

**BULLETIN ISSUE NO. 1 – JUNE 2023**



**Sergeant  
James Clarke Whitlock  
9<sup>th</sup> Battalion  
Leicestershire Regiment**



## Sergeant James Clarke Whitlock

The image on the 1st page of the bulletin shows Serjeant James Clarke Whitlock of the Leicester Regiment.

James Clarke Whitlock was born in the 3rd quarter of 1892 in Tugby and was the 5<sup>th</sup> child of Charles Whitlock, a carpenter and his wife Rachel Whitlock (nee Clarke).

In April 1911 the Whitlock family were residing at home in Tugby. Residing there James' parents Charles and Rachel plus his siblings, Nora, a dress maker, Elsie, an elementary school teacher and Alec a farm labourer. James was not listed on the family census return as he was residing as a boarder at Station Road, Broughton Astley, Leicestershire where he worked as an assistant teacher.

In 1913, James moved to Melton Mowbray where he became an assistant master at the Church Boys School on Norman Street, now Norman Way.



The old Boys School, Norman Street

James attested into the Army Reserve (Special Reservists) for 3 years with the Colours and in the Army Reserve on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 1914, here in Melton Mowbray. He gave his place of birth as Tugby, Leicestershire, his age as 22 years and 97 days and his trade or calling as school teacher. He gave his place of residence as 6, Church Terrace, Melton Mowbray, and confirmed that he was unmarried. He gave his mother Rachel Whitlock of Tugby, Leicestershire, his brother Alfred Whitlock of Thorney, Peterborough and his sister Norah Whitlock of Tugby, Leicestershire as his next of kin.

His medical examination recorded that he was 5 foot 7 inches in height, weighed 147 pounds and he had a chest measurement of between 34½ and 36 inches. His hair colour was brown and he had brown eyes. He gave his religion as Church of England.

He was pronounced fit for the Army Reserve on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 1914 in Melton Mowbray. His record of service began when he joined the Depot of the Leicestershire Regiment as a Private, service number 9/14910 on the 10/9/14. Posted to the 9th Battalion Leicestershire Regiment on the 24/9/14. Appointed paid Acting Lance Corporal, in Aldershot on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914. Promoted Acting Sergeant (Machine Gun Section) in Aldershot on the 12<sup>th</sup> February 1915.

Confirmed in the rank of Sergeant, in the field on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 1915. Admitted to the 48th Field Ambulance suffering from Inflamed Con. Tissue, in the field on the 20<sup>th</sup> August 1915. Discharged from the 48th Field Ambulance I.C.T., in the field on the 25<sup>th</sup> August.

Whilst home on leave, James married Ethel May Carter in the 4th quarter of 1915. The marriage was registered in the Leicester district, they resided at 227, Humberstone Road, Leicester.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1916, James was admitted to 64th Field Ambulance suffering from a gun shot wound to the neck and chest. Later the same day he was transferred to the 34th Casualty Clearing Station where he stayed for a couple of days.

He was transferred to the No.6 General Hospital at Rouen on the 17<sup>th</sup> July where he died later that day at 7.45pm from the wounds.

James is buried in St Sever cemetery, Rouen.

His younger brother Alec fell in action on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1916 whilst serving with the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Leicestershire Regiment and is commemorated on the Thiepval Memorial.

James is commemorated on the Egerton Lodge War Memorial and also on the Roll of Honour in the memorial gardens. He is also listed on the War Memorial in St Mary's Church and also the memorial outside the Royal British Legion.

He is also commemorated on 2 memorials at St Thomas a Beckett Church in Tugby.



However, a few years ago, I was sent a photograph (see opposite) of another memorial here in Melton that has since disappeared.

The old school building on Norman Way is now Early Years Nursery and when they took over the premises a few years ago, the war memorial plaque was found in a cupboard.

It is believed that it was handed over to Leicestershire County Council who previously owned the building, but it now can not be traced.

## Preserving our Military Heritage

On the Western Front, remains of WW1 soldiers are frequently found when new roads and buildings are being constructed. Over here in Blighty, our military heritage is also at risk from being damaged or destroyed as a result of modern development.

The construction of the new ring road is one such example that could have an impact on our local heritage, in particular, two sites on Saxby Road.

The first is the Wellington Bomber crash site. Historic England provide Archaeological guidance on Military Aircraft Crash Sites and their significance and how they should be managed in the future. If anyone want to read their publication, it can be downloaded for free here:

[Military Aircraft Crash Sites | Historic England](#)

The other site is along side the River Eye and is a WW2 spigot mortar.

Thankfully, these two sites have been recognised by Leicestershire County Council in their publication concerning the River Eye Options and Appraisals which can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2021/9/7/P18-01-ES-volume-III-appendix-3-1-River-Eye-Options-Appraisal.pdf>

An extract is shown below:

- 6.11 The final two assets are modern in date and relate to the Second World War. The first is the site of a spigot mortar emplacement (HER – MLE10600) to the east of the existing crossing point and the second, the crash site of a Wellington Bomber (HER – MLE21369), which crashed on a training flight in 1944.

Hopefully, these two heritage assets will not be destroyed by the construction of the new ring road.

# Spigot Mortars



Example of a Blacker Bombard

Spigot Mortars were used by the Home Guard during WW2, and the weapon was known as a 'Blacker Bombard' was a 29mm spigot mortar, designed by a Lieutenant Colonel V V S Blacker, and could fire a 20lb bomb some 900yds.

As part of the defence of Melton Mowbray, several spigot mortar sites were constructed around Melton Mowbray. There are 3 that I am aware of and still exist today.

If anyone wants to view these spigot mortars, their exact locations are best found using the What3Words app.

The first can be found in the Thorpe Road playing fields along the hedge line adjacent to the road that takes you to Tesco supermarket. What3words location [///fires.cone.pushes](#)



Thorpe Road Spigot Mortar



Saxby Road Spigot Mortar

The second is down Saxby Road in the fields next to the River Eye  
What3words location [///powers.spike.takes](#)

The third example is just off Dalby Road.  
What3words location [///stand.races.rich](#)



Dalby Road Spigot Mortar

As you can see from the images, the Thorpe Road and Dalby Road examples are not easily seen due to being overgrown by vegetation and weeds etc.



Waltham Spigot Mortar

There are also other examples close by in surrounding villages such as the one on Mere Road in Waltham on the Wolds; What3words location [///templates.then.dinner](#)

And at Gaddesby What3words location [///pleasing.giggled.paramedic](#)

People most probably just walk past these every day and either don't see them, or if they do, haven't got a clue as to what they are.

If anyone knows of any more in the area, please do let me know.



Gaddesby Spigot Mortar

## Street Signs

Wherever you go in Melton Mowbray, you are never too far away from something with a military connection. One of the most common items are streets & roads that are named after an individual with a military background that has a connection to our market town, and there are literally dozens of them!

In each edition of the HistoryFare Bulletin, I will include an article about one of our streets, and in this first edition, I will look at Baldock's Lane.



Baldock's Lane, which if you don't know is off Burton Road as you come out of town on the A606 Oakham Road. After crossing over the railway bridge, there is a slight bend in the road then you start climbing the gentle hill out of town and Baldock's Lane is the first left just after Craven Lodge.

The road takes its name after Colonel Edward Holmes Baldock who owned Craven Lodge.

Craven Lodge was up for sale in 1884 and it remained empty for a period until bought by Colonel Baldock. He Commanded the 3<sup>rd</sup> County of London Imperial Yeomanry (Sharpshooters) from 1904 – 1909.

The Sharpshooters were a Yeomanry regiment of the British Army. It was raised in 1901 from Second Boer War veterans of the Imperial Yeomanry.

Prior to taking command he had previously served with the Shropshire Yeomanry. He was promoted to Lieutenant on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1875 then to Captain on 3<sup>rd</sup> Nov 1883.

Baldock was not only interested in hunting but in many other sports. In 1893, he backed the idea of forming a golf club on land near the Swans Nest swimming club beside the River Eye but the project fell through. For several years he was the principal organiser of the Melton Hunt Ball and with Mr Beeby, was instrumental in forming the Melton Polo Club in 1908 on land off Nottingham Road near Sysonby Lodge.

The Baldock's continued to live at Craven Lodge until shortly before the First World War, though it remained in their ownership until 1922 when it was purchased by Captain Michael Wardell of the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars.



Please feel free to share this bulletin with whoever you think may be interested.

**For any enquiries or to submit articles, please email Brian at [meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com](mailto:meltonhistoryfare@gmail.com)**