



MHG NEWSLETTER

No 34

As we have now collected the Workhouse exhibition, thanks again to Terry Shepherd and the Rothley Heritage Trust, a few words about poor relief in Mountsorrel

During the Middle Ages support for the poor was mainly provided by the Church and the monasteries. This was no longer the case after the Reformation and so the poor became the responsibility of the Elizabethan government. A spate of legislation to deal with this in the second half of sixteenth century was consolidated by the 1601 Poor Law act which remained in effect for over 200 years.

Responsibility for the poor was passed to the parish who had to raise the necessary funds via a poor rate (surviving today as the council tax) on property owners. Two overseers in each parish collected the rate and administered relief, mostly as 'out-relief'. This included money, food, clothes and fuel, and was given to people in their homes. During the seventeenth century the workhouse gradually evolved as an alternative form of 'indoor relief'. Parish workhouses were usually ordinary local houses.

A parliamentary report of 1777 recorded a parish workhouse in operation in the North End of Mountsorrel for 16 inmates. In February 1852 the church wardens resolved that the five tenements in the North End commonly called the old workhouse should be sold.

The South End perhaps had no workhouse. In 1740 they contracted out their poor to the workhouse in Sibley Road, Barrow. The contract for three years was agreed between Walter Barrs and James Oldershaw, the church warden and overseer of the poor of the South End and William Squire, master of the workhouse in Barrow. It was agreed that William Squire shall take in '*all persons as through want and poverty shall become chargeable to the inhabitants of the South End and provide them with sufficient meat, drink, washing, lodging and clothing.*' For this he was paid £18 in two instalments.

In 1793 following a majority agreement at a public meeting in the South End a contract for a year was drawn up between the church wardens and overseers and John Place in which John Place was to be paid a guinea a week to look after the poor entitled to relief. Any persons brought to John Place were to be provided with lodgings, meat, drink, clothing and employment. If any person died John Place was to bear the funeral expenses but allowed the clothes of the deceased, if single. He also had the benefit of '*the poor peoples' Labour and Service*'.

Settlement

Assistance depended on the residential qualification of living locally. Settlement Certificates proved which parish an individual belonged to and therefore which parish had the legal responsibility to provide poor relief if needed. In 1767 William Gibbons was examined in front of John Danvers J.P. to determine his place of settlement, either the North End or South End of Mountsorrel. The outcome is not recorded

The examinant saith that he was born in the North End of Mountsorrel where his father's settlement then was. At Lady Day in 1761 he lived in his own house in the South End of Mountsorrel known by the sign of The Plough for about a year and a half. When his mother died he removed to a house in the North End of Mountsorrel known by the sign of the Naggs Head, which he inherited from his mother, where he resided about fourteen days at which time he employed an attorney to sell the same, which was sold for two hundred pounds. Further said he never paid any parish rates for the said house whilst he occupied it. He saith that he has not done any act matter or thing whatsoever whereby to gain any other settlement save as above mentioned

Apprenticeships

The Poor Relief Act of 1601 allowed parish officials to bind a child to a master. Normally only poorer children were apprenticed, often referred to as pauper apprenticeships. Children could be apprenticed from the age of seven, later ten. The child was originally bound until the age of 24, lowered to 21 in 1778. Most pauper apprenticeships were arranged to remove the child as a financial burden on the parish such as in cases of illegitimacy. A woman discovered pregnant outside marriage was examined to establish the identity of the father who was pressured to enter into a Bastardy Bond agreeing to pay the churchwarden and the overseers for the child's maintenance. The terms of maintenance lasted until the child was old enough to be apprenticed out. Many children ended up as cheap labour or unpaid servants. However, they did receive board and lodging and gained legal settlement in their master's parish.

Between 1737 and 1827 there are recorded 37 cases of apprenticeships from the South End of Mountsorrel. Most (26) were apprenticed as framework knitters. Two who weren't were:

Elizabeth Newton who, in 1757, was apprenticed to John Rice a ginger bread maker until the age of twenty
William Antill who, in 1827, at the age of nine, was apprenticed as a chimney sweeper in Loughborough

The Workhouse

An act was passed in 1782 which allowed parishes to come together to set up a common workhouse. Barrow and ten other local parishes "incorporated" to form a workhouse known at the time as the Barrow House of Industry. This comprised a block of old houses (Nos 49, 49a and 51) in Beveridge Street. Another act in 1834, known as the New Poor Law replaced the 1601 poor law. It imposed a national system in which parishes were grouped into unions and each union had to build a workhouse. The Barrow House of Industry was sold and the Barrow Union Workhouse was built on the corner of Leicester Road and Union Lane (Linkfield Road). Its operation was over seen by an elected Board of Guardians, thirty in number one from each of its constituent parishes. It cost £6500 and had room for 300 inmates. It was called the Mountsorrel Workhouse although it was in the parish of Rothley when it was built.



Mountsorrel Workhouse

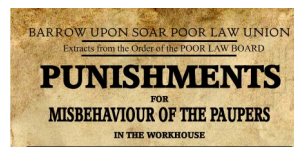
Conditions in the workhouse were harsh and discipline severe.

The diet consisted of 7 oz bread (5 for women) and two pints of gruel for breakfast, 5oz meat and vegetables or 2 pints of soup and 7 oz of bread (5 for women) for dinner. Also 2 oz of cheese (1½ oz for women) once a week. For supper they were given 7oz of bread and 2 oz of cheese (5 and 1½ for women). But on Tuesdays and Fridays there was gender equality at dinner time when the meal consisted of 4 oz of bacon for both men and women.



Breakfast		Dinner			Supper		
Bread oz	Gruel pints	Cooked Meat and Vegetables oz	Soup pints	Bread oz	Cheese oz	Bread oz	Cheese oz

There were two categories of misbehaviour each with their own punishments. Behaviour such as use of obscene language, pretend sickness or play at cards was deemed Disorderly Behaviour. This could be punished by the Master by replacing the normal dinner with a meal of just eight ounces of bread or a pound of potatoes or rice. Behaviour such as insulting the Master, wasting any provisions provided by the Guardians or being drunk was deemed to be Refractory Behaviour, and could be punished by confinement in a separate room (the dark hole) with a reduced diet or being taken before a Justice of the Peace.



In March 1869 James Baker was stopped 5 oz of cooked meat for throwing a piece of pudding at the women.
In October 1869 Fanny Cheshire was kept in a dark hole for 5 hours and kept on a low diet for refusing to work and refusing to go to bed.
In June 1873 William Smith and Susan Wooton were taken before the Justice and each sent to 21 days hard labour for having improper connexion in the bath house.

The Relieving Officer's duties included receiving and assessing applications for relief. No 1 Loughborough Road, once a butchers, was where the relieving officers lived in 1881, 1891 & 1901.

Other sources of relief for the poor of Mountsorrel were the various charities. The Consolidated Charity was formed in 1680. A total of £216 donated by seven benefactors was used to purchase land in Barrow. In 1874 it was amalgamated with three other charities to form the Mountsorrel United Charity which still today provides relief to those in need.



No 1 Loughborough Road

Market Place Messuages

In the last lockdown the solicitor dealing with properties in Market Place had a clear out. He gave deeds to the landlord, Paul [Mister Paul the Gents Hairdresser] who kindly allowed me to study them. The deeds comprise 42 documents from 1774 to 1968, when the property was sold to Samuel Roth. A further 35 documents cover the period from 1968 to 2002.

Most of the earlier documents are indentures written on parchment. For each transaction there were two separate indentures. In the first indenture the property was leased to the buyer for one year with a rent of one peppercorn. In the second indenture dated the next day the property was conveyed (released) to the buyer (now the tenant) for the full purchase price. This was called lease and release and was the most popular way to record sales of property from the seventeenth century up to 1845. It was essentially a legal wheeze to avoid the requirement to enrol property transactions in the public registry. Both were long wordy documents with a lot of repetition. Solicitors were paid by the number of words.

The documents originally referred to three separate plots.

One plot is described as *a messuage near the Market Cross and another messuage adjoining*. It belonged to Robert Pearson a druggist living in Melton Mowbray. When he died in 1829 it was sold by his executor, Robert Pearson Jacques for £200 to Edward Green, who died in 1834. The mortgage had not been repaid so the property had to be sold by his daughter to Charles Mitchil for £96. The two houses were later converted to three dwellings and were known as Nos 40, 42 and 44 Market Place. One was demolished about 1945, the other two about 1950. They were replaced by garages and what is now the Market Place Café.



Nos 40,42,44 Market Place



Nos 40,42,44 Market Place in 1840



Site of Nos 40,42,44 Market Place

Another plot is described as *a messuage in Market Place which has for several years past has been a Public House known by the sign of The Harrow.*

In 1777 it was sold by Benjamin Raven to William Oldfield for £80 who sold it to Charles Mitchil in 1794 for £94. This later became two dwellings, Nos 36 and 38 Market Place



Nos 36 & 38 Market Place

A third plot was described as all that messuage cottage or tenement with bakehouse in Mountsorrel formerly consisting of a house and three shops The messuage, shops and premises, for several years last occupied as one messuage in the possession of Charles Mitchil. And also that orchard or backside to the same.

And also the Cross Barn with two bays

Also a common right of depasturing for one cow on the hills of Mountsorrel.

The common right was later sold to Lord Lanesborough. When the three plots, all owned by Charles Mitchil, were sold as one lot in 1865 there was no mention of the Cross Barn.

When it was sold in 1889 it was described as *seven messuages one with shop and bakehouse attached with the gateway entrance, granary, stables, cowsheds, framesmiths' shops, yard, garden, outbuildings fronting in part on the town street of Mountsorrel near to the Market Cross and in part Watling Street*



Framesmith's shop, stables, cowsheds etc



Amongst the various later occupants were the General Household Stores and the Mountsorrel Industrial Society.

In 1928 it was purchased by John Henry Goodwin a butcher who lived at No 30 Market Place

In 1945 he sold it to John Joseph Goodwin who lived at No 34 and operated a

butchers shop at No 32. The final owner before the present one was Samuel Roth who purchased the property in 1965.



Nos 32,34 Market Place



In 1763 Thomas Herrick, in his will, left his house to his eldest daughter Ann, who married Joseph Osborn, a labourer. In an indenture dated 1802 Joseph borrowed £100 using the house as surety. The house was described as *all that messuage situate in Mountsorrel, near the Market Cross, now in the occupation of Joseph Osborn, the messuage of John Doughty being on the north side.* John Doughty lived at 28 Market Place, so this house must have been No 30 Market Place. The debt remained unpaid so in 1808 the house had to be sold to John Bunney for £180. After his death the house was sold to Simeon Brewin and after his death the property now three dwellings, was sold to John Gill in 1864, who was the landlord of the Griffin on the other side of the road. There are no documents relating to this house after 1864.



30 Market Place

It is probable that this building preceded the current No 30 Market Place, which does not have the appearance of a house existing in 1763, (its listed building description suggests a date of mid 1800's) and it is difficult to imagine as three separate dwellings. According to the census data it was unoccupied in 1871, and to let in 1881. This suggests it was demolished and a new house built during this period. It was occupied by Elijah Cox a cab proprietor in 1891 and he was still there in 1911. Elijah started a coach service between Loughborough and Leicester, the journey taking at least two hours. It is said he was the first man in England to prosecute a motorist for frightening his horse and failing to stop when requested. The motorist was fined ten shillings.



Elijah Cox's Cab

It is not clear why the documents to this house are included in these deeds.

Chairman's Chat

Hi all, hope you are all well & not letting this pesky virus get you down.

We are now the proud owners of the Workhouse exhibition, & it will go on display in the museum when we re-open. Thank you to everybody who helped collect it from Rothley cemetery.

We are hoping to start our talks again earlyish next year, but may have to do tickets as we will be limited to numbers to keep everybody safe, so watch this space.

Keep your pecker up during this trying time,. Keep well & safe.

Maggie

Then and Now

The Library

Mountsorrel has for many years benefited from a library in one form or another, presently it is within the Mountsorrel Learning Centre which opened in 2007 and houses the Library, the Mountsorrel Heritage Group Museum and a training room for adult education courses.



October 2020

The present building is a redevelopment of Church House, the former Sunday School and Community Hall for Christ Church, and sits on the site of Twigg's Cottage

Twigg's Cottage, although owned by the Lanesborough Estate, took its name from the Twigg family who lived there between the 1850s and 1909. John Twigg was a framework knitter and also held the post of Pinder, the keeper of the village

Twigg's Cottage – photo c1900



pinfold, sited at the top of the Green. His death was noted in the Melton Mowbray Mercury & Oakham & Uppingham News which on 11th October 1906 reported:

“Death of an old resident. - The interment of Mr John Twigg took place at the Mountsorrel Cemetery on the Sunday last. The deceased was 93 years of age at his death. Although outside the churches he was an honest radical and a good citizen”.

In 1909 John Twigg's wife Matilda also died and the Skelly family, who had been boarding there, moved to a house on the Green. The landowner, Lord Lanesborough, now decided to gift the site to Christ Church for use as a Church Hall. The Church Wardens and Vicar arranged for a bank loan to partly fund the building of the new hall assisted by a gift from the Mountsorrel Granite Company, arranged by Mr Robert Frewen Martin, of the top stone for building along with sets for quoins, sand, gravel and £100. The building was erected by the well known local builders, F. Sleath of Rothely, for a cost of £604 and 10 shillings.

The final conveyancing of the land in 1912 was marked by a plaque that was originally in the entranceway facing Leicester Road but since the redevelopment has been moved to the new entrance facing Sorrel Court.

The building served Christ Church as a base for their Sunday School and a wide variety of church events. It also hosted charity and other events for wider village community. By the late 1990s the cost of upkeep was becoming beyond the capacity of the church community and the decision was made to sell the building. The decision caused some "discussion" both within Christ Church and beyond.

PARISH COUNCIL 'WERE NOT CONSULTED'

Outrage over church sale

AN OUTRAGED parish councillor has slammed the Church of England over how it sold off one of its buildings in his village.

Coun Don Freshwater is angry over the sale of the Church House, which stands on the village green in Mountsorrel and was owned by the church.

But the vicar of Christ Church and St Peter in Mountsorrel, the Rev Fred Brodie, explained how the church was legally required to get the best possible price for the Church House.

Coun Freshwater claimed that when it was put up for sale the council immediately bid for the property, only to find that there was another interested party.

"We then increased our bid and had an understanding with the church that if necessary we would be able to increase our bid again," said Parish Councillor Prof Freshwater.

"However, the Diocesan Council then took over the sale and promptly sold it to a builder who will use the property as offices."

'Disgrace'

"We on the parish council were not consulted over this or even given any hint of the sale, it just went ahead before we could do anything about it."

"The facts are that we intended to keep this building for public use for the people of Mountsorrel and instead there will be builders' vans and lorries parked there, and all for a bit of extra cash. It's a disgrace."

Mr Brodie added: "The Parochial Church Council was faced with the difficult choice of raising £40,000 for renovations to the Church House or selling the property."

"The decision to sell was made this year and much interest was shown in the prospect of selling to the Parish Council for the development of council offices."

"However, the PCC was informed by the Diocesan Board of Finance that as a charitable body, it must comply with the provisions of the Charities Act 1993 when selling the property."

"The clear rule of the act is that a charity must dispose of its assets for the best price possible, given the nature of the market."

"This usually means an open market sale and sealed bid offers are standard practice, the aim of which is to produce the highest sale price."

"The PCC has followed these steps and has accepted the highest bid. As trustees, PCC members are legally liable to ensure that their actions are to the maximum benefit of the charity. To do otherwise may leave them open to a legal prosecution for negligence."

Loughborough Echo
1998

The sale however allowed for wider fresh developments to take place within the village. The new purchaser was a Charitable Trust formed in memory of some villagers from a generation born in the early part of the 20th century. Their aim was to ensure the long term use of the building for community purposes but to achieve this considerable renovation and building redevelopment were needed.



Renovation in progress

**To the Glory of God and memory of
The Rt. Hon. John Vansittart Danvers
Butler
Sixth Earl of Lanesborough
and of
Anne Elizabeth his wife.
This Church House was erected on a
site
Presented by their son, the Rt. Hon.
Brinsley Butler
Seventh Earl of Lanesborough**



Church House c1912

At some later point alterations to the roof permitted the addition of a clock and bell sounding the hours to be added. These were retained and renovated following the sale of the building.



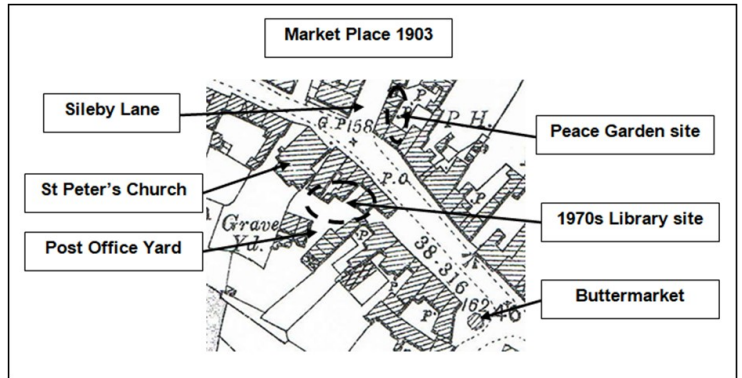
Church House bell and clapper prior to renovation



The opening in 2007 of the Mountsorrel Learning Centre triggered the end of the library building that had served the village from the 1970s which was housed in, to quote one resident, a “glass box”, built on the site of ancient cottages that had stood next to St Peter’s Church since at least the 17th century and had been swept away in the late 1960s wave of redevelopment. During its 30 years this building provided a much loved, valued and well used library service for the village but lacked the wider facilities that the redeveloped Church House provides.



When some 30 years later that library building was in turn demolished the replacement development picked up design features of the original buildings providing a degree of continuity to the village’s past and also added an “eco” house.



The houses facing Sileby Lane Junction 1952



Demolition 1958



Demolition 1958 and 2000 (Note a degree of improvement in Health and Safety standards!)



Building the Eco House

Demolition complete



The new houses October 2020

The Eco House was designed to be carbon neutral. The heating was supplied by ground source heat pumps. These use pipes buried in the soil to extract heat from the ground which heat is then used to heat radiators and hot water in the house. Just a metre or so underground the soil temperature is a constant eight degrees centigrade. Water with antifreeze is passed through the pipes. The temperature of the water is raised to eight degrees, the heat extracted and the water pumped back into the pipes at zero degrees. Normally the pipes are laid horizontally but the Eco house had no garden so to get sufficient surface area a borehole had to be drilled down 150 metres. All this was explained carefully by the site foreman to an interested local, who said simply what about the granite? He was assured the ground had been surveyed and there was no granite. "But this is Mountsorrel" thought the local, but he kept his thoughts to himself. A few days later drilling started and when they reached 80 metres they hit the granite, and not only the granite but also the water table. The result was a gusher, not oil, but dirty orange water and mud all over the roof of the Eco House and the house next door, where it punched a hole through the conservatory roof. The drill was taken away and replaced a few weeks later with a bigger one capable of cutting through granite.


A few years after the house was sold the pipes sprung a leak, and because of the cost of repair the system was replaced by a gas boiler.

Earlier Libraries

The 1970s Library was the first dedicated Library building for the village but not the first library facility. Following the 1870 Elementary Education Act the small infants' school founded by the Countess of Lanesborough in what is now the Parish Rooms closed with the children attending either St Peter's or Christ Church Schools. That permitted the building to be used as a Mechanics Institute providing adult education and a reading room facility. These institutes had their roots in the Industrial Revolution and aimed at furthering the education of the working man and naturally added a library facility as they developed, with the first being the Birmingham Artisans Library, formed in 1823. In Wright's Directory of 1878 the Mechanic's Institute is shown as holding a library of 650 volumes. Running somewhat in parallel with the Mechanics Institute the Mountsorrel Granite Company operated the Red Lion Coffee House which incorporated a reading room. The establishment of the Coffee House was as an attempt to ensure their workmen didn't gravitate solely to the village's many public houses after (or before) their shift.

The Library Today

After initial closure due to the COVID restrictions the library is once more open and serving the community, albeit with the controls necessary to keep staff and library users safe.

 **Mountsorrel Library**
 From Mon 12th Oct as well as browsing for books Mountsorrel Library will have some computers available for the public to use

Opening Times

Mon 2pm-4.30pm
 Tues 10am-12.30pm
 Wed CLOSED
 Thurs 2pm-4.30pm
 Fri 2pm-4.30pm
 Sat 10am-12.30pm

More information at leics.gov.uk/libraries



The Parish Rooms October 2020

In 1919 the post war changes in the village may well have led to the closure of the Mechanic's Institute as there was an effort by the Vicar of St Peter's, Rev'd C Chappell, to form a library within the church, using the Church Room (by the quarry railway bridge over Leicester Road) but it is not known what became of the effort.

Library Mrs C Martin has presented some books which will form the nucleus of a lending library. Will those who have any readable books please send them to the Vicarage if they can be spared. I will fill the shelves of the bookcase in the Church Room. When we have sufficient number of books I will open a lending library for members of the congregation.

Finally from early in the 20th century Alfred Sutton's Stationer's shop next to the Bull and Mouth operated a lending library as part of the business and this was continued through to the 1960s by Mr Godfrey, who took over the business.

This Official Guide may be obtained from—

A. SUTTON,
Bookseller, Stationer & Newsagent.

Local Views Postcards and Letter Cards in great variety.
 LENDING LIBRARY. (ARCADIAN CHINA.)

LEICESTER ROAD, MOUNTSORREL,
 Newspapers and Periodicals Daily Delivered.

Wildlife

Birds

Whilst the main migration gets underway it has been a quiet month for birdlife around us. There have still been some interesting birds about including a pair of Whooper Swans on Swithland Reservoir and the sighting of Hawfinchs and Crossbills nearby.

Fungi

Autumn is mushroom (and toadstool) time and a quiet walk around the short circular permissive path (Buddon Wood Farm path) around the western side of the Common revealed a large number. Sadly not a great variety and as the previous day there had been torrential rain they weren't at their best but still notable for the numbers to be seen. **We do not recommend picking or eating any of these unless you are an expert!**



Probably Sulpher Tuft (these start out pale yellow but turn chocolate brown with age and damp) POISONOUS



PROBABLY Agaricus augustus



2020 10 22 Probably Crumble



Possible Boletus family



Shaggy Inkcaps



Shaggy Inkcap

Peace Garden

Following our writing to the Parish Council suggesting some pre-emptive maintenance tasks in the Peace Garden we are pleased to note that the base stones under the memorial bench to the late Cllr Harold Newman have been re-secured. We have also been informed that the Parish Council plan for the cleaning and repainting of the fencing in 2021.

Navins Wildflower Meadow

With the completion of the scything and removal of the hay the Meadow has effectively been “put to bed” for the winter. During scything a small number of vole nests were noted and a pair of toads seen. The last job for the year will be checking the bird boxes for use and we know at least one of the small boxes was used by Great Tits. We are hopeful that the large box, designed for owls, may have been used by the Sparrowhawk and her young that were nesting somewhere around the copse in the summer.

From the sightings we’ve noted in the Newsletters this year seems to have been a good one for butterflies and it has continued so right up to the final bit of work on the Meadow for the year. As the final raking up was taking place along flew a Wall Brown butterfly. This was particularly pleasing as they’ve suffered a rapid decline in recent years and in Leicestershire now normally only found in some small specific areas such as Charnwood Lodge Nature Reserve (Near Mount St Bernard’s Abbey) and Bardon Hill. What these sights have, like us, are rocky outcrops where they can bask in the sun.



Wall Brown