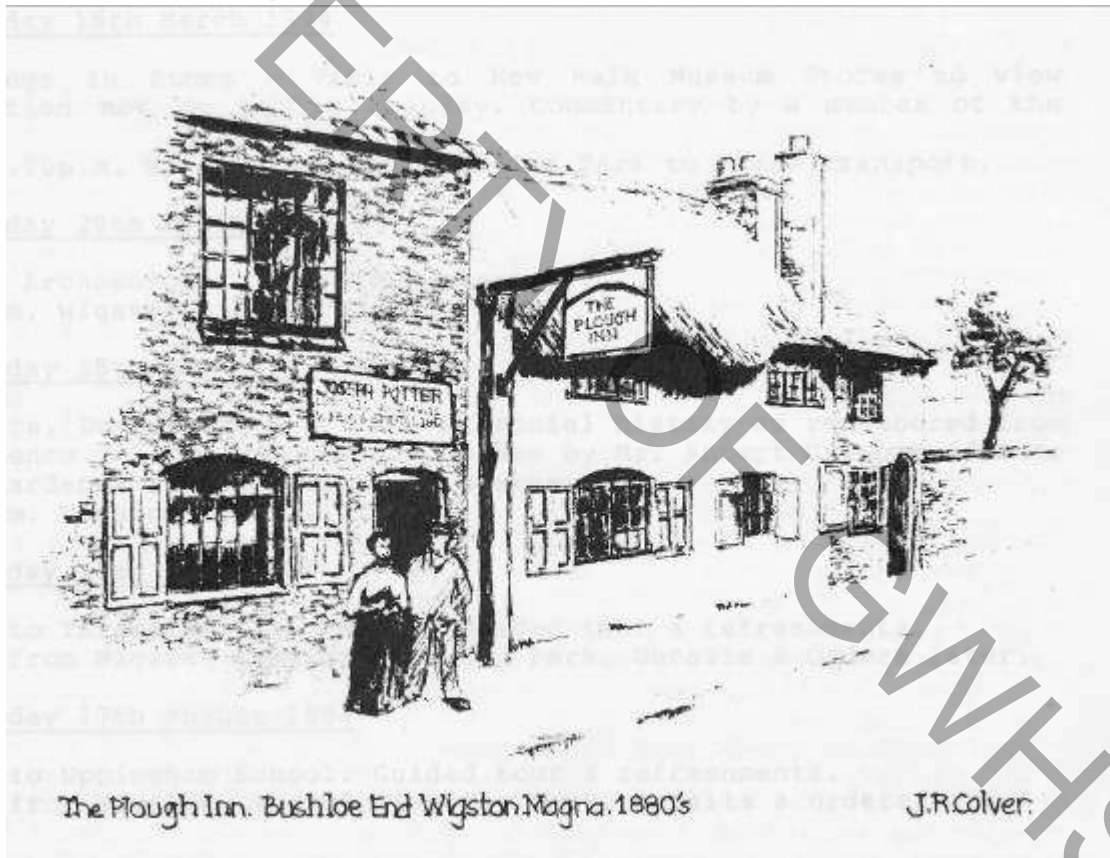




Greater Wigston Historical Society  
White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna Leicestershire

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## BULLETIN 38



**Wednesday 16th February 1994**

A.G.M. followed by short talks by some of our members who are doing family history research. 7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

**Wednesday 16th March 1994**

Paintings in Store - Visit to New Walk Museum Stores to view collection not on public display. Commentary by a member of the staff.

Meet 7.00p.m. Wigston Liberal Club Car Park to share transport.

**Wednesday 20th April 1994**

Aerial Archaeology - Mr. Jim Pickering.  
7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

**Wednesday 18th May 1994**

Upstairs, Downstairs - A talk on social history as remembered from experience in some of the big houses by Mr. Robert Gregory (former head gardener at Maidwell Hall, Northants. 7.30p.m. Wigston Liberal Club.

**Wednesday 15th June 1994**

Visit to Thrumpton Hall, Notts. Guided tour & refreshments. Coach from Wigston Liberal Club Car Park. Details & Orders later.

**Wednesday 17th August 1994**

Visit to Uppingham School. Guided tour & refreshments.  
Coach from Wigston Liberal Club Car Park. Details & orders later.

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

Joint Editors: Mrs. Chris Smart, 48 Evington Valley Road, Leicester. Mrs. Tricia Barry, 7 Wensleydale Road, Wigston.

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**OCTOBER MEETING**

A large turnout of some 55 members enjoyed a most interesting talk entitled "Leicester through the Ages" given by Mr. John Banner. Well known as a city guide and author of many articles on local history which have featured in the Leicester Mercury, Mr. Banner explained that his subject was his hobby and that he took a history degree at Leicester University at the age of 70.

His talk, illustrated with slides, concentrated mainly on the buildings and other evidence which survives today to take us on an armchair guide of the City from the Roman occupation to the late Victorian era. The Romans established a fort in Leicester where the underpass is now built, at the junction of their two important

roads The Fosse Way and Via Devana (Gartree Road). The town at that time covered an area of about 100 acres and the Jewry Wall remains as does some beautiful tessellated pavement which was discovered under the Great Central Railway Station and is now preserved at the Jewry Wall Museum.

Mr. Banner went on to describe the Castle Mound created in 1069, and once surmounted by a wooden castle. What remains of the present Castle building (1100), the Tudor Gateway (1445), Turret or Rupert's Gateway (1422), St. Mary de Castro Church (1107), Trinity Hospital (1331), William Wyggeston's Chantry House (1512), Roger Wyggeston's House (1500) and the Magazine Gateway (C1370)

The Guildhall which was founded by the Guild of Corpus Christi in 1343 was used as the town hall for many years. Its library being the 3rd oldest in the country. Phoenix House in Welford Place, built by the insurance company, which had its own fire station next door. Later occupied by Samuel Stone a famous town clerk of the city whose Stone's Justices' Manual is still consulted today.

He moved on to cover the Liberal Hall, The Museum (1837), Belmont House (1853), De Montfort Hall (1913), the War Memorial and lodges on Victoria Park both designed by Lutyens, and the gates, the gift of Sir Jonathan North, Mayor during 1914-18 war, in memory of his wife. The Clock Tower (1868), the Fielding Johnson Building of Leicester University erected 1837 as the County Lunatic Asylum, King Street, The Crescent (1826), New Walk and the Town Hall (1876), all were explained as was the life and work of John Biggs. The old High Cross, one pillar of which was moved variously to the Crescent and then Crown Hills House by Arther Wakerley is now back in Cheapside.

Two items of local interest, the fact that the Wyggeston Family is thought almost certainly to have originated from Wigston; and the water tank which stood in the market place and was supplied with water taken by a conduit from St. Margaret's Field (hence Conduit Street) ended its life in Wigston in the grounds of Abington House.

Asked to name the most impressive building of its era Mr. Banner chose the Midland Bank Building in Granby Street, designed by Joseph Goddard as the head quarters of the then Leicestershire Banking Company.

Our heads were full of facts (of which this is only a small summary) when after some questions and discussion, Edna Taylor, thanked Mr. Banner warmly for a really excellent evening.

The meeting ended at approx. 9.00 p.m.

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### November meeting

On Wednesday the 17th of November, the Society met to hear George Jackson talk about the overland expedition to Australia that he and his wife Kathleen undertook in the 1970

The talk and slide show focused on their experiences as they travelled through India.

We were treated to stories of an Indian prince who kept elephants and a pet lion in the grounds of her home. We heard about Ghengis Khan and the Mogul empire. How they had originated in Mongolia, conquered China and eventually entered Europe and how one of his descendants built the city of Agra. We heard about how the Taj

Mahal was built as a memorial to a favourite wife. We heard that the triumphal arch in New Delhi was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens, (who also designed the War memorial on Victoria Park)

All this was amply illustrated with slides, and prompted by questions Mr. Jackson had a fund of anecdotes to tell about his travels. He revealed that, his latest trip is to Jordan and the Middle East.

This is the second time Mr. Jackson has visited us and he was thanked for another interesting and enlightening talk.

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### DECEMBER MEETING

On Tuesday 14th December members gathered in the large downstairs room of Wigston Liberal Club for their annual Christmas Party.

The evening commenced with a very good picture quiz organised by the Chairman, Edna Taylor, which got everyone thinking and scratching their heads.

We were then entertained by The Mallinsons from Leicester Magic Circle. They amazed us with some very clever tricks and nearly succeeded in losing one member's ring which she rather unwisely lent to them. They were helped for part of the time by 'volunteer from the audience' Linda Forryan.

After this it was time for the excellent buffet supper which had been prepared by Pat Connolly, Mary Freestone, Peggy Taylor, Stella Tweed and Shirley Muggleton with Edward Connolly transporting everything in his car.

Edna Taylor concluded the evening by thanking those responsible for the refreshments and giving each a small thank you present. She suggested we send some of the food and a card to Secretary, Doris Chandler, who could not be present because of a very painful back. This idea was readily approved. The company sang 'Happy Birthday to You' to Ralph Wignall who was 86 that day.

Prizes were won by Mrs. Pollock for coming first with an impressive score of 29 out of 30 in the picture quiz. Peter Mastin and Shirley Stewart came second with 27 points. The raffle raised £15. 15 for Society Funds.

The evening closed at approximately 9.45p.m.

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### **January meeting**

Vernacular architecture: an illustrated **lecture** on farm buildings by David Smith.

40 members present.

On Wednesday the 17th November the Society met to hear David Smith speak on the history of Leicestershire farm buildings. His lecture centred on the historic interest of farm buildings rather than the technical details, interiors or classification details.

He mentioned the word palimpsest, often used to describe the multiple imprint of things on the landscape, and proceeded to show us the evidence of this in farm buildings.

All the main points were illustrated with slides of farm buildings, some still standing some demolished, in Leicestershire.

Many of the slides illustrated how labour intensive activities, low level technology and the reuse of old materials were employed for contingency building in the past.

He recommended two books for further reading:-

Discovering farm buildings by J.E.C. Peters.

Illustrated handbook of vernacular architecture by R. Brunskill.

Iravid Smith is also the author of 'Smaller domestic buildings', which forms part of the introduction to the 2nd ed. of Pevsner's Leicestershire and Rutland, in The buildings of England series. This short article includes details of many of the farm buildings mentioned in the lecture.

The meeting closed at about 3.30 p.m. and I am sure all would agree this was a most interesting and absorbing talk.

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The front cover illustration of this bulletin has been drawn by Jim Colver and is of the Plough Inn, Bushloe End, Wigston Magna.

For a period of at least forty nine years, from possibly earlier than 1855 to 1904, a Joseph Potter is listed in various directories as being the landlord of the Plough. In the 1881 census Joseph Potter was said also to be a farmer of 12 acres. However, in Kelly's directory of 1888, Mrs Catherine Potter is listed as the landlord. One could speculate, therefore, that this was not one person but perhaps a son taking the Inn over from his widowed mother.

In the 1912 edition of Kelly's directory the landlord is Thomas Bull. The last entry found for Thomas Bull is 1925. In 1928 Fred Stapleford is the landlord, followed in 1932 by Harry Herbert. In 1936 W.J. Clarke is the landlord.

The Inn is said to have got its name from the fact that the village plough was kept there. In later years it was known as the Sundowner hut has now returned to its original name of the Plough.

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#### WIGSTON WHO'S WHO NO: 7

#### HAROLD EDWIN HURST M.A.,D.Sc.,F.Inst.P.,F.R.Met.Soc.

Harold Edwin Hurst was born on New Years Day 1880, the eldest of the 5 children of Charles & Caroline London Hurst. His father was a builder and the family lived at No: 12 Bell Street, Wigston. This was later the site of Forryan's Garage and is now part of the area covered by the Iceland store. In Mr. Hurst's time the premises extended through to Frederick Street and contained a large covered shed with open sides used for the drying of timber. In addition to building he was a joiner,

wheelwright and blacksmith and a contractor to the Midland Railway Co. He was Wigston born but his wife Caroline was originally from Coventry.

Young Harold attended Alderman Newton's School, Leicester and then won a scholarship to Hertford College, Oxford. He graduated in 1903 with a B.A. First Class in Physics and the then Vicar of Wigston, Rev. R.C. Palmer, wrote in the Parish Magazine that it was "a highly creditable performance and one that not only his parents but all Wigston should be proud of."

From 1903-6 he remained at Oxford University working as a lecturer and demonstrator in the Electrical Laboratory. Later in the year he took up employment with the Egyptian Government in the Physical Department as Hydrological Adviser. As the cultivation of Egypt's farmland was totally dependent on irrigation from the River Nile, the proper management of her water supply was of the highest importance to that country and also to the Sudan where he was at times seconded. His calculations were used in the raising of the Aswan Dam which enabled a further 5,400 million cubic metres of water to be stored in its reservoir.

In 1924 and again in 1926 he set out on research expeditions to the Lake Plateau Basin to study the climate and topography because "it is only since the low year 1913-14 that it has been fully realised.... that development of the cultivable area of the Nile Basin to its greatest extent requires in addition to storage of water from flood to low stage the storage of water in years of good supply to cover the deficiency in bad years. Such storage is only possible in the Great Lakes of the Nile Basin where a rise of level does not greatly increase the water losses [by evaporation], and where a small change of level implies a large volume of water impounded or released." These journeys took nearly 6 months each to complete and his party travelled round Lake Victoria on each occasion and passed through Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Tanganyika and the Belgian Congo over terrain hardly ever visited by Europeans before. Porters carried the supplies and 30,230 kilometres (18,784 miles) were covered, 2056 miles by foot, bicycle and canoe, the rest by lake and ocean steamer, train and motor transport. Later by courtesy of the Royal Air Force aerial reconnaissance was used in addition.

Mr. Hurst would typically complete two years work abroad and then return to England for 6 months, visiting Wigston where he would relax by walking in the fields and catching up on local friendships. On one occasion in the 1920's he hired the Co-Op Hall in Long Street and gave a public lecture illustrated with lantern slides taken from the air. These shots of Africa's big game made a big impression locally in the days before T.V. wildlife programmes.

He was appointed Director General of the Physical Dept., Ministry of Public Works, Egypt 1919-46 and this department published a number of papers he wrote, on physics, the measurement of water and a magnetic survey of Egypt and the Nile. He was thrice awarded the Telford Premium and the Telford Gold Medal in 1957, by the Institute of Civil Engineers. He was also awarded the Order of the Nile 2nd Class and the Order of Ismail 3rd Class.

During the course of his long working life he was called upon to give evidence in a court case. The prosecuting barrister at the beginning of his cross examination acknowledged that he was questioning one of the greatest mathematicians in the world. The Egyptian Government went on to win the case.

Prior to the Suez Crisis when anti-British feeling began to emerge he left his employment but was held in such high esteem that his services were purchased on a freelance basis thereafter. When British troops were sent into Egypt he worried about the fate of his pension, but all was settled satisfactorily.

He married firstly Winifred Hawes, and after her death a member of her family, Marguerite Hawes, by whom he had two sons.

For recreation he enjoyed mechanical work, shooting and fishing. He retired to live in Sandford-on-Thames, Oxfordshire where he died 7/12/1978, aged 98 years.

Tricia Berry

Sources: Who Was Who 1971-80

The Lake Plateau Basin of the Nile, Parts 1 & 2, by Dr. Hurst.

Mr. E.F. Broughton of Arnesby whose father was a personal friend of Dr. Hurst, and who continued to correspond with him after his father's death in 1939.

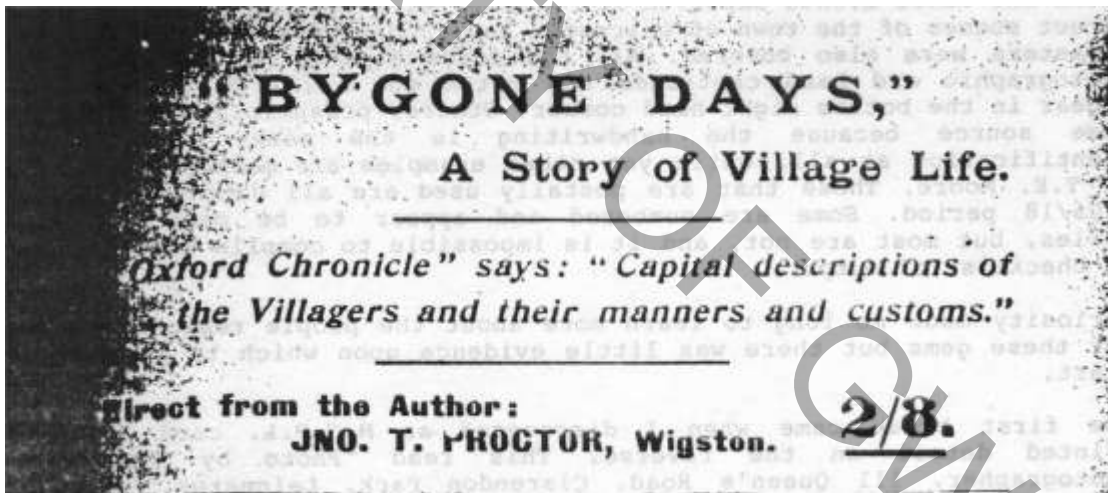
1891 Census for Wigston, at Leics. Record Office.

Gravestone in Wigston Cemetery

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OLD ADVERTISEMENT

This advertisement appeared in the July 1903 issue of Wigston Parish Magazine. Does anyone know if a copy of "Bygone Days" survives? It would make 'Capital' reading!



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POSTCARD CENTENARY

1994 marks a milestone in postal history. It was in September 1894 that the Post Office first allowed private publishers of postcards to produce pictorial versions to be sent through the mail. Prior to this time postcards (which were first used in Austria in 1869, followed by Great Britain in 1870) were plain affairs with a message on one side and an address on the other.

The first picture postcards had a small illustration on the front with space left for a brief message and the address on the back. This was changed in 1902 to the divided back we know today i.e. picture on one side and address and message on the back.

The 1902 change gave much more scope for designers and photographers to introduce different styles. Millions of cards were produced and used mainly in place of today's telephone call. "Arrived home safe" is by far the commonest message. Because it was fashionable to collect postcards at this time a surprising number have survived and are now eagerly sought by a new generation of collectors.

The Centenary is being marked by a set of commemorative stamps in April and an exhibition at the Royal Horticultural Society's Halls in London from 30th August to 3rd September.

From a local history point of view the most interesting card is the topographical view. A local company active in this field was known as M.C.P.L. and has long aroused my curiosity. Anyone who has enjoyed one of Bill Ward's slide shows or looked through Duncan Lucas's albums is likely to have seen examples of their work.

The Centenary has prompted me to write down my findings and submit for possible publication in the card collectors' magazine Picture Postcard Monthly. I hope it is also of interest to Society Members.

Tricia Berry.

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#### SO WHO WAS M.C.P.L.?

Not long after starting to collect topo's of my local area of South Leicestershire it became noticeable that one photographer/ publisher's work stood out from the rest, both in terms of quality and quantity. Many villages, however small, had been visited and views and local events captured for posterity. A few cards featured street scenes of the town of Leicester too, and several spectacular disasters were also covered. All the cards I have seen are real photographic and hand captioned and often the initials M.C.P.L. appear in the bottom right hand corner. Others, presumably from the same source because the handwriting is the same, bear no identification at all, while yet other examples are marked T.E.M. or T.E. Moore. Those that are postally used are all dated in the 1906/18 period. Some are numbered and appear to be part of a series, but most are not, and it is impossible to compile any sort of checklist of output.

Curiosity made me long to learn more about the people responsible for these gems but there was little evidence upon which to make a start.

The first break came when I discovered an M.C.P.L. card with printed detail on the reverse. This read "Photo by Moore, Photographer, 111 Queen's Road, Clarendon Park, Leicester." (So this was what M.C.P.L. stood for). A look in Wright's Leicester Directory for 1906 listed a Mrs. Agnes Moore, photographer and milk dealer, at that address. Was it therefore a lady who was responsible for this marvellous work?

All efforts to find out more came to nothing until I had a second lucky break. Through a newspaper article I was able to make contact with Mr. Edmund Peter Moore, who is a son of T.E. Moore. He has very kindly supplied me with much of the background information I sought and what he didn't know I was then able to find out by the usual genealogical methods.

Thomas Edmund Moore had been born on 16/3/1865 at Swanwick, Derbyshire, the son of George Clark Moore, a bricklayer, and Sarah Jane Moore, nee Purdy. One of a family of 13 children, he also trained as a bricklayer, as did his brother James,



and together the two boys would travel all over the country seeking work, often spending the night under a hedge. They eventually settled in Leicester and Thomas was living at 28, Mowbray Street on 2/8/1890 when he married Agnes Sketchley from 6, Lonsdale Street. The ceremony took place at Leicester Register Office. Agnes was born on 12/1/1869 at 34, Archdeacon Lane in the town and was the daughter of Thomas Sketchley, a postman, and his wife Ann, formerly Bishop. Thomas and Agnes had two children, Thomas Herbert Moore and Lilian Maud Moore.

The first business reference so far discovered is the previously mentioned entry in Wright's Directory referring to Agnes Moore. Her husband presumably followed his own occupation at that time. I understand that Thomas had no formal training in photography but had always been interested in the subject. It is not known whether he taught his wife her photographic skills or whether she was the original photographer.

In the 1914 Wright's Directory Agnes Moore is still listed as a photographer but by then Thomas Moore is also mentioned, as a picture framer of the same address, and with additional business premises nearby at 54, Queen's Road.

The couple used bicycles to travel about the countryside, their photographic equipment strapped on the back. Illustrations 1 and 2 are typical examples of the peaceful yesteryear scenes they captured. More dramatic are those of a serious fire which occurred in Leicester on 5/10/1911 when St. George's Church and several nearby factories were destroyed. Peter Moore recalls his father often spoke of this event which he had attended with his elder son Thomas H. No one was allowed through the barriers but Thomas lifted up his camera and shouted PRESS. This did the trick and they were allowed nearer and took some graphic photographs. Illustrations 3 and 4 are examples which also show that the initials M.C.P.L. and T.E.M. were in use at the same time. It is not known what the reason was for these different styles. My own guess is that M.C.P.L. denoted Agnes's work and that Thomas used his own name or initials on his work.

Tragedy struck the family on 8/11/1916 when Agnes died of bowel cancer, aged only 47. The Leicester Chronicle of 18/11/1916 carried the following announcement:

"Moore. . . On 8th at Royal Infirmary, Agnes, wife of T.E. Moore, 111 Queens Road, C.P. Leicester & only daughter of Thomas & Ann Sketchley, 59 St. Saviours Road East."

The Sketchleys had by then moved to this new area of Leicester and opened a hard confectionery shop. Illustration 5 shows the widower wearing a black armband in mourning for his wife. On the death certificate Mr. Moore's occupation is given as master photographer.

On 7/2/1918, Thomas Edmund Moore, by then aged 52 years, married Clara Smith, spinster aged 41, at Laughton Parish Church, Leicestershire, a village some 10 miles south/east of Leicester. Clara was the Rector of Laughton's housekeeper and daughter of George Smith, a shoehand. Illustration 6 shows an M.C.P.L. card of Laughton village church. The middle aged Thomas and Clara had a son, Edmund Peter Moore, whose help is gratefully acknowledged in helping me unravel this story.

Thomas continued to live in Queen's Road and work as a photographer/picture framer until about 1924 when the family moved to another new and developing area - 3 Wigston Lane, Aylestone on the outskirts of Leicester. This house was bought incomplete and finished off by Thomas himself. The family named the house Pentrich after the village of that name in Derbyshire, which they considered the prettiest. At about this time, with the boom in picture postcards over, Thomas returned to building, trading under the name T.E. Moore & Co. Illustration 7 shows the new family home with business name board attached. After 17 years as a full time

professional photographer he thereafter continued only in his spare time. It was his practice to buy plots of land on Knighton Fields Road and area, often from the council, and build speculatively. Unfortunately during the 1920/30's recession he got caught out with houses he could not sell and went bankrupt. When better times arrived he repaid all his debts and therefore discharged his bankruptcy. He died, aged 76, on 2/10/1941. Sadly no space could be found or use foreseen for the master photographer's many negatives which were stacked from floor to ceiling in his house. They were taken away by the dustmen!

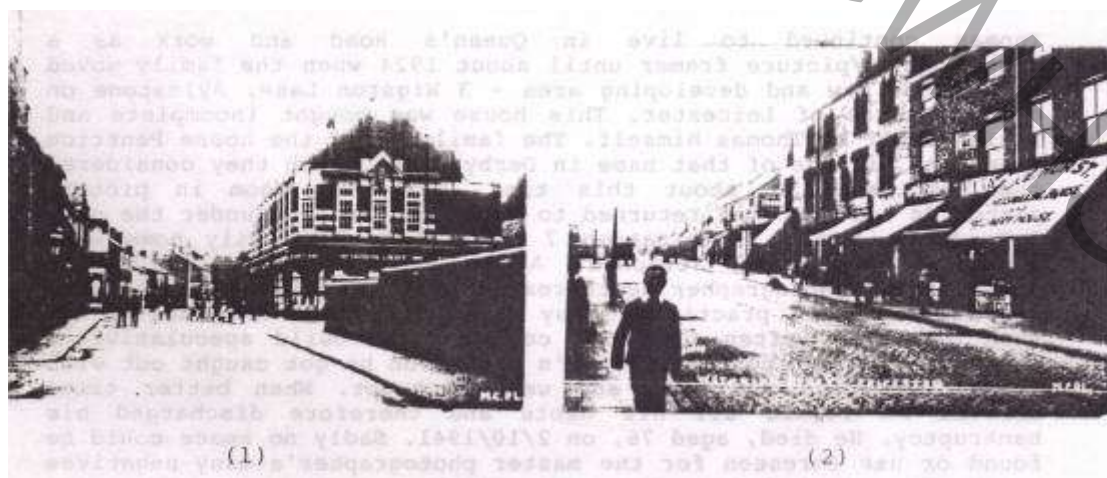
Peter Moore has many memories of his father. He had a particular interest in parish churches and photographed the interior and exterior of many in the city and county. He was, however, a member for at least part of his life, of the Christadelphian sect. He frequently attended meets of the local Fernie Hunt, and was probably their official photographer. Illustration 8 is a typical hunt postcard. He was well known to the gentry and proud because they addressed him by his surname only, which made him feel part of the proceedings.

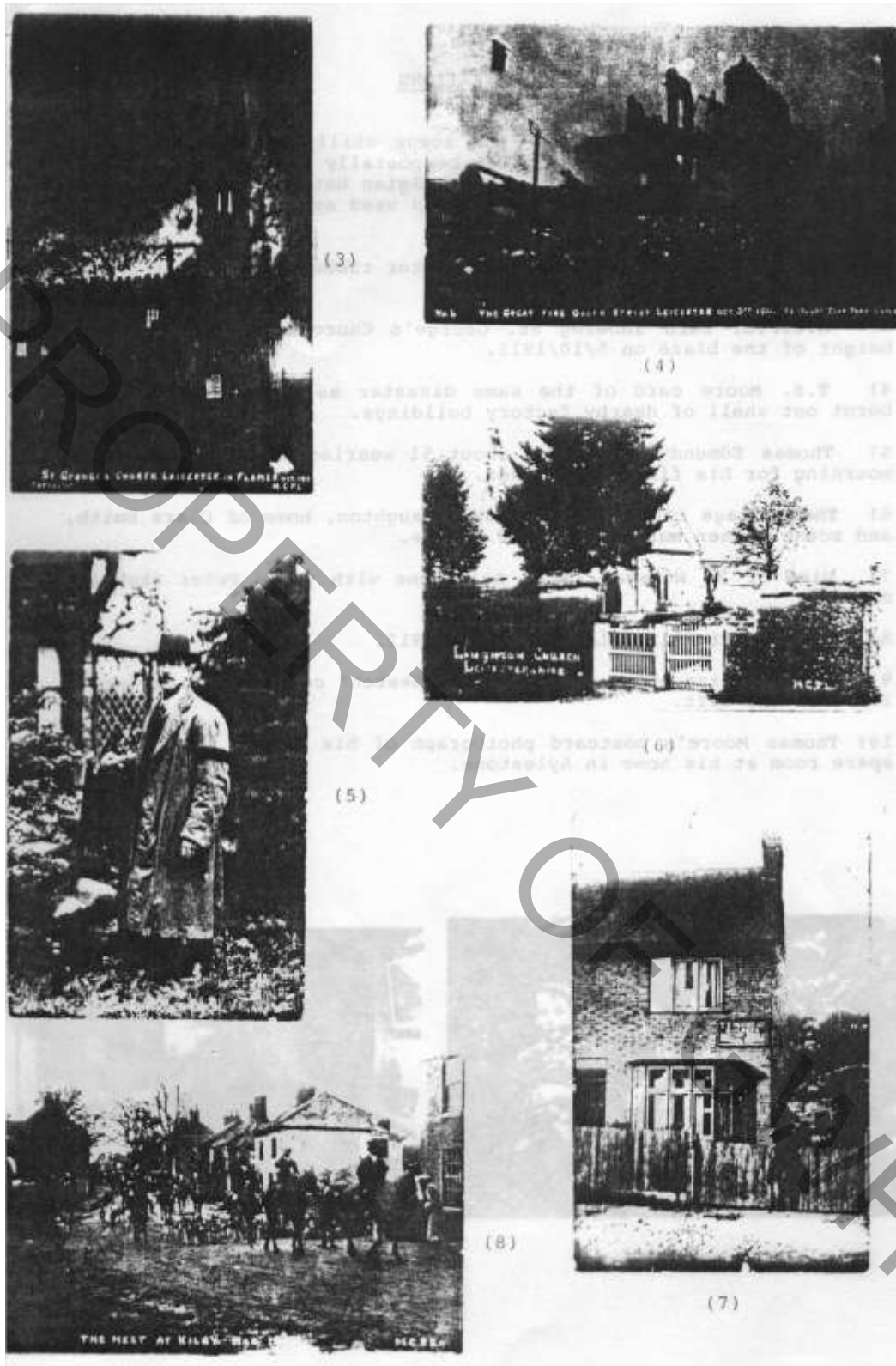
As well as a postcard publisher Thomas was also a portrait photographer and was particularly good with children. He once photographed Peter and three friends with their rabbits which was then entered in a Daily Sketch competition entitled "Me and my Pet". The entry, see illustration 9, won 2nd prize and the boys received 2/6d each.

On his business card, Thomas described himself as a photographic artist and Peter remembers him having a small compact set of paints with different colours and fine brushes and pens with which he would touch up the photos if requested, sometimes producing a kind of colour picture. This tended to flatter some people and made a change from the usual black and white or sepia. He created a studio in the back bedroom of his house, see illustration 10, part of which was used as a darkroom where he had an enlarger. Developing was done in the bath.

Thomas's elder son shared his father's interests and once made a camera the size of a postage stamp. He worked for much of his life as a picture framer for Gadsby's, fine art dealers, of Leicester. His younger son Peter followed him into the building trade.

The Moore family home at 3, Wigston Road, Aylestone is still a private house and looks much the same today, but Queen's Road is more commercial and number 111 has been combined with 109 to form a travel agents' premises. Number 54 is now a restaurant.





### ILLUSTRATIONS

A Typical M.C.P.L. card, the scene still recognisable today. The only one of these examples to be postally used, it was sent on 15/2/1915 to his home country by a Belgian National staying at The Grange, Old Wigston, Leics., which was used as a refugee hostel at that time.

- 2) Waterloo Street, Leicester in quieter times. Today it is a busy dual carriageway.
- 3) M.C.P.L. card showing St. George's Church, Leicester at the height of the blaze on 5/10/1911.
- 4) T.E. Moore card of the same disaster as No: 3, showing the burnt out shell of nearby factory buildings.
- 5) Thomas Edmund Moore aged about 51 wearing a black armband in mourning for his first wife Agnes.
- 6) The village church of St. Luke, Loughton, home of Clara Smith, and scene of her marriage to T.E. Moore.
- 7) View of 3, Wigston Lane, Aylestone with young Peter standing outside.
- 8) The meet at Kilby, Leics., March 1912.
- 9) Prize winning entry in the "Daily Sketch" competition. Peter is 2nd from the left.
- 10) Thomas Moore's postcard photograph of his studio created in a spare room at his home in Aylestone.



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EXTRACT FROM:-

RETURN OF THE SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES RECOGNISED ON 1st  
JANUARY 1906 AS VOLUNTARY PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

showing as far as practicable the Tenure of the premises of such schools and the character of the Trusts, if any, to which the premises are subject under any Trust Deeds or Instruments or otherwise.

Leicestershire County Council - Class A

School number                                    new \*243            old 917

Wigston Magna N.

Class	A	
Accommodation	483	
Average Attendance	448	
Date of Deed or scheme	2 Dec 1842 (7)	31 Dec 1868 (S = Scheme)
Tenure	F	F
School Sites Act	A	A
Use:- School	S 40	40
Other Educational Use		SS
Society		N
Denomination or Religious Instruction expressly prescribed by Trusts	C	C

Notes:-

(7) Provision for inspection endorsed 1843. It is not clear whether this deed relates to any part of the present school premises.

\* A Building Grant was made in aid of the erection etc., of the premises or part of them.

F Freehold.

A Grant under the School Sites Acts 1841 to 1852.

40 School open to inspection under the Order in Council of 10th August 1840.

S School.

SS Power to use as Sunday School.

C Church of England.

Class A Schools of which the premises are held on express charitable trusts for purposes solely educational.

This extract was kindly supplied by Brian Bilson.