



Greater Wigston Historical Society

White Gate Farm, Newton Lane, Wigston Magna Leicester

BULLETIN 67



PROPERLY OF GWHS

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS - OCTOBER 2003 TO FEBRUARY 2004

Wednesday 15th October 2003

Enclosure & the Village Labourer 1760/1832 - Mick Rawle (L & R Family Hist Socy)
7.30p.m. U.K. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

Wednesday 19th November 2003

The History of the Bicycle - Stuart Warburton & Tony Pickering (Desford Lane Pedallers)
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

Wednesday 17th December 2003

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

Wednesday 21st January 2004

Looking for a Black Sheep - Linda Hotchkiss (Lines. R O)
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

Wednesday 18th February 2004

A.G.M. followed by History of the Brocks Hill Millennium Park - Duncan Lucas
7.30p.m. U.R. Church Boys' Brigade Rooms.

FRONT COVER

Jim Colver's drawing for the cover this time features a market trader. He is shown purposefully striding along pulling the sort of hand cart commonly used for moving and displaying stock.

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.

JUNE MEETING

Our second summer outing was to the interesting villages of Appleby Magna and Parva. We duly arrived at St. Michael's Church where a guided tour had been booked to include mention of the adjacent medieval manor house and almshouses, but such was not to be the case! Another group who were apparently expected on a different night had beaten us to it and the sole guide seemed overwhelmed and quite unwilling to do anything for us except point out some printed leaflets and answer the odd specific question to anyone who managed to get his attention.

This disappointment was more than compensated for when we arrived at our next destination, the Old Grammar School (now Sir John Moore's C of E Primary School). This beautiful old building has to be one of the most spectacular primary schools in the country. It is currently undergoing massive change to develop and make better use of the facilities with the aim of securing an income for future maintenance. A charitable trust has been established, with lottery money and other sponsorship obtained, and more sought. There is a requirement that £50,000 should be raised locally, so fund raising is a high priority. The aim is to repair the buildings and landscape the grounds to English Heritage standards, refurbish the school, create for rental residential accommodation from the old teachers' quarters, open a heritage and interpretation centre within the Trustees Room and dormitories which will be set out as they would have been in 1750 and feature displays on the history of the property and famous people associated with it, convert the stables into an education and internet centre and provide a community room and office space.

We gathered for an initial talk by the administrator, Deena Morris, who confirmed we were the very first group of proper visitors to the project. She told us the founder of the school Sir John Moore 1620-1702 was brought up in Appleby where his family owned the manor. He became a grocer and merchant and increased his fortune further by investing in the East India Company. He was knighted in 1672 and became Lord Mayor of London in 1681. The school was his way of putting something back into his native place.

His friend Sir Christopher Wren prepared the original plans which still survive at Oxford University. Work started in 1691 under one of Wren's church carpenters, Thomas Woodstock, but when he died a local man, Sir William Wilson, took over and completed in 1697 having made many changes, supposedly with Wren's approval. A strong bond with the family remains to this day as Peter Moore, descendant of Sir John, is currently chairman of the Trustees.

Our tour took in:- the original school hall complete with statue of Sir John and childish carvings of past pupils in the wooden panels, the school bell dating from 1585 and 17th century clock mechanism, dormitories as designed and last used at the beginning of the 20th century, Trustees room with original furniture including the first school chest (which needs 3 different keys to open it!), the first modern flat conversion (with Mike Forryan, saucepan in hand, offering to cook supper) and spectacular surrounding views from the roof.

A truly fascinating evening with many members planning a return visit as the project develops.

AUGUST MEETING

This month we completed our round of visits to the old medieval churches of Leicester with the Cathedral church of St. Martins.

We were warmly welcomed by Canon Barry Naylor who then introduced one of the local Blue Badge Guides Virginia Wright. Her expert knowledge and easy style made for a most enjoyable and enlightening evening. She began by explaining the dedication. St. Martin was a Roman Army Officer who became a Christian. He later settled in Tours, France which like Britain was then part of the Roman Empire. He became a charismatic leader and was much admired in Roman Britain. He died in AD397. Because of this dedication it is thought likely there would have been an earlier church on the site built soon after his death.

Parts of the present building date from the 13th century as do the Sedilia and Piscina, but much more including the tower and spire were rebuilt in the 1860s. It was constituted a Cathedral in 1927 being selected because it had always been the civic church situated next to the Guildhall. Because there was still need of a church for parish use St. Dunstan's Chapel was designated for this purpose.

St. Katharine's Chapel has many fine monuments to the Herrick family including Abigail Swift nee Herrick, the mother of Jonathan. It was restored in 1928 by the American branch of that family. The Lady Chapel was where wills were once proved and contains a memorial to Aid. Newton founder of the school which until recently bore his name. St. George's Regimental Chapel is dedicated to the 17th Regiment of Foot, later the Leicestershire Regiment, 1688-1964. Here there are many symbolic flags commemorating battle successes and handsome embroidered kneelers.

A notable slab in the chancel floor was commissioned in 1980 in memory of King Richard HI who was initially buried in the Greyfriars Church in 1485 and for whom no memorial existed in Leicester. Our visit being on 20th August fell the day before the anniversary of his death at the Battle of Bosworth and our guide mentioned that the following day there would be flowers placed there by the Richard EH Society.

Having enjoyed light refreshments and a most interesting tour, the chairman, Edna Taylor, thanked Virginia and Canon Naylor very much for a lovely evening.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

The Autumn programme commenced on a beautiful warm evening when we sat in summer cloths with the rear doors wide open but to the accompaniment of fireworks! Peter Liddle, Leicestershire County Council Head of Archaeology, made a welcome return visit to talk on Roman Leicestershire.

He commenced by noting evidence of pre-Roman habitation in the county, the Iron Age forts at Breedon-on-the-Hill, Borough Hill and at Ratby, the discovery in many locations of stone querns used for grinding corn and no less than thirteen hoards of coins, most notably the recently discovered one near Market Harborough. This latter is of major importance and has caused some previous theories to be re-examined. It is believed to be a site of religious sacrifice because close to the coins were many animal remains which had been discarded in chunks rather than just scattered as bones from a clean carcase. Also a high quality Roman helmet thought to pre-date the invasion and to have been brought to England by a native who had fought for the Roman Army.

Evidence of the Roman occupation has been discovered in many areas. In Leicester there is the notable Jewry Wall, the Black Friar's Mosaic found under the Great Central Station and more tessellated pavement during excavations in 1850 of the Cherry Orchard belonging to Dannets Hall. Numerous coins, pottery, burials, animal bones and foundations of buildings and walls have and still are being discovered as new sites are cleared and become available for excavation prior to rebuilding.

In the county remains include tile and pottery kilns and a classical temple at Ibstock, a Roman well in a quarry at Goadby Marwood and iron melting at Medbourne. Many of these settlements have first been pinpointed by aerial archaeology, when the outline of former buildings, roads and ditches can be seen as crop marks not apparent on the ground. Former WWII pilot Jim Pickering who has archaeological connections spent many years flying over the county photographing and recording his discoveries on a voluntary basis. Now that he has had to retire such surveys are sadly mostly beyond the council's budget.

After some questions and discussion, the chairman, Edna Taylor thanked Peter for sharing with us his immense knowledge and enthusiasm in such an entertaining way.

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OBITUARY

Very sadly we have to report the loss of two members since publication of the last Bulletin. Eleanor Armitage died on 23rd May and her husband Michael some two and a half months later on 9th August. Their deaths coming so close together and only a short time after their move to a bungalow at Oadby came as a great shock to all. They had been members of the Society since about 1994.

Michael was connected on his mother's side to the Wigston Pochin family one of whom was his direct ancestor Robert who started the ironmongery shop. He himself trained as a Chartered Accountant and after war service in the Blues and Royals spent his working life at Goodwin Barsby the quarry plant and heavy engineering company also a Pochin enterprise.

They had lived at St. Wolstan's House since 1955 and in the early days often hosted events for the Magna Sword Club. Eleanor worked as a doctor's receptionist. In 1960s she was a founder member and Chairman of the Wigston Ladies Luncheon Club. I have 'inherited' her scrapbook of press cuttings if anyone would like to look at them.

EXHIBITION - 2004

Duncan Lucas and Alan Kind are planning to hold an exhibition of paintings of the Wigston area by local artists during Heritage Week in September 2004 at the Record Office. This celebration of their work will be accompanied by biographical details of the artists. They would be very pleased to hear of any examples which members may know of for possible inclusion in the event.

THE LANCASTER CRASH

On Monday 4th February 1946 a Lancaster Bomber dived from the sky and crashed into a ploughed field in Wigston just yards to the rear of properties on Long Street/Leicester Road and Aylestone Lane. Those over a certain age who were in the village at the time remember it very clearly while those a touch younger, or later arrivals, have mostly heard at least something about it. It was the subject of an article and follow up in the 'Mr. Leicester' page of the Mercury recently, but some of the contributors' statements differed, it was time to take a closer look.

Although the war was over things had not as yet returned to normal. Many men remained on overseas duty in the armed forces, prisoners of war were still around working on the land etc. Allied aircrews were flying from operational Royal Air Force bases, the National Fire Service established to deal with the fires and devastation of bombing raids had not been disbanded and of course there was rationing.

The ill fated bomber number AI PA269 was being flown by airmen of 300 Polish Squadron, RAF. It took off from its base at Faldingworth, Lines, on a routine cross country training exercise. On board was Wing Commander R. Sulinski DSO. DFC, pilot, age 37, Flight Officer W. Jedrzejczyk, navigator, age 30, Flight Officer C. Sulgut, air gunner, age 27, Warrant Officer W. Brzezinski, wireless operator, age 27, Warrant Officer M. Szwandt, air bomber, age 28 and Flight Sergeant F. Mikula, flight engineer, age 25. They first of all headed north in the direction of Scunthorpe then turned due south towards Leicester. One hour, twenty minutes into the flight when about 4 miles south of Leicester in the vicinity of Wigston they encountered terrible problems.

Local Newspapers take up the story :-

Leicester Mercury 4/2/1946

BOMBER CRASHES AT WIGSTON: HOUSES DAMAGED

Believed to have been struck by lightning, a RAF Lancaster crashed inflames in a field in Aylestone Lane this afternoon. It fell behind The Beeches [Beech House] the home of Mrs. J A Broughton, -widow of a former hosiery manufacturer and JP. Explosions blew the plane to pieces and the house was severely damaged as fragments hurtled around it. There -were no survivors, eye-witnesses think that the pilot, who dived out of the clouds, feared he would hit the centre of Wigston, and made a steep turn with his plane ablaze. When the plane went up in explosions damage was done to many houses. Some roofs were damaged, but it was windows that

suffered chiefly....Mr. Robinson of Bulls Head Street in an interview with a Leicester Mercury representative said that following a heavy flash of lightening he saw a four engine bomber come out of the clouds in a power dive. The pilot evidently saw he had no chance, but obviously feared he would hit the centre of Wigston. He did a steep turn with his plane all aglow. Finally he succeeded in diving into a ploughed field at the back of Wigston Long Street schools. Explosions followed and the windows in the vicinity were shattered. Mrs. Broughton who was badly shaken, told a Leicester Mercury reporter "I was sitting in my kitchen when I heard a deafening roar, and the whole house shook. I thought the plane must have crashed on top of the house, but apparently only bits of the plane struck it. Every room in the house has suffered damage and the ceilings are ruined." When a Leicester Mercury reporter arrived on the scene four fire engines of Leicester NFS were fighting the blaze which they had confined to what must have been the main half of the plane's fuselage, which lay in an eight foot crater and was burning furiously. In the garden of Mrs. Broughton's house the tyre of one of the huge landing wheels was also consumed by flames. Mr. WE Rowley, 16 Coronation Avenue, formerly in the RAF was the first man to arrive at the scene. He said "I heard a terrible roar. Looking up I saw a large four engined bomber, hurtling to the ground, a mass of flames. It was an awful sight. Just before I saw the plane, there was a vivid flash of lightening." The Leicester NFS made an almost incredibly fast journey to the scene of the tragedy. They connected their hoses to nearby hydrants, and ran them over muddy ground to the blazing fuselage. By this time the aeroplane was completely destroyed apart from a few odd parts, which were scattered together with torn sections of the mainplanes and fuselage over adjoining roads, in people's gardens, and were even lodged in the bare branches of trees. Miss Jean Knight, la, Gladstone Street, an assistant in a nearby stores, said the roar of the plane attracted her to the shop window when she saw it flying very low. "Suddenly" she said, "there was a dazzling flash of forked lightening and the plane flashed into a red burning mass." A new angle to the crash is supplied by Mr. Kenneth Woodward who lives with his father and mother Mr. & Mrs. F Woodward, next door to The Beeches [sic]. Mr. K Woodward said "I was walking into the house when I heard the roar of a low flying plane. It shot into view coming from the direction apparently of Oadby. Suddenly it banked at a very steep angle, and seemed to be coming straight at me. I ran for shelter by the side of the house. A few seconds later there was a deafening explosion." Mr F Woodward, his father, said he and his wife with their 2 sons and 3 daughters were sitting down to lunch when they heard the low flying plane. The whole house shook, and the roof and the scullery, which is an outbuilding, were partly demolished.... **Leicester Evening Mail 4/2/1946 PLANE EXPLODES OVER WIGSTON IN STORM**

....part of the plane crashed into the roof of a Midland Red bus, injuring a passenger. Two eye-witnesses were Mr. R Swann of Kingston Avenue and Mr. W G Maurice of Granville Road who were waiting for a bus.... "We saw a plane, a four engined bomber it looked like, pass overflying low. Just after there was a terrific flash, a bang, and then a crash. The whole district, which was very dark because of the storm clouds, was lit up by a flash of flame as vivid as the sheets of lightening which had preceded the crash. "All witnesses agree that the plane....appeared like a ball of fire before the explosion, above Bell Street. The pilot avoided the W M Modern School by less than 10 feet. It broke into fragments many of which crashed on the residence of Mr. Josiah Hincks, solicitor, Aylestone Lane, the roof of which was badly damaged.

The bulk of the plane however continued across the road to crash in a field at the back of the house of Mrs. J A Broughton, Aylestone Lane. The roof of her house was severely damaged and her garden received much of the broken plane. There was no apparent attempt by the crew to bale out, parachutes however, landed on trees and house roofs in the vicinity so that the crew must have been thrust by the explosion from the blazing fuselage before it buried itself in the field. Mrs. Broughton, whose house was badly damaged is prostrated by her experience but a number of neighbours including the Rev. Bebb, the Methodist Minister, were quickly on the scene to render what help they could.... A number of council employees had the grim task of gathering the human remains from trees and house tops. Aylestone Lane over which the plane exploded presented a scene of destruction with debris from the machine scattered all over.... One of the engines fell at the back of Mrs. Broughton's house....Part of the kitchen of Mr. Woodward's house was blown in by the blast, and Mrs. Woodward....was cut by flying glass. She told the Evening Mail "We heard the roar of the explosion and then things seemed to befalling all around us. The body of one of the crew fell into this garden"....Mrs. Jebbett, of Aylestone Lane said "I was in a bedroom when there was a flash of lightening followed by the roar of an explosion and bits began to fall everywhere. Part of the machine just missed the front of the house, but another piece fell on the roof at the back and set fire to it. Neighbours came in with a stirrup pump and we managed to put it out"....Among the injured was Mrs. Ada Smith of Aylestone Lane, who hurt her wrist when the blast blew her down the cellar steps. Ex P.C. Jones' house was hit and one of the bodies fell into his conservatory.... A dramatic story of the escape of 80 school children was told by Mr. Robert Kind headmaster of WM Modern School [now the Record Office J. "Eighty children were staying to dinner at school....we had just shepherded them into school to avoid a sudden shower at about 1.20p.m. when we saw a flash and heard the explosion. Apparently the plane caught fire over Wigston Magna LMS Station and circled round for a place to land. He passed the church and went overhead not six feet above the roof of the Modern School. The pilot appeared to be making an effort to land on the school playing field which has been ploughed up during the war. The explosion occurred long before he touched down however and the schoolyard was littered with debris flung violently from the exploding aircraft. That shower of rain was a miracle for those 80 children." Mud and stones were flung 2 00 yards from the field by the impact of the landing wreck. **Leicester Evening Mail -5/2/1946 100 HOUSES DAMAGED BY WIGSTON AIR CRASH** Over 100 houses were damaged by the crash....yesterday. 30 of these are houses the property of Wigston Urban Council, in the Kings Drive area. Mr. WH Gunning clerk to the council told the Evening Mail that a comprehensive survey of the houses damaged is being made today. "I am myself going to find out officially who is responsible to meet the cost of repairs" he said.... "whether the repairs will be met out of the War Damage contribution or direct by the Air Ministry"....One house alone Homefield, Aylestone Lane, the residence of Mr. Josiah Hincks....was damaged to the extent of £700 and that is not as serious as The Beeches [sic] opposite. It now appears that the plane narrowly missed.... the Central Avenue day nursery school....there were 40 children there at the time....when the bomber crashed not 30 yards away they were terrified. No inquest is expected to be held on the crew.... because this was an operational flight. Under these conditions a RAF court of

enquiry is held.... W/Com Sulinski....took over as a last minute substitute for another pilot.

Leicester Evening Mail - 6/2/1946

AIR CRASH DAMAGE CLAIMS: WIGSTON MOVE

At Wigston Urban Council meeting last night....the Council endorsed the action to deal with the emergency taken by the clerk, the surveyor and cemetery superintendent. The chairman Mr. E H Rawson made special mention of the work performed....by the latter, Mr. A J Brown, whom he thanked in the name of the Council. Mr. W H Gunning reported the surveyor, Mr. G F Stacey, had immediately arranged for first-aid repair to the damaged houses. He had surveyed 80 damaged properties already of which 38 belonged to the Council. He had arranged for supplies of slates and had set on the Council's own workmen and local builders. Where householders had set on builders themselves he had told them to carry on. He could not state...the procedure for claiming for the damage but the Air Ministry would without doubt be responsible. The Council decided to offer their services to the Ministry to act as agents in dealing with claims for damage. The six bodies were taken to the Council's mortuary in Newgate End and removed from Wigston the same evening by the RAF..... Mr. R Kind said "So far as the Modern School is concerned, I am still wondering how we got away with it. As the youngsters got in and the door was shut a chunk of the plane came against the door, and there was not a square yard of the playground which was not covered with debris or bodies. One youngster had a slight cut on the hand. Two girls standing against the wall could not move out of the way when this thing hurtled to them. Their legs could not carry them"... The Council stood in silence as a tribute to the crew....

EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT FROM DISPLAY - MISS IM Sharp *"I was a senior nurse on sleep duty in the big room of the day nursery. I was with a student and our meal break was due at 1.30p.m. The student had asked if I knew what we were having that day. I had said she had only 10 minutes before she would find out. As the weather had turned bad I was going round shutting the windows. Some of the children were frightened of the thunder as they had been in air raids as babies and did not like loud noises. As I was shutting the windows I saw a plane, seconds before it hit the ground, it was at a steep angle, nose down, only the cockpit was clear of the flames. The time must have been about 1.20p.m. I told the student to stay where she was and I went towards the staff room to get help. Matron told me to get the babies in as some were outside in their prams. I remember going by the office with a baby in each arm and hearing matron saying 'SEND THE LOT'. She had rung 999. When all the children were under cover she sent some of the staff to see if we could find anyone alive. Also to try to stop the fire from coming towards the nursery. I remember seeing a close friend of my father Mr. Brewin, a joiner and undertaker, and his staff running up the nursery drive to help. They were followed by some German prisoners of war and guards who could not have been more helpful. I was looking for survivors, fire bucket in hand, surrounded by fire when a German came up to me, took the bucket and dumped the water on some exploding material. He then led me back to the nursery as the fire brigade had arrived. He asked me if the 'kinder' was safe the best way he could. After that I remember we had a great number of very upset mothers arriving as they had heard all sorts of stories as to what had happened. I made endless cups of tea for them. I do not remember getting a meal break that day. I also got very wet whilst looking for survivors. The police kept on wanting cardboard boxes and they took all*

that -we had. The children's toys were piled up all over the place. The recovery crew were also Polish with not very much English. We put one of the children's blackboards in the hall so that they could draw whatever it was they wanted. We also boiled their kettles for hot drinks. I have never liked to hear a plane in a thunderstorm since and I always move away from windows. I must have been about 18 years old at the time and I am now a pensioner but I have never forgotten that day."

EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT FROM DISPLAY - MYRA DOWNES *"My recollection of February 4th 1946 is really one of horror.... it was dinner time....having spent it at home [in Moat Street] I was on my way back to afternoon school, in a thunderstorm. I walked along Long Street and could hear an aeroplane approaching from behind me. I thought at the time 'goodness it seems very low in the sky' and as it got level with me I could indeed see that it was. Larger than any plane that I had ever seen before and for a nine year old it was a sight never to be forgotten. As I got nearly to the Magna Cinema, (I will just mention that my father, Jack Barnes, was the commissionaire there when this cinema opened in 1934 and was employed there until he retired with glaucoma in 1965) I could see the plane was heading towards the tower on top of the Co-operative Society building across the road. It did in fact hit this and then went down in the field behind Beech House in Aylestone Lane. The flames rose high into the sky and then thick black smoke. By this time I was screaming and crying, my finger nails going into the mortar between the bricks of a house near the cinema. I cannot remember how long I was there but I do remember going straight to school to see other children bringing in pieces of aeroplane glass. The headmaster, Mr. Herrick, ordered them all to take it back to the field. Whether they did or not I do not remember. Apparently the children going to the infant school in Bell Street had a different story to tell. The window of the Co-op grocery store was blown out, all the oranges, apples etc. rolled into the street and they had a great time picking them up. For me, it was a day I will never forget and even now, and my grandchildren will confirm this, I am terrified when there is a thunderstorm. Whatever time of day one occurs I find myself reliving the horror of that day. I can see the approach of the aircraft, hining the tower and going down in a mass of flames. I have always thought of the Polish airmen who were on board and feel so sad."*

Mrs. J A Broughton's youngest daughter Hazel was living in London at the time. The first she knew of the accident was when she listened to the news and realised her mother's house was likely to have been affected. She says in those pre National Health Service days her mother was much involved in the administration of local nursing and the Infant Welfare Clinic. When the plane crashed she was hosting a nursing meeting. Mrs. Burkett from Wigston Hall was among those present. Doctor Longford whose property adjoined Beech House at the back vaulted the fence to see if he could help. The ladies began to clear up, then decided they should not move anything until the authorities had arrived. Several days after the crash she noticed a bad smell in her living room and discovered another body part which had been overlooked behind her piano!

Margaret Broughton of Spa Lane, (niece by marriage of Mrs. J A Broughton) recalled "the deafening roar of the plane as it approached out of the storm and then seeing the Lancaster skimming over the rooftops of the farm buildings opposite. There was a

tremendous explosion followed by an eerie silence. For a long time afterwards the sky was full of small pieces of singed debris drifting down for all the world like black snow."

The six crew members were buried on 7/2/1946 in the Polish War Graves Section of Newark Cemetery, London Road, Newark, Notts. Many hundreds of their countrymen who fought in the allied cause are there also.

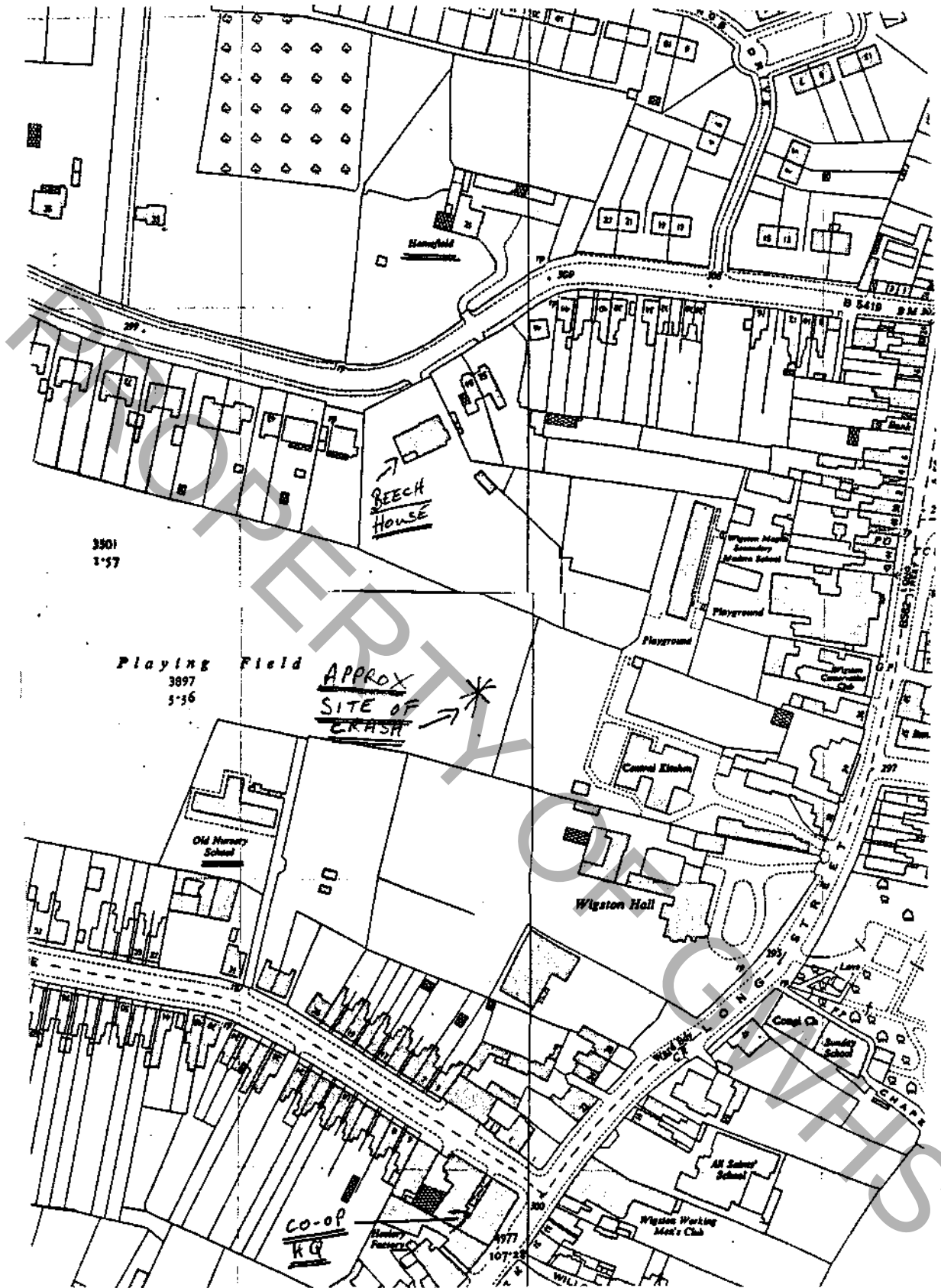
Lightening was not the cause of the crash, though the plane was very likely struck. Notes on the RAF Accident Card state the 'plane entered Cumulo-nimbus cloud causing the pilot to lose control and plough into the ground at speed. The Pitot Head could have frozen causing subsequent failure of the ASI. To undergo investigation'. Put more simply this means the pilot flew into dark thunder clouds and therefore lost visibility. The outside temperature would have dropped suddenly. A tube on the wing takes air to the Pitot Head which measures air speed and then indicates this via a dial in the cockpit (the Air Speed Indicator). From this the speed of the plane is known. If it had frozen and was not working the pilot would have no idea of his speed and probably went too fast causing structural stress and the plane to break up. This would make it even more unstable and leaking fuel would cause a fire perhaps made worse by the lightening.

When the present All Saints C of E Primary School and Community Centre was built in the 1970s in the field where the main part of the plane came down, more fragments were found. In 1996 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the tragedy a permanent display was created there by the Head Teacher, Cheryl Pharoah. This includes a cross-section diagram of a Lancaster, plaque with details of the crew and glass case with pieces from the plane, eye witness statements and a newspaper account. The most poignant is a perspex cross about 4" tall carved by a German POW from part of the wind shield and donated by a descendant. The display can be viewed during school hours by prior arrangement with reception staff and is well worth a visit. A service of remembrance is held at the school each year on the anniversary of the crash.

Tricia Berry

Sources: Newspapers at Leics. RO, Display at All Saints C of E School (with special thanks to Head Teacher, Cheryl Pharoah, for photocopying some of her exhibits for me), Grave stones in Newark Cemetery, Sue Dickinson (historian) at RAF Air Historical Branch, Phone: 95271 7442.

Further research at the National Archives (PRO) Kew, would probably lead to the results of the official investigation into this accident. A job for another day! Writing this it made me realise how lucky Wigston was to escape so lightly. Nothing was damaged that could not be repaired. No-one was killed or even seriously injured, though I understand one poor lady 'never did any good afterwards'. Also a man suffered a heart attack a few months later which might have been brought on by the shock of it all.



Section of 1955 Ordnance Survey Map showing site of the crash and nearby buildings mentioned in the text.



Top: Squadron bases and route of the Lancaster

Middle: The six graves at Newark Cemetery

Bottom: The dreaded telegram to the air bomber's wife

TELEGRAM

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POST OFFICE

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REGRET TO INFORM YOU THAT YOUR HUSBAND RTO SZWANDT M
KILLED AS A RESULT OF AN ACCIDENT ON THE 4 TH FEB 1946
LETTER FOLLOWING

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THE LEICESTER CHRONICLE & LEICESTERSHIRE MERCURY
13th August 1870

In performance of the promise made last week, we now commence our notice of the clubs of Wigston. In point of age, the oldest club of any kind in Wigston is the Stand Up Benefit Club, if it is excepted the old club of the Most Ancient Order of Idlers, which has an important branch here. The Stand Up Club was established in 1800, having for its object the support of its members in sickness and medical attendance.

The club takes its name from one of its rules, which insists of every member who addresses the chairman being upstanding. The Stand Up club has steadily increased its numbers and affluence and now numbers one hundred members, many of them being young 'Stand Uppers'.

The Club is in possession of a tract of land in the Wharf Road which is sub-let or sold to the members as a garden ground. It has been singularly prosperous has this club and in addition to the ground mentioned, possesses a surplus of £150 in the hands of its treasurer Mr. T. Burgess, who holds the position of banker to the bulk of the clubs in Wigston.

The club meets monthly at Mr. Murrell's, Mr. Isaac Harrison being the secretary. The present position and the future prospects of this club are quite 'couleur de rose' and it promises to be a Stand Up society when many of its rivals have stood down.

Wharf Road is the present Welford Road. The site of the club's garden ground was probably on the east side between what is now a footpath leading to Stanhope Road and Cottage Road, this area being set out in plots in the 1885 Ordnance Survey map. Mr. Murrell was landlord at the King William IV in Bell Street.

Thanks to Jim Colver for providing this interesting piece. Unfortunately the idea mentioned in the paper of doing a 'notice' of the various clubs in Wigston does not appear to have been carried through, no more can be found in subsequent issues.

OLD FASHIONED EXPRESSIONS

A few more familiar ones with a note of their meaning. We might:

- 1) Refer to some loss as "Daylight robbery".
- 2) Describe poor workmanship as "Making a pig's ear of something".

Origins:

- 1) Windows bricked up to avoid the Window Tax gave rise to this one.
- 2) A statue of Alexander the Great & his horse was commissioned in Edinburgh but the sculptor was not paid his mil fee so he modelled pig's ears instead of horse's for the animal.