

AGM Report – The Master-Builder entertains

At the recent annual general meeting of Wigston Civic Society there was a good turn out of the public and members of the Leicestershire and Rutland Family History Society to hear its Chairman give a fascinating talk on the life, family background and work of Orson Wright who had such a major impact on the area.

Orson was born in Dunton Bassett in 1853 and went into business as a builder whose firm constructed almost all of the original town of South Wigston over the period of about 7 years in the late 19th century. As his business expanded he built many prominent local buildings including the Clarence (of Gertie Gitana fame)



The Marquis of Queensbury (formerly the Clarence) with the blue plaque commemorating Gertie Gitana

and Grand Hotels and the Grand Hotel in Leicester. He bought the Wigston Junction and Knighton Junction brick and tile companies and Wigston Iron Foundry.

He built two houses for his family (he had 6 children in all) in South Wigston and went on to be involved in house construction in Newfoundpool, Knighton Fields, Spinney Hills and Fosse Road areas often including such hotels as the Empire, The Manchester and the Granville.

He became a councillor in Wigston and was involved in local life as well as donating land for the parish church of St Thomas in South Wigston. He died in 1913.

Orson Wright's life and work is celebrated on a 'blue plaque', one of 14, provided by the Civic Society affixed to the wall of Orange Tree House, 2 Orange Street, South Wigston which he built for his sister.

The Civic Society reported on a busy year and with several ongoing projects and campaigns including one to establish a piece of public art in Wigston Magna.