



March Meeting **Tuesday 12th March 7.30. Memorial Centre**

Charnwood Forest: Waste to Wonder

By Dr Julie Attard

Julie will delve into the history of the landscape of Charnwood Forest and will also talk about the new Landscape Partnership Project.

Trustee Activities

At the AGM Brian Stanton stood down, after five years as chairman. Brian's tenure has been a very successful one during which the group has more than doubled in size. He was ably assisted by the vice chairman, Robin Davies who also retired at the AGM.

The new chair is Maggie Hunt, so thanks to Brian and Robin and good luck to Maggie

And we have two new trustees-Mary Geary and Paul Hunt

Robin entertained the Methodist Ladies Group with his talk 'The Demolition and Destruction of Mountsorrel'

John Doyle gave a presentation to the Leicestershire & Rutland branch of the Western Front Association titled 'The Battle of Mount Sorrel 1916'

Linda Tyman's article entitled "The effect of the First World War on Mountsorrel Quarry" was published in the January edition of 'East Midlands History and Heritage' which can be seen on-line at:

<http://eastmidlandshistory.org.uk/>

A Mystery Solved

Several years ago I came across a picture in the Record Office which looked familiar. When I looked a bit closer I recognised our house. The inscription says "Nelson Centenary 1905"

About two years ago a lady sent us an image of a postcard which had the same inscription. It had been sent from Mountsorrel 114 years ago to her great aunt, Sally Russell, in Mowsley End, Wigston. She asked if we could tell her what the picture depicted. John Doyle suggested they were standing outside the Drill Hall and identified the soldier as a Royal Marine. But what they were doing remained a mystery. In fact they were making a cup of tea [or rather boiling the water for 570 cups of tea- see below]



John recently solved the mystery whilst researching the history of St Peter's church. The following is taken from a report of the celebrations in the village to mark Trafalgar Day which appeared in the 1905 edition of the East Akeley Deanery Magazine for St Peter's church

Celebrations began on the Thursday with pupils at both St Peter's and Christ Church Schools being presented with keepsakes purchased by the Mountsorrel Granite Company and given out by Robert Edmund and William Francis Martin. The boys were given a Trafalgar Medal and the girls a Trafalgar brooch. These contained some of the copper from the hull sheathing of HMS



Centenary Medal



Centenary Brooch

Victory but, as they were widely available across the country, the amount of original copper must have been very small!

The 21st October was a Saturday and with many houses decorated with patriotic emblems, the celebrations commenced with the pupils assembling on the Green. There the Headmaster of Christ Church School, Mr Mosedale, conducted the pupils in singing "The Death of Nelson" with music provided by the St Peter's String Band.

A parade then formed up, and led by the Mountsorrel Brass Band, moved off down to the Market Place. Here there was more singing by the pupils, this time conducted by Mr Wagstaffe, Headmaster of St Peters. After that everyone progressed down to the Drill Hall where tea had been arranged, paid for by the Granite Co, but made and served by a "Ladies Committee". Some 570 attended and took tea with some 60 ladies and other helpers doing the work.

After refreshments the pupils and orchestra entertained those present with nautical music and again singing "The Death of Nelson" along with, "Ye Mariners of England" and Rudyard Kipling's "Lest We Forget". An address was given by Mr RE Martin on Nelson and the battle.

The celebrations closed about 7:00 pm with a vote of thanks to the Granite Co., The Ladies Committee and the Headteachers followed by the singing of the National Anthem. To close the day the bells of St Peter's were rung in a celebratory peal.

For the full story go to <http://mountsorrelarchive.org/category/military/pre-world-war-1/>

Mountsorrel Town Band

The Mountsorrel Town Band existed for at least 110 years.

They were kept busy at the annual fair in 1850 :

On the Thursday, the Female Druidess's Society met at the White Swan, and walked in procession to Christchurch, headed by the Mountsorrel Band

On Friday the Female Friendly Society met at the Duke of York, and walked in procession, headed by the Mountsorrel Band, to St. Peter's Church.

On Monday, at 8 o'clock a.m. the quarry-men in the employ of Mr. Martin proceeded up the town-street, headed by the band, and carried on to Bradgate-park in wagons decorated with green boughs. When they arrived at Bradgate they were amply regaled with beef and ham, and some good brown-stout.

But the most important duty of the band was during the official opening of the fair conducted by a "mock" Lord of the Manor, "Beauty" Bowler, of Dob Hall. The proclamation was read out by his "steward" Ebenezer Johnson, and a grand procession paraded the village headed by the band. After the proclamation had been duly read out the band played the National Anthem, the Fair was then officially open

The band was led by Benjamin Derry a frame work knitter who, in 1841, lived in Watling Street. There seems to have been a reorganisation of the band in 1877 led by his son, also called Benjamin. For many years they practiced in one of back rooms of the Black Swan.

Mr. Charles Harper, the drummer in this new band, was appointed secretary, a position which he held for over thirty- six years. The trade depression of the 1880's meant that the quarries were very short of work and a number of men, including several bandsmen emigrated to America and Scotland. The band was reduced to only seven members and for about twelve years practically no practices were held. They only met about once a year at feast time when they played at the annual dancing in Johnson's orchard behind the Stag and Pheasant

A complete reorganisation was carried in 1897 under the leadership of Mr Joseph Baum. They obtained the use of the school belonging to St. Peter's Church as a practice room and later they removed to the cookery school in Watling Street.

Mr Joseph Baum resigned the position as bandmaster in 1910 and handed over a keen and thriving organisation to his successor, Mr Charles Bates.

New instruments were purchased in 1920 thanks to donations from Mr F A Toon and the Granite Company.

Mr Charles Bates resigned in 1922 and was succeeded by Mr Henry Dakin.

It was finally disbanded in 1960, and the instruments sold with the proceeds going to the Pensioner's Happy Circle, the Scouts and the Memorial Hall.



The band leader, Harry Dakin, is in the middle of the back row



In 1922 the cookery school was no longer available for practices, so they decided to build their own band room.

Wildlife

We carried out some small scale and very early spring maintenance on the Navins Wildflower Meadow in mid February. The encroaching brush from the treeline has been cut back as has the large ivy clump by the “Froggy”. This has opened up the back area to more light and will hopefully aid the development of the wildflowers that are there.

Whilst on the Meadow we also cleaned out the bird boxes there and the one that we positioned in Christ Church graveyard. We were really pleased to see that all had been in use in the last season by Blue Tits. Let’s hope that the coming breeding season sees all the boxes in use again.

Getting on with that job seemed to trigger the warm weather and with it encourage the birds to thoughts of Spring. Whilst we were working the Song Thrush that has used the trees above the Green for the last two or three years as a singing post, could be heard singing strongly trying to attract a mate. Along with the Song Thrush there were a good number of Great Tits sounding their mating songs and the distinctive call of a Raven as it flew over towards the river valley.

Despite the excellent weather we’ve enjoyed in February it is still early for most of the spring flowers on the meadow but the snowdrops are out and have increased really well. From single plants some two or three years ago we now have about 50 individual small clumps which augers well for a massed display in future years.



Snowdrops on the Wildflower Meadow 24th February