

## **Albert Leonard Frederick Leach – Fielding and Platt Ltd. 1930 – 1946.**

On May 17, 1930, on his fifteenth birthday, my father Leonard Leach was indentured as an apprentice 'in the trade of fitter' with Fielding and Platt Ltd. Years earlier, he had passed the 11 Plus examination but his parents were unable to afford to send him to grammar school (the Crypt or Thomas Riches). After the 11 Plus he attended the Widden Street E.P.T. School where he did well. At the end of the 1929-30 session he was awarded a prize for general progress, which was a book on 'Oil and Gas Engines' by Peter S. Caldwell. In his selection of this book, Leonard may have foreseen his move to an apprenticeship with engineers Fielding and Platt in 1930.

Leonard's Apprenticeship Indenture document is impressive (see attached photographs of the document). The full document opens out to a sheet 13 in. by 16 in. and is printed on heavy parchment paper. The formal agreement covers the full sheet and is signed by Leonard (the Apprentice), his father (the Guardian) and on behalf of Fielding and Platt by Frank T. Morris (the Employer). The Schedule part of the Agreement is interesting. A six-year apprenticeship, working 47 hours week, paid nine shillings a week in the first year rising to sixteen shillings in the sixth and final year. In the bottom left hand corner of the formal Agreement page, hand-written it states "We Certify that the above has completed the Terms of apprenticeship" and is signed on behalf of Fielding and Platt Limited by Frank T. Morris.

Leonard's apprenticeship at Fielding and Platt influenced his life in several ways. My mother once said "I have known your father for over 60 years, and I have never heard a foul word cross his lips". I also never heard a foul word cross his lips. One day my mother told the story why. The reason that Leonard never swore was that when he started work at Fieldings, like all the other young men he started to swear. One day his foreman 'Happy Hillman' took him into the office and told him what a good lad he was and that he should not follow the ways of the other lads in the factory. Apparently, Leonard was reduced to tears in the conversation and from that day forward never swore again.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, Leonard and four other young men from Fieldings volunteered for military service and were 'accepted'. However, once the authorities learned that they were all highly skilled tradesmen their acceptance for military service was immediately rescinded. Throughout the war, Leonard was not allowed to join any active service, the Home Guard or even be an air-raid warden as his trade was too valuable to the war effort. In fact, he spent most of the war keeping munitions factories working in Coventry and Belfast.

After the war he continued working as a service engineer for Fieldings (see attached photograph of his works pass). I remember him reminiscing that he had worked on servicing the Fieldings oil engine that is now restored in the Inland Waterways Museum in Gloucester Docks.

At Wallbridge in Stroud, the Howard and Powell woollen mill had no mains electricity. The factory derived its power from a Fielding's gas engine that powered an electrical generator. If the engine was not working then the mill had no power. One day the engine seized and Leonard was called in to fix it. He managed to replace a main bearing in hours rather than days and so got the mill running again. After this demonstration of his mechanical skills, the mill manager Mr. Atkinson kept contacting Leonard and offering him the position of engineer in charge of maintenance at the mill. Leonard had been away from home a lot as a service engineer with Fieldings, so with the prospect of being home every night he finally accepted the position with Howard and Powell in January 1947 and moved from a rudimentary cottage

in Hartpury to a new prefab at Cashes Green just outside of Stroud. Apparently, Mr. Atkinson was largely responsible for obtaining the prefab for Leonard and family.

So, ended Leonard's 16-year association with Fielding and Platt. However, I do have a memory of taking him to some sort of Fieldings reunion in 1968 that was held in a pub (a half-timbered place) in Southgate Street just down from the Cross and then picking him up a little worse for wear later that evening! Leonard did play rugby for Fieldings before moving on to captain Widden Old Boys for two seasons and then moving to Gloucester for the 1939-40 season, but the war terminated his rugby career with Gloucester, so the 1968 event may have been a Fieldings rugby club reunion.

Dated *May 16<sup>th</sup>* 19*36*

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*Albert Leonard Frederick Leach*

WITH

**Messrs. FIELDING & PLATT, Ltd.**

*Fitter*

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**Apprenticeship Indenture**

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Term *Six* Years

Commencing *May 17<sup>th</sup> 1930*

*(70)*

*2/6*

*Gloucester 22/5*

Front Cover of Leonard's Apprenticeship Indenture.

## SCHEDULE REFERRED TO IN FOREGOING AGREEMENT.

### HOURS OF WORK.

- WORKING WEEK**
1. (1) The ordinary working week to be worked by the Apprentice will consist of such total number of working hours, and of such ordinary working days each of such working hours as from time to time constitute the ordinary working week in the Works in which the Apprentice may be working.  
(2) When the Apprentice is working under Clauses 3 (2) of the foregoing Agreement on any basis of short time a shortened working week consisting of a less number of working hours than the full number in the ordinary working week, and for a shortened working day consisting of a less number of working hours than the full number in the ordinary working day, such shortened week and such shortened day will respectively be deemed to be the ordinary working week and/or the ordinary working day as long as short time continues.
- COMPUTATION OF PERIOD OF SERVICE**
2. (1) When in accordance with Clause 3 (2) of the foregoing Agreement the Apprentice has worked a shortened working week he will nevertheless be deemed to have worked a full ordinary working week for the purpose of computation of his year of service.  
(2) All days which the Apprentice is entitled to keep as holidays will nevertheless be counted as days on which he has worked for the purpose of computation of his year of service.  
(3) All working hours during which the Apprentice is absent from work by reason of sickness certified as provided in Clause 6 (a) of this Schedule (not exceeding the total of the working hours contained in eight full ordinary working weeks) and all working hours during which he is absent from work with the permission or consent of the Employer will nevertheless be counted as hours in which he has worked for the purpose of computation of his year of service.
- OVERTIME**
3. (1) The Apprentice will, as and when requested so to do, work in excess of the hours contained in—  
(a) the ordinary working day or the ordinary working week as the case may be, or  
(b) the shortened working day or shortened working week when short time is being worked under Clause 3 (2) of the foregoing Agreement,  
such additional hours as the Employer, from time to time, subject to the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, 1920, and/or the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901-1911, and any Acts amending the same, may lawfully require the Apprentice to work.  
(2) When such additional hours are worked they will be counted as overtime in the manner and to the extent provided by the practice for the time being prevailing in the Works or in any Department thereof in which the Apprentice may be working.
- NIGHT WORK**
4. The Apprentice will, as and when requested so to do, work at night to such extent as the Employer, subject to the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, 1920, and/or the Factory and Workshops' Acts, 1901-1911, and any Acts amending the same may lawfully require him to work.
- HOLIDAYS AND SUNDAYS**
5. The Apprentice will be entitled to keep as a holiday all such days as are customarily kept as holidays in the Works, provided that the Employer may in cases of necessity, of which he will be the judge, and subject to the Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children Act, 1920, and/or the Factory and Workshops' Acts, 1901-1911, and any Acts amending the same require the Apprentice to work on any such holiday or on any Sunday.
- LOST TIME**
6. The aggregate of all working hours or portions of working hours which the Apprentice fails to work in any ordinary or shortened working week as the case may be in any year of service shall be worked by him before that year of service is deemed to have been completed, provided that the Apprentice will not be bound so to work in respect of—  
(a) any time during which he has been absent from work by reason of sickness (not exceeding the total of the working hours contained in eight full ordinary working weeks) if he produces to the Employer a certificate from a duly qualified medical practitioner that as a result thereof he has been unable to work;  
(b) any time he has been absent from work with the permission or consent of the Employer or as provided by this Agreement.

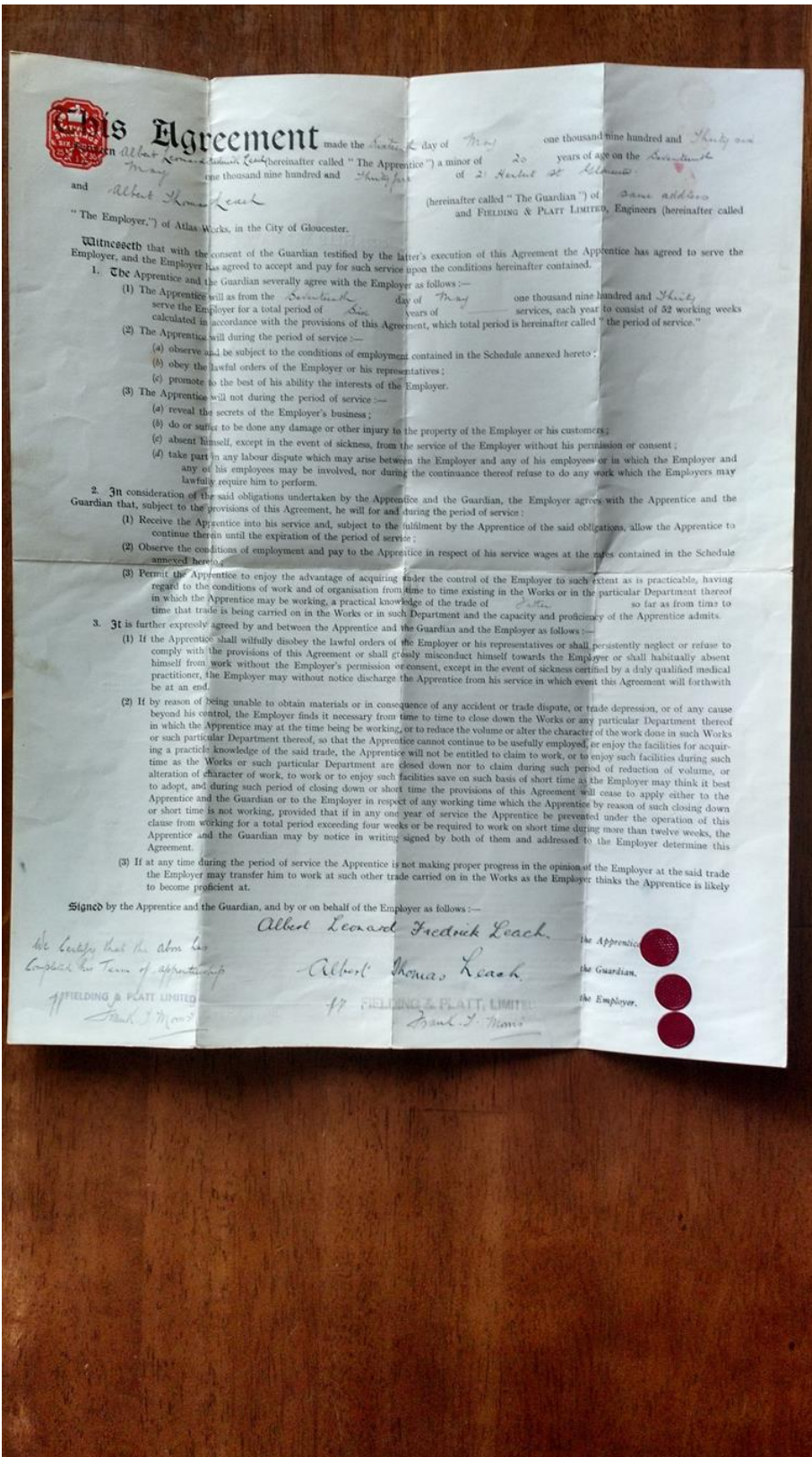
### WAGES.

- RATES OF WAGES**
7. (1) The Apprentice will be paid in respect of each ordinary or shortened working week for each hour he works in such ordinary or shortened working week respectively at the following rates according to his year of service.
- |                                                                         |                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| During the 1st year of service at the rate of 9/- per week of 47 hours. | During the 5th year of service at the rate of 14/- per week of 47 hours. |
| “ “ 2nd “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ 10/- “ “ “ “ “                                  | “ “ 6th “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ 15/- “ “ “ “ “                                   |
| “ “ 3rd “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ 11/- “ “ “ “ “                                  | “ “ 7th “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “                                    |
| “ “ 4th “ “ “ “ “ “ “ “ 12/- “ “ “ “ “                                  |                                                                          |
- (2) The Apprentice will, as and when required to do so by the Employer, work and accept remuneration based on piece work or any other system of payment by results on which the Employer may desire him to work but in such cases he will be paid as a minimum his time rate of wages.
- OVERTIME AND NIGHTWORK**
8. The Apprentice will be paid for overtime and night work on the respective bases on which overtime and night work are, for the time being, paid at the Works or in any Department thereof in which the Apprentice may be working.
- HOLIDAYS**
9. The Apprentice will be paid for all hours he works on days customarily kept as holidays in the Works or in any Department thereof in which the Apprentice may be working, such addition (if any) to the foregoing rates as is usual at the time being at the Works.

### GENERAL.

- WORKS RULES**
10. The Apprentice will conform to the conditions of employment and the rules which from time to time are in existence in the Works so far as they are not inconsistent with the express provisions of this Agreement and are applicable to the Apprentice.
- WORKING CONDITIONS**
11. The Apprentice will work in or away from any Works of the Employer on new work, repair work or on any other work which the Employer may require and with any class or classes of workmen which the Employer may select, and when the Apprentice is engaged on work away from such Works he will receive such allowances as are customarily paid under the circumstances of the case by the Employer.
- CERTIFICATE**
12. When the Apprentice has served the Employer to the satisfaction of the latter for the full period of service a certificate to that effect will be given to the Apprentice by the Employer.

**The Schedule Part of the Apprenticeship Indenture Referred to the Main Agreement**



The Agreement – Part of the Apprenticeship Indenture

FIELDING & PLATT LTD., GLOUCESTER



WORKS PASS

A. L. LEACH.

Name

OIL ENGINE SHOP.

Dept.

A. L. Leach.

Signature

Clock No.

584.

Identity No.

OBAL. 243. 3.

FINDER: Please hand to nearest Police Station

Leonard's Works Pass