

**A HISTORY OF PROPERTY  
No 39, TOP ROAD, GRIFFYDAM**



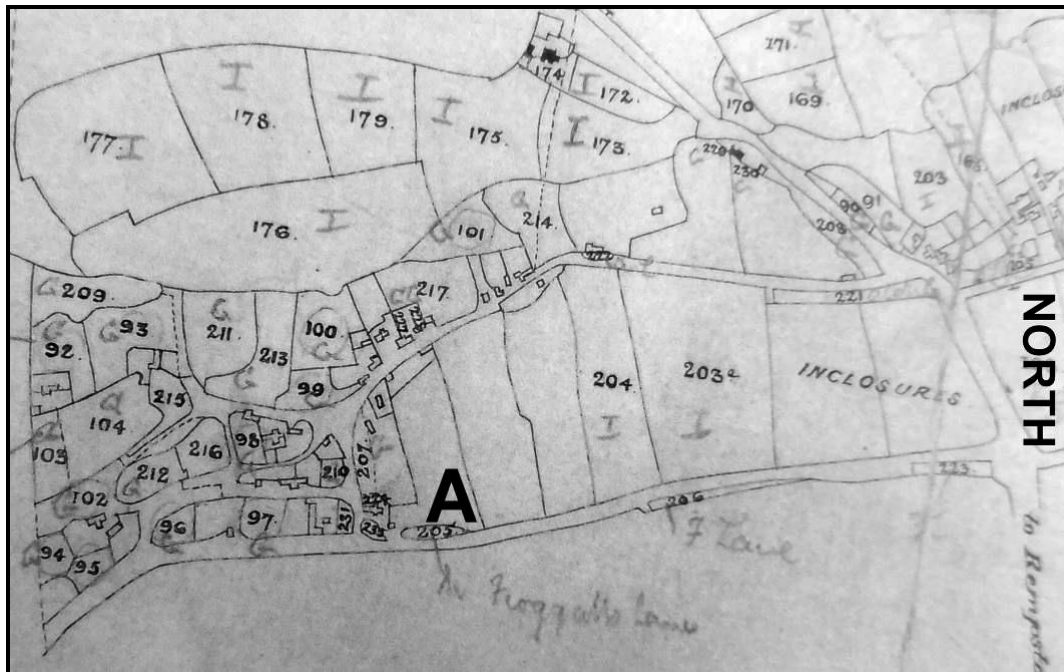
**PROPERTY MARKED B ON THIS EXTRACT FROM THE 1882 ISSUED O/S MAP**

**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - UPDATED FEB 2024 AND  
MARCH 2026**

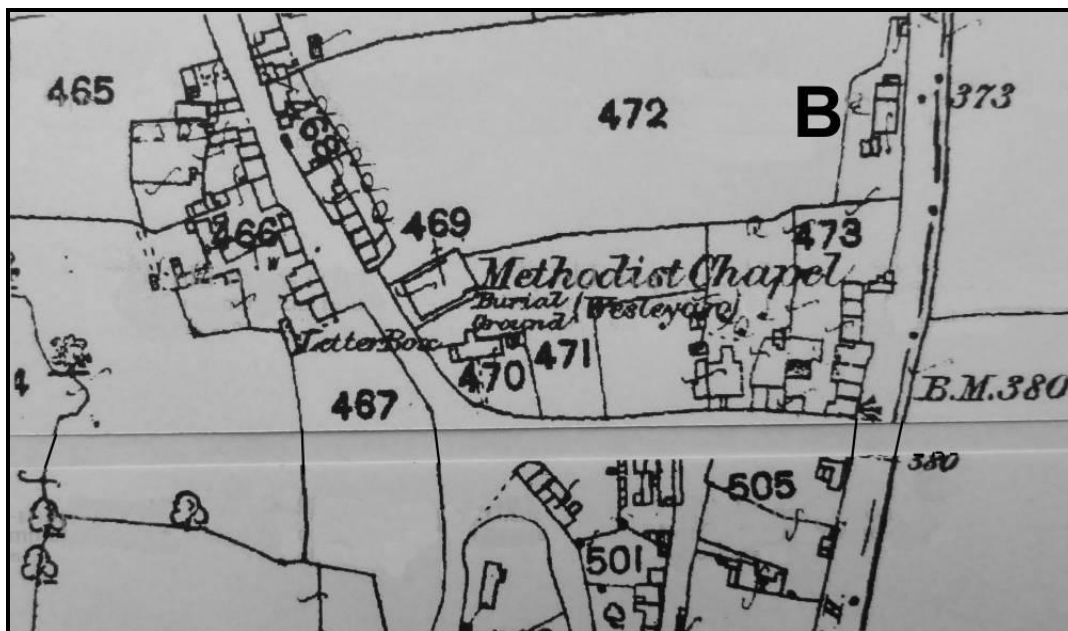
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In the 1806 inclosure Act for the Parish of Breedon, an intake No. 205, containing 7 perches in area, and as shown on the following extract of the map marked **A**, was awarded to John Burton and Samuel Clarke, the latter being a trustee of the Griffydam meeting house (to become the Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist Chapel).



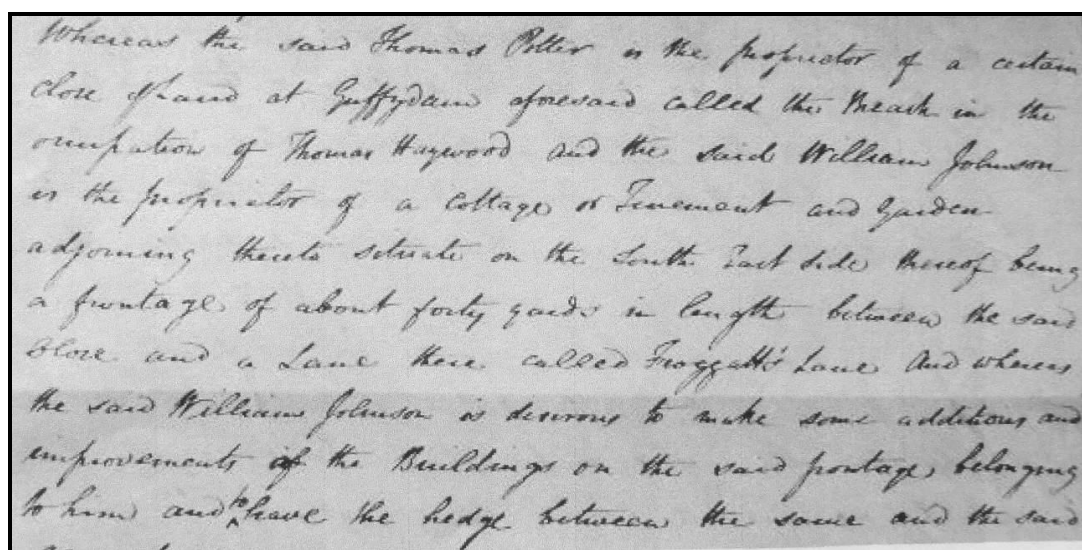
Extract from the 1806 enclosure map - not to an accurate scale



The above 1881/1882 surveyed O/S map shows the 7 perch plot with a property on it marked **B** to the east of Breach Close (472).

We can see from the following extract of an 1831 agreement, that a cottage and garden was in existence on plot 205 (shown on the preceding enclosure map), adjoining Breach Close at that time, and William Johnson, a tailor, of Griffydam was the proprietor. Mr. Johnson was making an application to make some additions and

changes to the property and garden. There is little doubt in the writer's mind that this property is well over 200 years old. The cottage and garden had been conveyed to William Johnson by William Burton, a potter from Griffydam, and others on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 1830, for the sum of £24.



Whereas the said Thomas Potter is the proprietor of a certain close of land at Griffydam aforesaid called the Meash in the occupation of Thomas Heywood and the said William Johnson is the proprietor of a cottage or Tenement and garden adjoining thereto situate on the South East side thereof being a frontage of about forty yards in length between the said Close and a Lane there called Froggatt's Lane and whereas the said William Johnson is desirous to make some additions and improvements of the Buildings on the said frontage belonging to him and have the hedge between the same and the said

On the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1869, Elizabeth Johnson conveyed the two cottages and hereditaments to Sarah Robinson. In an indenture of 28<sup>th</sup> April 1871 between Sarah Robinson and Sarah Knight, the said Sarah Robinson conveyed the 7 perches formerly allotted to John Burton (as a trustee for Thomas Burton now deceased) with the house built by Thomas Burton, **now described as being converted into two cottages**, to Sarah Knight for the sum of £165. It states that the cottages were formerly in the occupation of William Burton, presumably a relative of John Burton, but were now in the occupation of Joseph Richards and John Davies as tenants.

Less than one year later, Sarah Knight transferred ownership to Edmund Doman whom she had married in September 1872. The ownership of the property becomes rather confusing at this stage, so we will move forward to the point where the 7 perches of land and property (now described as a messuage or dwelling house) is conveyed to the trustees of the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in 1900 for the sum of £335.00, nearly doubling the properties value over a period of 30 years.

In the 1900 conveyance, it states that the premises were in the late occupation of John Kendrick.

**The 1881 Griffydam census confirms John Kendrick (53) and his wife Hannah (51) plus four children are living in the property.** John is given as a Grocer and born in Swepstone (1871 census states Normanton). Hannah was born in Thornton.

In the 1871 census they were listed as having eight children all born in Griffydam, but living in a different house – John E (14), Elizabeth E (12), Sarah (10), Mary M (8), Samuel E (7), Geary (4), Alice H (2), Ernest (2mths). In 1865 they had a son William, but it seems he only lived 6 months. They had another son Arthur in 1873, making 10 children in all. Arthur doesn't appear till the 1881 census of course.

Sarah, Mary and Samuel had presumably left home by the 1881 census, and Elizabeth had died in 1880.

John's wife Hannah passed away in 1888 and John died in 1900. John, Hannah, Elizabeth and William are all buried in a single grave in Wesleyan Methodist Chapel cemetery. Ernest Kendrick's wife Hetty and son Winson are also buried there.

John Kendrick purchased Samuel Eagle Esquire's Bakery and Grocery business in Rotten Row, Coleorton (then part of Thringstone). In the 1891 census, Samuel was listed as being retired. The Kendricks took over his shop, and in 1884 it had become a sub-post office also with John Kendrick described as a baker, grocer and Sub Postmaster. John died in 1900 and his son Ernest is listed as proprietor in 1901. John's son Arthur had now joined them in the business. He was given as a journeyman baker.

Samuel Eagle Esq., was clearly a man of some standing, as Kelly's 1891 trade directory includes him as a member of the court list. Samuel Eagle purchased a cottage in Elder Lane, Griffydham in 1877 which still exists but now much changed of course. However, this was presumably acquired on a buy to let basis as an investment as Samuel and his wife Elizabeth never lived there. There is a land tax receipt paid by Mrs. Eagle in 1897 when a Mrs. Elizabeth Radford was the tenant.

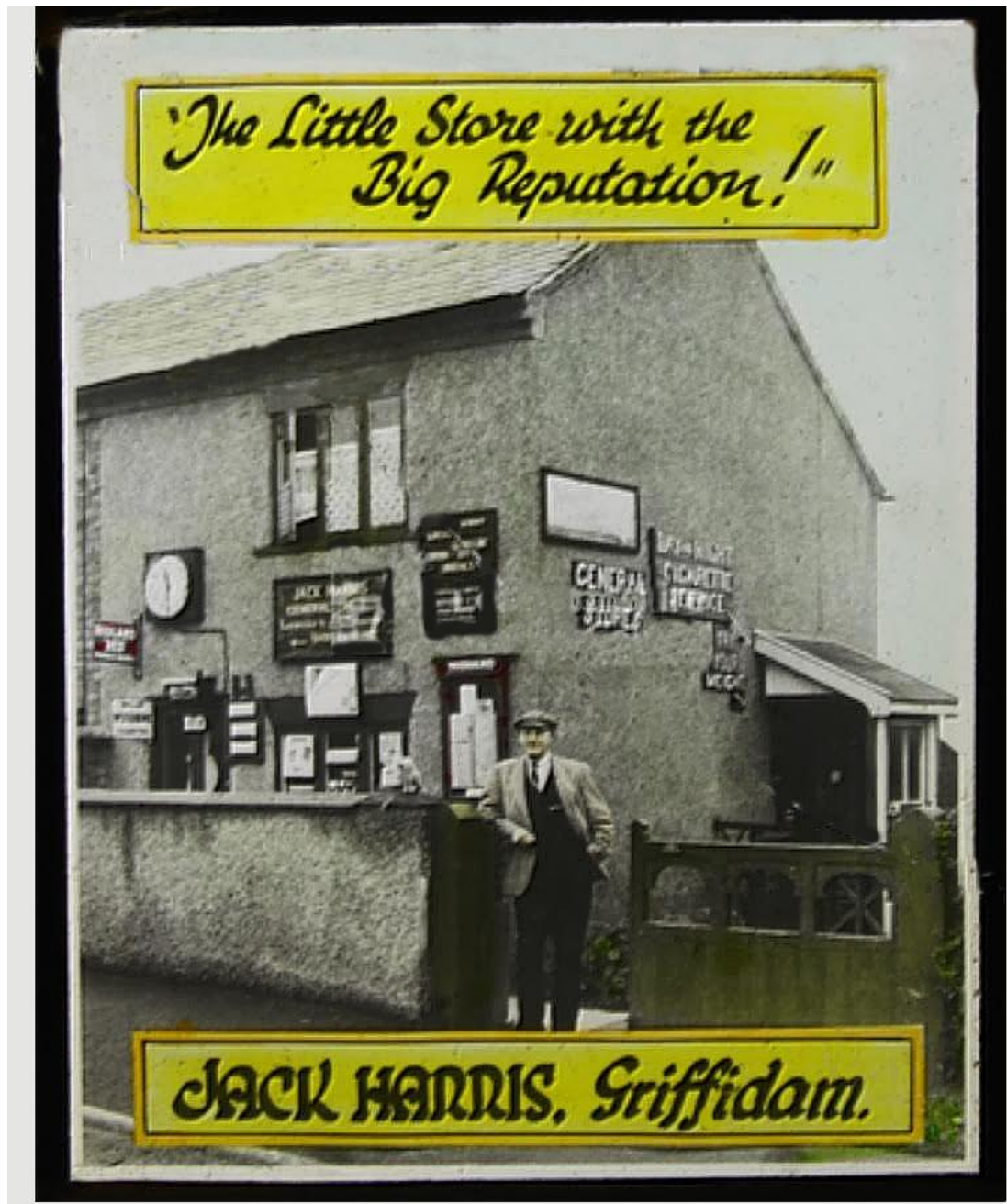
In 1932, the cottage/s and its 7 perches of land were in the ownership of Sydney and Frederick Johnson. Sydney was a retired miner and we believe Frederick was a railway worker.

**c. 1940, 39 Top Road, Griffydham had been purchased by Jack Harris.**

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**Continued over page**

**JACK HARRIS - A SHOPKEEPER IN  
GRIFFYDAM**



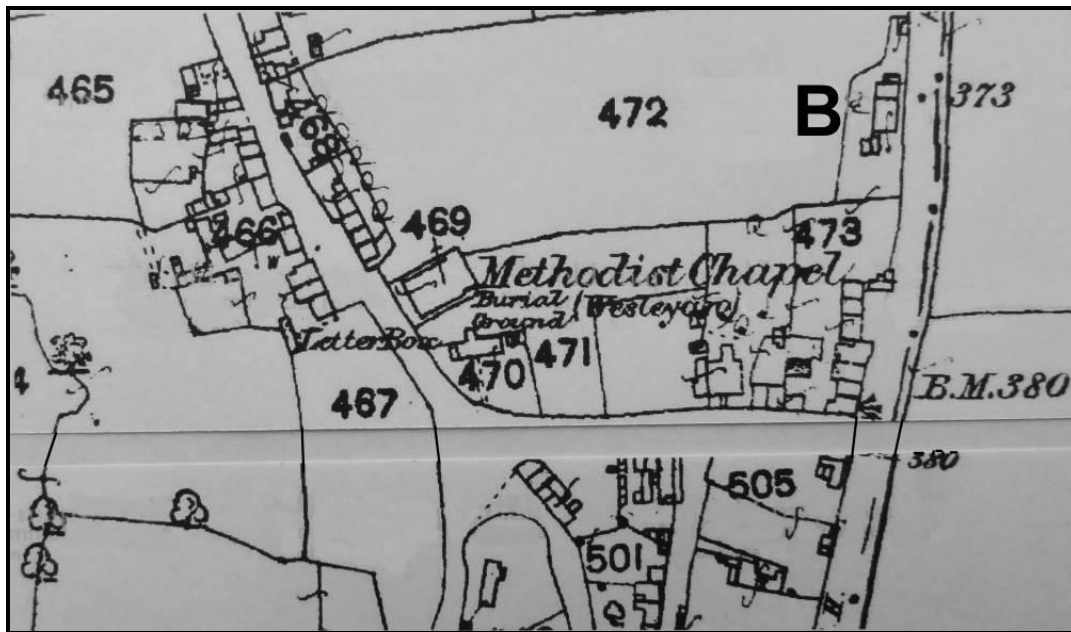
**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - UPDATED MARCH 2026**

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Thanks to Nita Pearson of the 'Friends of Thringstone for supplying information appertaining to this publication.



Jack Harris



The above 1881/1882 surveyed O/S map shows the 7 perch plot adjacent to the Top Road with a property on it marked B which is to the east of Breach Close (472). Part of this property now has the address of 39, Top Road, Griffydam

c. 1940, Jack Harris, a widower, with a rather chequered history, opened a general store in part of what is now 39, Top Road, Griffydam. We assume Jack lived in the adjacent part. This was originally two properties as described in Jack Harris was the son of Major William Lyster Holt and his wife Catherine nee Dulin. They were from Kensington in London, and were married in 1872.

Jack Harris's store was previously occupied by John Kendrick, a Griffydam long standing family man and shopkeeper He was an all round good man who went on to establish the first Coleorton Post office. A history of John Kendrick is free to download and read on the author's website under subsection 'People'

The complex early history of Jack Harris who had two other names as shown on his death certificate has been researched by Nita Pearson and features on 'The Friends of Thringstone' website and can be linked to this publication to form a complete history of this gentleman's eventful life.

Before coming to reside at Griffydam, Jack had previously lived at Gracedieu, being first recorded as living there in 1934. He was apparently involved in a garage business there. Jack was a well known character in Griffydam and the local area, frequently leaving a 'back in five minutes' sign on the shop door. Often, the five minutes turned into hours. A half crown was glued to the shop counter to see how many customers would attempt to pick it up. His resident parrot was also famous for its wolf whistles.

Locals related the story that Jack had a valuable gold watch with the inscription *Sergeant Horace Holt* engraved on the back which he apparently left to one of the people who used to look after his shop when he was away. Research, again carried out by Nita Pearson suggests that this watch was previously in the possession of a Sargent Holt who was in the City of London Royal Fusiliers during WW1. Through this, it seems he became formerly known locally as Horace Holt, and rumours

circulated in the village that he may have been, a spy at some point in his past life. In fact, throughout his life, Jack was recorded as having three names as shown on the following copy of his death certificate, kindly supplied by Nita Pearson. According to his death certificate, Jack Harris died at Sunny Bank house, which was formerly Westward Cottage, which Josiah John Weston, junior had purchased previously and now lived there. This was adjacent to the Red Lion Inn Peggs Green, where Jack was apparently a frequent imbiber. Jack died in 1952 aged 74. His death certificate registers his three names, and his profession is given as 'General Dealer':-

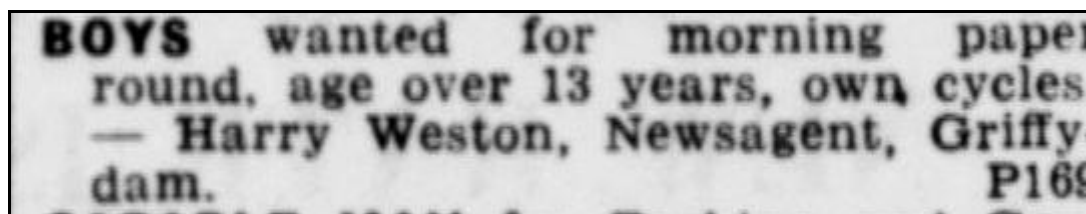
Jack Harris  
Horace Holt  
Motta Holt

A history of the Red lion is free to download and read on the author's website [samuelstewart.com](http://samuelstewart.com) under subsection 'Public Houses'

19 52 DEATHS in the Sub-District of <i>Coalville</i> in the <i>County of Leicester</i>									
(Col. 1.)	(Col. 2.)	(Col. 3.)	(Col. 4.)	(Col. 5.)	(Col. 6.)	(Col. 7.)	(Col. 8.)	(Col. 9.)	(Col. 10.)
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
122	<i>Twenty third June 1952 Red Lion Peggs Green Coalbrookdale Ashby de la Zouch RD</i>	<i>Jack Harris otherwise Horace Holt otherwise Motta Holt</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>74</i>	<i>J. Prebais Griffyddam Washington Ashby de la Zouch RD &amp; several Dealer</i>	<i>1) Apoplexy 2) Chocinoma of Tongue (Died aged) Certified by Dr. W. R. Holmes M.D.S.</i>	<i>Widow Present at the death of Sunny Bank Peggs Green</i>	<i>Twenty fourth June 1952</i>	<i>Annable Registrar.</i>

Whilst in Griffyddam, Jack drove a one seater three-wheeler invalid car so he must have had some form of disability. The photograph on page 2 shows him with a walking stick in hand. There are some amusing stories told about his escapades in this car when he broke down, which it often did apparently, including one when he had lent it to Arthur Else (father of David Else who features later) who suffered the ingnominy of having to call for help to push it home when it broke down.

Harry Weston ran a newspaper business from the shop in conjunction with Jack and later after Jack's death, he and his wife Mary continued to still deliver newspapers around the area in their black Morris Minor car. Harry Weston, was recorded in a newspaper report of his marriage, as the son of Josiah John Weston, senior of the Red Lion, Pegg's Green and his brother Josiah John, junior was the best man.



The Rex and Regal cinemas in Coalville regularly showed advertisements for Jack's shop, and it is thought the photograph on the front page is one of these. Note that the 'y' in Griffyddam is replaced with an 'i' which was how it was often spelt locally in those times we are told.

The following two newspaper articles provide an interesting, overview of Jack Harris's bequests following his death.

**Transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail - Saturday 24 January 1953**

## **PARROT LEFT TO WOMAN**

### **LEICESTER DEALERS BEQUEST'S**

MR. HORACE HOLT (aka Jack Harris), of Top-road, Griffydam, general dealer, who died on June 23 last, left £2,301 14s. 6d. gross, £2,254 6s. 9d. net value. (Duty paid £68.) He left "my parrot" to Mrs. Jackson, of The Tentas, Griffydam. His freehold house and shop equally between his partner, Harry Weston, and David A Else (on attaining the age of 21 years).

#### **The clock**

His share in the goodwill, stock in trade, etc., and certain monies and household furniture and effects in or about the said house, "and also my motor-car and my cats and budgerigar," to the said David A. Else, on attaining 21 years of age. He expressed the wish that the clock on the front of the said premises at Top-road be kept in good repair condition, "and displayed to the public, as at present, so that the public may tell the time of day. The Midland Red bus stop was outside his shop, so the driver would be aware if he was on time.

#### **The Licensee**

He left £50 each to the said Mrs. Jackson and her husband; £50 each to Josiah John Weston and his wife Olive, of the Red Lion Inn, Griffydam ([Pegg's Green](#)). Olive was the licensee in the 1940s and 50s after her father Jack Stevenson's death. The residue was divided equally between Jack's brother George and sister Violet Gibson. Probate was granted to George O Joyce, Solicitor of 'The Elms', Ashby.

**Transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail – January 26<sup>th</sup> 1953**

## **MEMORY OF VILLAGE SHOPKEEPER**

**Before Mr. Jack Harris, the village shopkeeper, died at Griffydam, Near Coalville, leaving an estate of £2,301 14s. 6d. gross, he made provision for his friends – the pets that had been his companions, and the villagers whom he had come to know and love in his 20 years in the district.**

In Griffydam today with the publication of his will, they are remembering Jack Harris, whose former name was Mr. Horace Holt, by carrying out his wish that his parrot, cat, dog and budgerigar should be cared for.

As a permanent tribute to the village of his adoption, Mr. Harris has provided, through his will, that the clock on his shop – the only public timepiece in the village – should be maintained "so that the public may tell the time of day there from".

[He left his freehold home and shop equally between his partner Harry Weston, of Griffydam and David Arthur Else \(on attaining the age of 21 years\). David, son of Mr.](#)

Arthur Else, a miner, and Mrs. Else of the nearby village of Newbold, is a 14 year old school boy at Coalville's Broom-Leys School. He used to sit and keep Mr. Harris company in the shop and act as an unofficial assistant. The boy is also left Mr. Harris' one-seater car and some of his pets.

There were a number of other bequests – A grey African parrot was left to Mrs. Jackson, whose home is near the shop. Today she said, 'I am not a great admirer of parrots, but I am providing, and shall always make a home for "Poly" because she was entrusted to me'.

Jack Harris was known for his love of animals. In the garden at the rear of his shop he had a small cemetery with gravestones where the beloved pets which predeceased him are buried.

From the Coalville Times

## MEMORY OF VILLAGE SHOPKEEPER

**B**EFORE Mr. Jack Harris, the village shopkeeper, died at Griffydam, near Coalville, leaving an estate of £2,301 14s. 6d. gross, he made provision for his friends—the pets that had been his companions, and the villagers whom he had come to know and love in his 20 years in the district.



**TOMBSTONE** in Mr. Harris's pets' cemetery.

In Griffydam today, with the publication of his will, they are remembering Jack Harris, whose real name was Mr. Horace Holt, by carrying out his wish that his parrot, cat, dog and budgerigar should be cared for.

As a permanent tribute to the village of his adoption, Mr. Harris has provided, through his will, that the clock on his shop—the only public time-piece in the village—should be maintained "so that the public may tell the time of day therefrom."

He left his freehold house and shop equally between his partner Harry Weston, of Griffydam, and David Art Else (on attaining the age of 21 years).

David, son of Mr. A. Else, a miner, and Mrs. Else, of the nearby village of Newbold, is a 14-year-old school-

Reds heckle Mr. Janner

boy at Coalville Broom Leys School.

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There were a number of other bequests.

A grey African parrot was left to Mrs. Jackson, whose home is near the shop.

Today she said, "I am not a great admirer of parrots, but I am providing, and shall always make a home for 'Polly' because she was entrusted to me."

Mr. Harris was known for his love of animals. In the garden at the rear of his shop he had a small cemetery with gravestones, where the beloved pets which predeceased him are buried.

Transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail – February 2<sup>nd</sup> 1949

A colleague passing through the hamlet of Griffydam tells me of his surprise on seeing a large Belgium flag flying from a mast near the village general store. His conviction that some quaint local festival was being observed was strengthened by the sight of an elderly man in a military cap and uniform. Nothing extraordinary was going on. Inquiry proved that the military-looking man was just a local resident. As for the flag, the explanation came from the store-keeper, Mr. Jack Harris. He has flags of all nations and it happened to be Belgium's turn that day. They are all flown in rotation.