



MHG NEWSLETTER

No 31

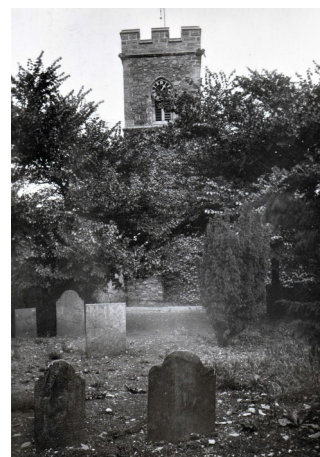
A Final Resting Place

If you lived in Mountsorrel in previous years, depending on where and when you lived and who you were, your final resting place could have been:

- The Consecrated Ground in the Cemetery
- The Unconsecrated Ground in the Cemetery
- St Peter's Church
- The Graveyard of St Peter's Church
- Barrow Church
- The Wesleyan Methodist Burial Ground
- The Baptist Burial Ground
- Rothley Churchyard



The Baptist Burial Ground



St Peter's Graveyard

Traditionally Parish Churches and churchyards were the burial grounds for the inhabitants of the parish. Wealthier inhabitants were often buried in the church or vaults. Stone memorials were not generally used until the later 17th century. By the early 1800s churchyards were beginning to fill up, particularly in the larger cities. An act of 1850 empowered the General Board of Health to take over all burials in the capital, close churchyards and create new cemeteries. In 1853 the Burials (beyond the Metropolis) Act extended the system of civil cemeteries to the rest of the country, with responsibility falling to the local councils.



Castledine vault in St Peter's churchyard

The Cemetery

At a special meeting of the vestry of the North End of Mountsorrel, held on 30th March 1858, it was resolved to provide a new burial ground for the township of Mountsorrel North. A burial board, one of the members being John Mitchil, was formed and on 29th June 1858 it was authorised to purchase a piece of land from John Woodruffe. The land, called Castle Hill, was situated on the west side of the turnpike from Mountsorrel to Quorn and cost £300. £1000 was borrowed from Mr William Inglesant to purchase the land, erect the chapels and lay out the burial ground. The chapel and ground on the south side were unconsecrated and on the north side were consecrated. The money was paid back at a rate of £50 pa. from the poor rates of the North End of Mountsorrel. By 28 Aug 1858 the burial board were selling off 6 roods of potatoes and mangold wurtzels, and just one year on from the original decision, on 13th May 1859 the first burial took place. It was in the consecrated section that Frederick Kirchin aged 3 weeks was buried. The first burial in the unconsecrated section was Mary Mitchil, 56 wife of John Mitchil (a member of the Burial Board).

The cemetery was extended in 1896, accompanied by a heated debate in the Parish Council. The Home Office insisted that the extension be divided into consecrated and unconsecrated portions, which the Parish Council refused to do. When they were told it was a matter of law rather than choice the Chairman said they would resort to passive resistance, which had enabled nonconformists to obtain the civil and religious liberty that they now enjoy. The vicar agreed to relinquish his fees and any exclusive right to the performance of the service at the time of burial. This just left the question of the Bishop's consecration fee of £15. The Parish Council refused to pay it and on the basis of 'those who want the consecration can pay for it', voluntary donations from churchmen resolved the situation.

In the first twelve months 27 people were buried in the cemetery and the average life expectancy was 21 years. The number of children under the age of five was 15 (55%).

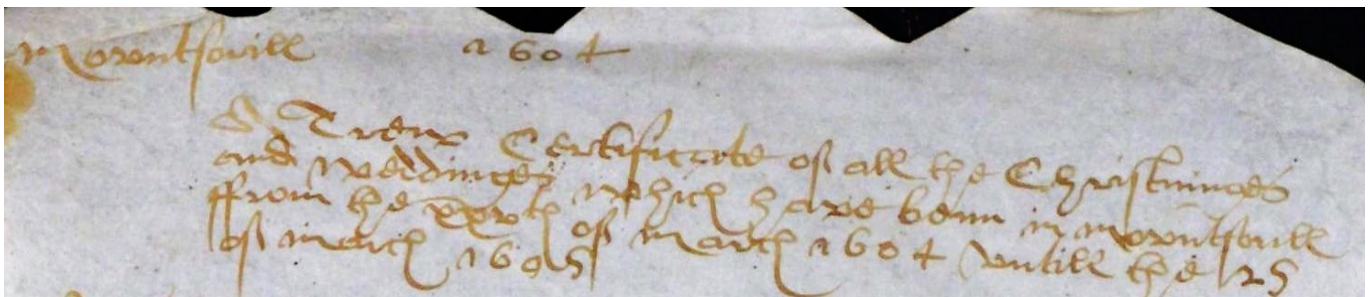
Graveyard ,St Peter's Church

Prior to 1859, if you lived in the north end (Mountsorrel Inferior) you would have been buried in the churchyard of the chapel of St John the Baptist, now St Peter's church. It appears the grave yard may not always been in the same location as in:

1759 *a new burying ground at Mountsorrel was consecrated by the Bishop of Lincoln for the use of both ends of the township*

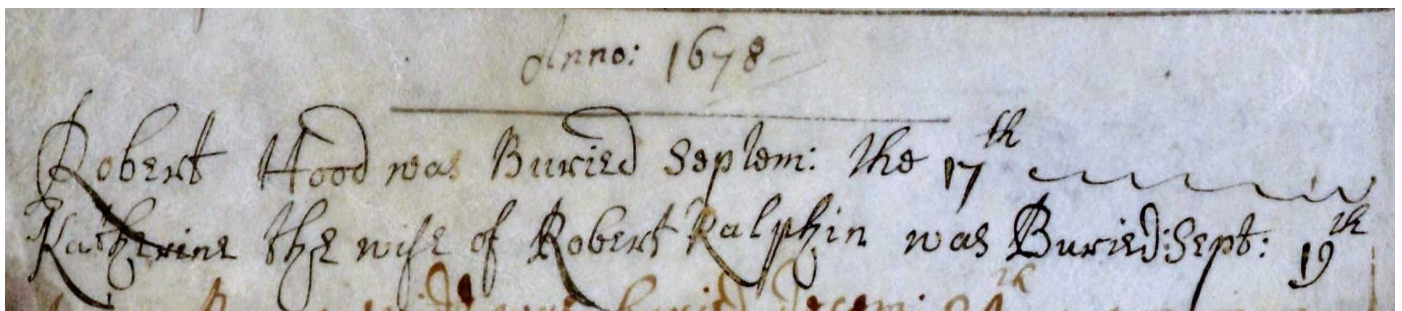
And in 1782 *'A petition by Sir John Danvers, , to take down and remove the Wall and to erect handsome uniform Iron Balisader and Iron Gates on a piece of ground at the West end of the Chapel of Mountsorrel for a burial place of the Inhabitants and those staying in the Township of Mountsorrel'*

Burial records did not start until 1538 when a mandate was issued by Henry VIII to keep parish registers. This ordered that every parson, vicar or curate was to enter in a book every wedding, christening and burial in his parish. The parish was to provide a coffer with two locks, one key for the parson and one for the church wardens. The entries were to be made each Sunday after the service. In 1597 registers were to be made of parchment instead of paper, and copies were to be made and sent to the bishop. The earliest surviving record for Mountsorrel appears to be the Bishop's Transcript of 1604, but it does not include burials.



Look carefully and you might see that this says; *mountsorill 1604*

A true certificate of all the christenings and weddings ??? born in mountsorill from the 25th of march 1604 until the 25 of march 1605



This is easier to read and is the earliest recorded burial

St Peter's Church

More important (richer) inhabitants could be buried inside the church:

On a flat stone in the chancel : near this place lieth the body of Thomas Greasley, gent, who departed this life the 21st of January, 1765, in the 52nd year of his age. Also his wife Ann and their daughter Sophia aged 16 years

Barrow Church

More Mountsorrel Greasleys are buried in Barrow church including Phebe the daughter of Thomas Greasley, her husband George English innkeeper of Mountsorrel, and six of their nine children: George 1731 aged 8 months, Trueman 1732 aged 7 months, Thomas 1744 aged 6 years, Millicent 1745 aged 3 years, Edward 1748 aged 8 years and George May 1754 aged 22 years. People from Mountsorrel buried in the churchyard are mostly from the work-house. Mountsorrel chapel was under the auspices of Barrow Church

The Wesleyan Methodist Burial Ground

A Wesleyan chapel was erected in the north end of the village in 1810 after a license for a dissenters meeting house was granted to Simeon Brewin and others. In 1896 the chapel was sold to the Granite Company so that they could widen the railway bridge which had been built alongside it. In the attached graveyard were the bodies of Simeon Brewin and his son Illife. The cost of moving the bodies would have been high and so Robert Brewin gave his reluctant permission for his father and brother to be entombed under-

Baptist Burial Ground

The burial ground was situated on the corner of what is now Barons Way and Leicester Road. Ten members of the Preston family were buried there (average age 23) but Charles Preston age 78 was buried in the Quorn Baptist Churchyard. In 1880 the burial ground was restored by the trustees of the Thornton and Hickling's Charity with an added memorial stone which is still there. In 1987 the gravestones were removed to Mountsorrel Cemetery



Rothley Churchyard

The inhabitants of the south end worshipped at the St Nicholas chapel which was under the auspices of Rothley church and demolished in the sixteenth century. It did have a chapel yard and possibly carried out funeral services (obits); but there is no evidence of a burial ground and it may have been impractical due to the rocky nature of the ground. An area set aside in Rothley churchyard for the burials of Mountsorrel people was in use until the Mountsorrel cemetery opened in 1859

From the Chairman

First I would like to say thank you to Brian Stanton who has retired as a trustee, for all his hard work for the Heritage Group and his vision on having a museum in Mountsorrel, which has now come to fruition. Thank you Brian

We are hoping to carry out another test pit in the gardens of 4, Castle Hill on the 17th & 18th August (social distanced) of course. We may locate the foundations or some evidence of a chapel that was on that site.

Good news that Scott Greene has agreed to become a Heritage Group trustee. Scott was born & has lived in Mountsorrel all of his life.

Scott works as a shift manager at the quarry and is very keen on the history of the village.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you for all the cards and kind words from members of the group, when Paul suddenly passed away in April, you know who you are. THANK YOU.

Maggie Hunt

Chairman

Wildlife

We held our first socially distanced work party at the Peace Garden on 22nd July and a follow up on 5th August. We have concentrated on weeding around the memorial and at the riverside – you can now again see the water from the seats! We've also planted some new small shrubs courtesy of Jean Alexander – thank you Jean! The place looks immeasurably better for the work with some very positive comments received from various quarters. The next work party day will be early in early September date yet to be confirmed but help is welcomed, remember we must keep to the social distancing guidelines but apart from that it's business as usual weeding, tidying and cutting back where needed.

It was good to note that the Swifts that are usually seen around the Market Place and down to the river are still with us although numbers are well down on previous years.

We found a resident in the Peace Garden who will be a great help in keeping the slugs down if nothing else!



An Earth Ball in Cufflins Pit Lane, about the size of a small football (or was!) and the marking is due to grass getting wrapped on it as it grew.

One thing we are unable to do anything about is the Fungus which has re-appeared on the large tree stump on the Sibley Lane side. There is also some now appearing on the southern side of the site. We haven't a fungus expert (that we know of!) amongst us but think it is *Laetioporus sulphureus*. We would welcome comments from anyone who is knowledgeable about fungi!



Wildflower Meadow

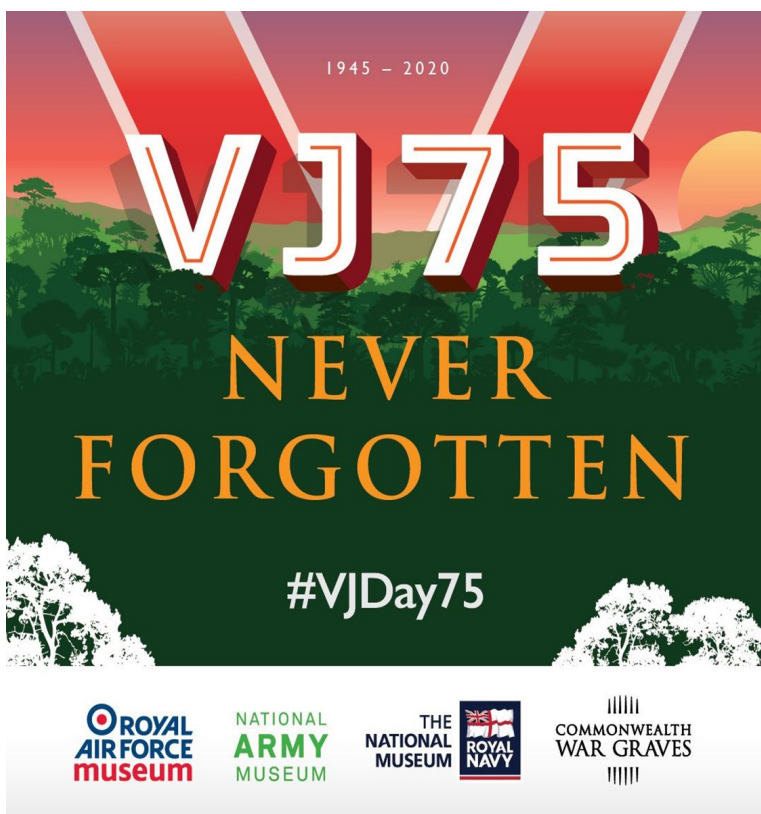
The Meadow continues to develop as we move into high summer with strong growth of a variety of grasses along where we did have a large amount of brambles. It attracts a good showing of butterflies with some of this year's Brimstones now joining the varieties we reported last month. We see Brimstones in April as probably the first butterfly of the year those have hibernated through the winter. The ones we see now are from this year's eggs laid by those that hibernated last winter.

Birds

Along with the Swifts that we see over the Market Place and by the river the ones that nest somewhere around Danvers Rd / Linkfield Rd are with us and have successfully reared young. They and the others will now be feeding up ready for their departure southwards at the end of August.

The radio tagged White-Tailed Sea Eagles that we mentioned in the May Newsletter are still visiting Leicestershire having been seen over the Burrough Hill area in late July.

VJ Day 75



Sadly due to the COVID issues the Parish Council have been forced to cancel the planned picnic on the Memorial Playing Fields that was to mark the 75th Anniversaries of both VE and VJ Days. Whilst this is disappointing it is a fully understandable decision given the current situation.

The Group had planned to support the Anniversaries with a display of photos of the various Street Parties held at the time and we will in due course add to the articles we have already posted on the website.

Mountsorrel WW2 Far East War Casualty

Whilst we had long known of the village's casualties in the other WW2 theatres of war it was only in 2000 that we learnt that we had a casualty in the Far East. The reason that the knowledge was lost is simple and reflects similar problems that we encountered when trying to identify WW1 Casualties, it is that as the war commenced, the family moved to Loughborough and the village connection was broken. Puzzlingly though even there he was not recorded on the Carillon until the Mountsorrel Royal British Legion had been contacted in 2000.

In the autumn of 2000 a letter was received from a former WW2 RAF serviceman who said that in early 1942 he had been serving at RAF Station Toungoo in central Burma and had become a great pal of a Mountsorrel man, Maurice Spence. He went on to say that he knew Maurice's family had moved to Loughborough and that he had visited both the Carillon and the memorials in here in Mountsorrel and he was very disappointed to see that his old pal was not remembered.

He wrote that on 24th March 1942 Japanese forces had all but surrounded the airfield which was then being held by a small party of British servicemen. As the Japanese launched the final assault to secure the airfield 12 men, several of whom were wounded managed to escape but Maurice and two others did not make it.

Maurice was posted Missing believed Killed in Action. The MoD Archives Branch have told us that records show that when Burma was eventually recaptured a search of the site took place but no remains could be found and Maurice's name was added to those listed as having no known grave at the CWGC Singapore War Memorial.

Sometime after 2000 Maurice's name was added to the Carillon Memorial but it wasn't until the new Memorial Centre was opened here in the village that his sacrifice was marked with his name being to those on the memorial in the foyer.



**1003785 Corporal, Maurice Spence,
Royal Air Force (Volunteer Reserve)**

Maurice was the son of Benjamin and Evylin Spence on who married at St Peter's in 1915. Benjamin was originally from Hathern but on marriage he and Evylyn set up home at 11 Quorn Rd (now Loughborough Rd). Maurice was born in May 1918 and after school worked as Chief Clerk at a distribution company. On 10th June 1940, aged 21 he joined the RAF and was employed as an Orderly Room Clerk. By 1942, promoted to Corporal, he was serving at the isolated Toungoo airfield in south central Burma. The airfield and town sits astride the main Rangoon to Mandalay road along which the Japanese were advancing after capturing Rangoon on 8th March. The Japanese objective was to attack the Chinese Nationalist Armies in the rear through Yunnan Province. A subsidiary objective was to destroy the small British force in the area or push it back into India. RAF Station Toungoo had been in use by 67 Squadron RAF equipped with Hawker Hurricane IIB aircraft to defend Rangoon but with the fall of the city the aircraft were redeployed leaving a small RAF and Army force to defend the airfield.

At 07:00 on 24th March the Japanese assaulted the airfield with mortar and machinegun fire. At 08:45 the evacuation was ordered as Japanese forces overran the airfield. Whilst some men got away north towards Mandalay by truck Cpl Spence was not with them. He was posted missing believed killed in action. He has no known grave but is remembered on the memorial in the Memorial Centre and at the CWGC Singapore War Memorial.



Memorial Centre Memorial