

**A GENEALOGY STUDY OF FREEMAN  
WILLIAM PLATTS (b. Peggs Green) &  
RHODDA (nee., HOLLAND) PLATTS (b.  
Griffydam) AND THEIR ANCESTORS**

**BY SAMUEL T STEWART - AUGUST 2024**

The following is transcribed from the Leicester Evening Mail - Wednesday 27th February 1957, and annotated by the author in blue.

## He earned 4d. in 12 hours

### HUGGLESCOTE DIAMOND WEDDING

**MR. FREEMAN WILLIAM PLATTS**— at 82, one day younger than Sir Winston Churchill—and his wife, Rhoda (79), celebrate their diamond wedding at their home, 1, Crescent-road, Hugglescote, today. **Natives of Griffydam** (Incorrect - William Freeman Platts was actually born in Pegg's Green and Rhodda Holland was born in Griffydam). Mr. and Mrs. Platts were married at Breedon-on-the-Hill Parish Church in Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee year, 1897. Though their anniversary is today, their party, given by their surviving family of three sons and a daughter, will not take place until Saturday. Mr. Platts started work at the age of nine and was paid 4d. for a 12 hour day carrying clay at a brickworks (This would most likely be Griffydam Brickworks on The Brand). Later, as a coal miner, he had to walk 12 miles a day above ground to and from his work as well as a couple of miles below the surface.

When the mining industry fell on hard times, as it often did, he relied on what was then a collier's second trade, that of well sinking (this would have been village wells sunk for drinking water), and did occasional harvesting and mowing with his scythe.

Seven years ago, he retired **at the age of 75** from Desford Colliery. Mr. Platts has never been to a cinema, visited the seaside or London, or seen television. He has never been to a dentist or an optician, and rarely to a doctor. In his retirement hobby of tilling a 1,000 yard garden, he is helped by his wife, who has now learned the art of cultivation and of saving home-produced seed for the next year's crop.

Freeman William Platts, who was born 1st December 1874 in Peggs Green married Rhoda Holland who was born on the 22nd December 1877 in Griffydam at Breedon Church in 1897.

They had the following eight children within 14 years - James William Platts (b.1898), Freeman Richard Platts (b.1899), Alonza Charles Platts (b.1901), Walter Joseph Platts (b.1902), Benjamin Arthur Platts b.1904 d.1905 at 12m of age), Bramley Platts, Evangeline Norah Platts (b.1911) and Louisa Grace Platts (b.1911). Evaline Norah and Louisa Grace were 4 month old twin sisters in 1911.

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The Griffydam 1881 census records that **three generations** of the Platts families were living together -

- **Freeman William Platts** (6), his sister Catherine Ann Platts (8) and parents William Cooper Platts (38, b.1843 in Worthington) and Sarah Nicklinson (nee, Handford Platts (44, b.1837 in Heather).
- Living with them were William Platts (71, a retired gardener) and his wife Elizabeth (Cooper) Platts (71) who were Catherine Ann and Freeman William's paternal grandparents, both born c.1810. William and Elizabeth were born in Griffydam and Newbold respectively.

**In 1881 there were 32 people with the surname Platts living in Griffydam.**

The 1901 census records that Freeman William Platts (25), a coal miner hewer, born in Peggs Green, and his wife, Rhoda (23, born in Griffydam) had three children, James W (3), Freeman R (2) and Alonza C (11 months) and were living in Swannington Common, Swannington, Leicestershire.

In 1911, Freeman William Platts (35, a coal miner hewer), his wife Rhoda (33), five sons, James Wm. (13), Freeman Richard (12), Alonza Charles (10), Walter Joseph (9) and Bramley (4) and twin month-old daughters, Evangeline Norah and Louise Grace were living in a 5 room house at 55 Forest Road, Hugglescote. By this time the couple had been married 14 years and seven of their eight children were living.

The preceding newspaper article confirms that in 1957, Freeman William and Rhoda were living at 1, Crescent Road, Hugglescote at which time only three of their sons and a daughter were living.

Rhoda died in 1958 in Coalville aged 80 and was buried on 16th October 1958 in Hugglescote cemetery. Freeman William died in 1969 in Leicester at the age of 94.

Rhoda Holland was the daughter of William Holland (b. Thringstone 1841) and Louisa Haywood (b. Griffydam, 1845). The Griffydam 1881 census records William Holland as a coal miner and their children (including Rhoda), all born in Griffydam were as follows:- Mary (15, a servant to Frederick W Cox of Worthington), James (12, employed at brickyard), William (10, a scholar), Arthur (8, a scholar), Sarah A (6, a scholar), Charles R (4, a scholar), **Rhoda (3)** and Walter (1).

**Freeman William Platts** was the son of William Cooper Platts (b.1842 in Griffydam ) and Sarah Nicklinson Platts (nee., Handford, b.1837 in Heather), who was the daughter of William Handford a miller. William Cooper Platts and Sarah Handford were married on July 11th 1872 in Worthington parish church Their only other child was named Catherine Ann, brother to Freeman William.

William Cooper Platts, was the son of a William Platts (born c.1810 at Griffydam) and his wife Elizabeth Cooper (born 1809 in Worthington) who were married on August 29th 1831, at Breedon church. Elizabeth was baptized at Worthington Chapel as Eliza Cooper on June 11th 1809. William Cooper Platts had 9 siblings - Benjamin, Hannah, William, Amy, William, Thomas Stretton, Thomas Oliver, John Oliver, and Clara.

**Five of William and Elizabeth's 10 children all died at a young age and are buried in Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist graveyard - Amy (3, Nov 24th 1839), William (13m, Dec 25th 1839 - Christmas day), Thomas Stretton (9m, June 7th 1842), Thomas Oliver (3m, Nov 12th 1843) and Clara (6m, Mar 1st 1854).**

William Cooper Platts was recorded in the Griffydam censuses as a Scholar in 1851, a Smith's labourer in 1861 and 1871, a pork butcher in 1881, then a coal miner in 1891 and Colliery Labourer Above Ground in 1901. In 1911, he was recorded as 'Late Colliery Labourer Above Ground', **and resident in Top Road, Griffydam.** William Cooper Platts died on the 25th Oct 1918 aged 76 years in Griffydam as did his wife Sarah who pre-deceased him by 4 years on the 21st Nov 1914 at the age of 77. Both are buried together in Griffydam Wesleyan Methodist graveyard as shown in the following photograph of their Switherland slate gravestone.

The first record we have of William Cooper Platts mother and father William and Elizabeth Platts living in Griffydam is the 1841 census which records William Platts (42, agricultural labourer) and his wife Elizabeth Platts (nee., Cooper) with their son Benjamin (9) and daughter Hannah (8) living on Froggat's Lane which later became Top road, Griffydam. William Cooper Platts was born the year after the 1841 census was taken.

**William Cooper Platts had remarkably lived in Griffydam for 75 years, quite possibly in the same house.**

Elizabeth Platts (nee., Cooper) was the daughter of Thomas Cooper (*b.1787 in Worthington and baptized at Whitwick on 25th Feb 1787 as the son of James and Elizabeth*) and his wife Sarah Tucker (b.1786 in Thringstone). Thomas Cooper and Sarah Tucker were married at St. John The Baptist Church, Whitwick on the 24th December 1805

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The carved Switzerland Slate gravestone of William Cooper Platts and his wife Sarah Nicklinson Platts