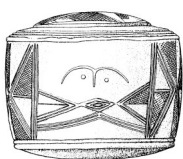


Late Neolithic Britain (3000 – 2300 BC) witnessed the construction of amazing structures like Maes Howe in Orkney, Avebury and Stonehenge by people who used a new type of flat-bottomed pottery, known rather prosaically as Grooved Ware. Its highly decorated surfaces sometimes displayed incised patterns of spirals and lozenges, as did carved stones set up inside and around great tombs in Orkney, Ireland and Anglesey. But beyond these patterns and a clear interest in marking the solstices, we know nothing of the beliefs that drove people to undertake great building projects.

No image that could be confidently considered to represent a deity had been found until excavations in 2005. These excavations, not strictly in Mountsorrel, but only 300m outside the parish boundary, took place prior to the industrial development at Rothley Lodge Farm (occupied by an Italian multinational paper maker, Sofidel). Evidence of a late Neolithic occupation was found.

There a large (5m x 4m), shallow (30cm), flat bottomed pit was filled with hundreds of sherds of Grooved Ware, nearly three thousand pieces of worked flint, several polished axes and a small, broken flat stone (8" x 5.25"). On one side there was a light engraving of what appears to be a very stylised human face within two sides of a rough 'frame', two double circles seem to represent eyes with a lozenge marking a nose. The only things in Britain and Ireland to come close to this are three carved chalk cylinders found in 1889 in a round barrow at Folkton in Yorkshire. As these accompanied a child burial it is possible that they were toys.

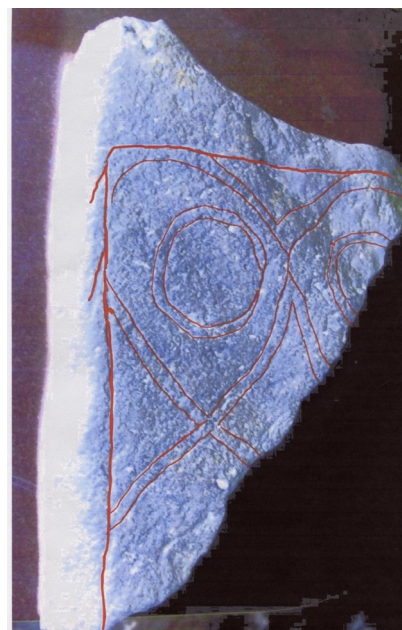
The search for parallels takes us to a stone that blocks the entry to a burial chamber at Luffang, near the great stone rows of Carnac, in Brittany. This engraving suggests a guardian spirit of the house of the dead. Perhaps the Rothley plaque is a household shrine for the living.



Folkton Drum



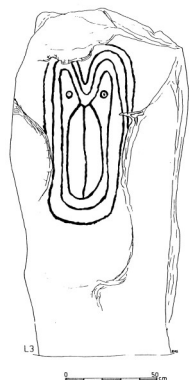
Rothley Plaque



Engraving highlighted

What we can say is that the people who used it were amongst the earliest users in England of a pottery style that first appeared in Orkney. We also know they lived several centuries before the great period of monument construction that produced Avebury, Silbury Hill and the great sarsen structure at Stonehenge.

The Rothley plaque is a hugely important artefact that furnishes a unique window into the otherwise obscure world of Late Neolithic religion.



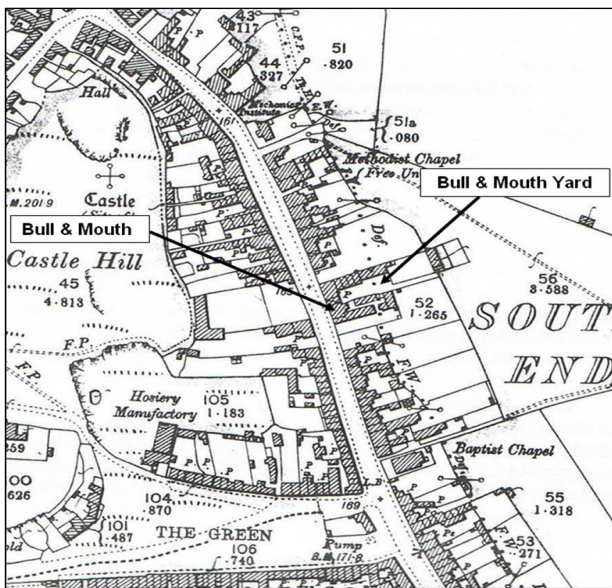
Luffang engraving

# Now and Then

## The Bull and Mouth

It's often said that the pub names "Bull and Mouth" and "Bull and Bush" are both based on that of the battle and Siege of Boulogne on the north French coast by Henry VIII's forces between 19 July and 14 September 1544. (More properly called the Battle of Boulogne Mouche or Boulogne Bouche). It's also true however, that pubs named The Bull, The Bush, or the Bull and Bush are fairly common and come from other derivations!

There's evidence of the pub existing from at least 1828



- 1828 - Edward Dixon
- 1835 – 1841 Richard Place
- 1848 – 1849 John Morley
- 1851 – 1855 Thomas and Ethel Morris
- 1861 - 1887 Henry Clark victualler, farmer & grazier
- 1889 – 1892 George Billson victualler, farmer, grazier & baker
- 1896 – Fred Wilett
- 1899 – 1916 Harry Barrs, Publican and Grazier
- 1924 – 1925 Mrs Agnes Langford
- 1939 – 1941 Sam and Ethel Lester
- 1950 – 1975 George & Annie Davies
- 1987 – Mick Lemon
- 1989 – 2000 Rob and Sheila Cross
- 2005 – Shirley Hearst

The associated yard accessed was through the carriage gateway which led to the fields at the rear. It seems probable in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the fields were in the ownership of the landlord several of whom are described as being "graziers, licensed victuallers and inn keepers". At some point in its history the pub frontage was changed quite considerably with a door way being blocked up and new windows let in. The farming connection continued through to the Great War when the then landlord, Henry Barrs, was advertising a pedigree Lincoln boar "for service". In addition to being a centre for social life the pub was also regularly used throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century for auctions and inquests.



**Leicester Road c1910**

### **Leicester Journal 12 Nov 1858**

*Seventeen acres of valuable grass keeping situate in the Township of Mountsorrel, Leicestershire, adjoining the Bull and Mouth Inn will be let by auction by R Warner on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> Day of November 1858. Meet at the Bull and Mouth Inn at Two o'clock precisely. The above will be Let until Lady next, in Three Lots.*

There was a longstanding connection to the village's cricketing and soccer teams latterly helped by it being adjacent to the Memorial Playing Fields. In a newspaper article in 1987 it was described as being the "unofficial club house" for both the soccer team and the historic cricket team, Mountsorrel Castle. But that link to cricket goes further back as a report in the Leicester Journal of 15<sup>th</sup> June 1855 shows and the link continued right up to the closure of the pub.

Leicester Journal -15 June 1855

Cricket Challenge The cricket players of Mountsorrel, not being satisfied with their defeat last year by Sileby hope they will give them another opportunity to regain their laurels. The match can be made by placing a deposit of £5 at Mr Morris's Bull & Mouth, Mountsorrel on Monday night 18<sup>th</sup> inst. for £22. or £25. Aside. The match to be played at the Leicester Cricket Ground *Sadly the result was not reported!*



Patrick Butler

In the yard was a small area set up as a boxing ring. It is said that World Middleweight Champion Randolph Turpin employed the services of a local boxing trainer who lived in the Sileby area and The Bull became his HQ during a small part of his boxing years. He certainly boxed in the Granby Halls in the 1950's.

You can listen to another professional boxer Patrick Butler from Rothley on the East Midlands Oral Archive where he talks about his boxing career and training with Sammy Lester at the Bull and Mouth. Between 1932 and 1936 he had 67 fights and boxed 559 rounds, winning 28 and losing 39.

As with all well run and popular pubs the Bull and Mouth attracted a varied and at times 'colourful' clientele as these press reports illustrate:

**Leicester Journal - Friday 7th October 1853**

*Charles Antill and John Marshall, of Mountsorrel, were charged with unlawfully destroying William Johnson's hat, on the 27<sup>th</sup> inst Johnson said when he went into the Bull and Mouth public-house that day, Antill a cripple, knocked his hat off with his crutch, and Marshall kicked it upon the fire, where was burnt to atoms. Antill, in defence, said Johnson was drunk, and wanted to bet a wager that he could eat a dozen snail horns in six minutes. He told him they did not want any snail horn eaters there and he at once struck him. In the scuffle which ensued, his hat fell off, and he walked out of the house leaving it upon the floor. Antill added if Johnson had not been drunk would have knocked him 'all to bits'. Antill's story was partly confirmed by the landlord, and the case was dismissed.*

**Leicestershire Mercury - Saturday 16 February 1861**

*Loughborough. PETTY SESSIONS, Thursday February 14. Before J. Martin and J. Cartwright, Esqrs. Cash or Stabbing. — James Chester, of Mountsorrel, was charged with cutting a man named Wardle with a sharp instrument, on the 6th inst. It seems the prisoner had been in the habit of sleeping in an out-house belonging to the Bull and Mouth public-house. On the night in question the prisoner was drunk, and when prosecutor went to him to shut him up, he received a cut from a knife on the fleshy part of the arm about 1 1/2 inches long, but not deep, which caused a good deal of haemorrhage. The prisoner said, if he did such a thing he was very sorry. Other corroborative evidence having been given, he was fined £5, including costs, or two months' hard labour.*

In 1896 the licensee was Fred Willett but the property was owned by Cecil Fairfax Scott and Miss Scott (they also owned the Old Anchor Inn opposite Stonehurst Farm). When sold both pubs aroused a good deal of interest, in particular the Bull and Mouth as that was being sold together with the adjoining four room cottage and butchers shop. Offers started at £1,200 with the sale eventually closing at £2,150 offered by Mr Sharp the brewer from Sibleby. The fields behind the pub were not sold at that point but in the aftermath of the Great War they went to form the Memorial Playing Fields which are held to this day in a village Charitable Trust.



c1970



George and Annie Davies

From 1950 to 1975 the Landlord was George Davies ably supported by his wife Annie. A former village resident remembers the place when he was a youngster. *“George was a typical publican, ruddy-cheeked and rotund, while his wife (a Hilda Baker lookalike) possessed the temper of an angry Rottweiler. Not without good reason were the pair nicknamed George and the Dragon.”*



The pub sadly closed around 2001 and was then purchased as a restaurant bar trading as “The Slate.” This in turn closed and was followed as another restaurant for a short period of time called “The Spotted Duck”.



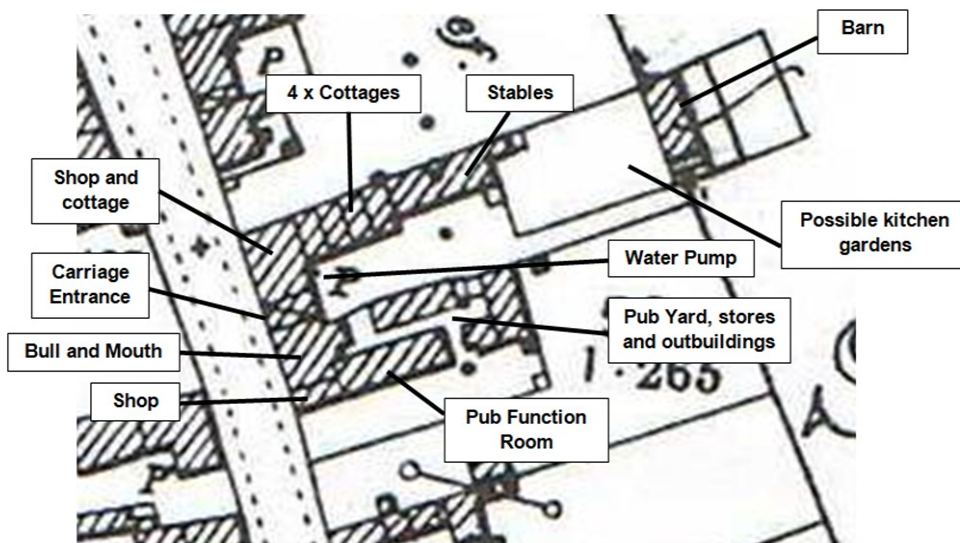
The Slate c2005



September 2020

The site was empty for some time until refurbished and reopened as a stylish, luxury hairdressers – Mewies & Co.

### Bull and Mouth Yard – formerly Place’s Yard (1841) and Leicester Road Shops



Bull and Mouth Yard 1903

Behind the pub was an extensive yard area with four cottages, stables, pub yard and stores and a path that led to a barn and the associated fields. Whilst on Leicester Road and forming part of the total property, were two shops.

With the sale of the pub and redevelopment as a restaurant the yard area was sold for housing which led to the loss of the footpath to the playing fields – an event that caused much acrimony within the village.

During WW2 the old stables on the left at the end of the yard provided a base for the volunteers of the Mountsorrel Auxiliary Fire Service and was fitted out with bunk beds and heated by a coke fired brazier. Opposite on the right and formed from a pub out building, was a garage for the Fire Pump.



1990s - Bull & Mouth Yard – the garage for the village fire appliance in WW2



Like the pub the two shops either side have also changed radically over the years, today at the right is Noor Jahan, an Indian restaurant and on the left, a private house.


Noor Jahan has in the recent past been a bookies and prior to that a newsagents run by Mr & Mrs Wykes but previously it was a bakers run by Samuel and Edith Hunt. Part of one of the pub yard outbuildings may have been used for the actual baking and that could be a hangover from the 1890s when the pub landlord, George Bilson was also a baker (and farmer and grazier!). The stables will certainly have been useful for the Hunts who made deliveries using a horse and cart.

What is now a private house to the left of the carriage entrance, in 1911 called Rock View, was a shop and run as a Newsagents and Stationers by Alfred James Sutton. Later it became a watchmakers and gift shop and the building name was changed to Clock House and run as "Godfrey's Bazaar". Mr Godfrey, the shop owner, continued the stationary side of the business and operated a small lending library being an agent for Foyle's.

+++++  
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c1926

**GODFREYS  
 BAZAAR  
 MOUNTSORREL**



WATCHES, CLOCKS, JEWELLERY  
 AND REPAIRS

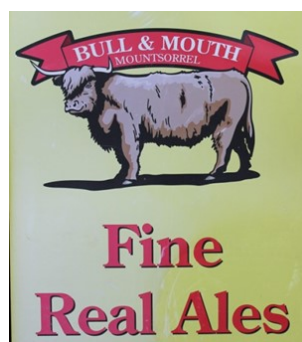
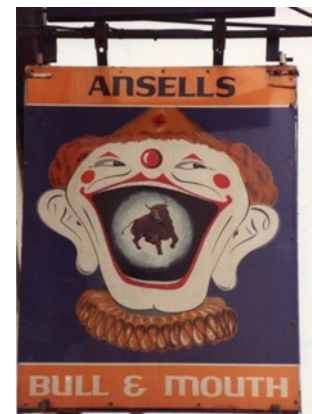
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## Changing Signs

Pub signs have always been subject to change with fashion and the Bull and Mouth was no different to others



## The Man who Fell 18,00 Feet [3.4 miles] and Lived

Over the past 2 years one of our trustees has been transcribing the 3200 burial records of the Mountsorrel Cemetery. Whilst in the cemetery correlating the records with the headstones he came across a large plot bearing the name Nicholas Maine Alkemade 26 August 1954. On further investigation he discovered that this was the grave of the father of Nicholas Stephen Alkemade.

When living at 23 Danvers Road Mountsorrel Nicholas Stephen joined the RAF. He trained as an Air Gunner, and was posted to 115 Squadron as a rear gunner on their Avro Lancasters.

On the night of 24/25 March 1944 Alkemade's aircraft, christened Werewolf, was one of 811 aircraft destined to attack the German capital, Shortly before midnight, a Junkers Ju 88 night-fighter intercepted Werewolf and attacked from beneath with cannon and machine-guns. Werewolf's starboard wing and fuselage were shredded and erupted into flames which streamed back beyond Alkemade's rear turret, the Perspex glazing from which had also been completely blown-out, exposing him to the frigid night air.

A Lancaster's rear turret was too cramped for the gunner to wear a parachute. Instead it was stored in a canister in the rear fuselage. Alkemade saw that his parachute was already well alight and the fierce flames seared his exposed face and wrists. His rubber oxygen mask, clamped tight over his mouth and nose began to melt. The immense heat forced Alkemade to close the turret doors again. He was trapped. He had the choice of staying with the aircraft or jumping out. If he stayed he would be burned to death so he decided to jump and end it all as quickly he could, so he did a back flip out into the night. Falling head-first, looking back towards the stars twinkling in the night sky, FS Alkemade, serenity itself, hurtled towards the ground at 120 mph. At some point in the descent, he lost consciousness, whilst above him, Werewolf exploded. Three hours later, Alkemade opened his eyes. He was lying in the snow in a small pine wood. Assessing himself, he found that he was suffering from burns and cuts to the head and thigh, bruising and a twisted knee. Not a single bone had been broken. Both of his flying boots had disappeared. He lit a cigarette. The snow was but 18 inches deep and had been sheltered from the sun by the pine trees. Just 20 yards away was open ground completely devoid of snow. If he had come down there, nothing would have saved him. The flexible branches of the young pines had slowed Alkemade's descent, just enough for the mattress of snow to cushion him as he reached the ground.

Unable to walk he blew his distress whistle and was picked up by some German civilians, and taken to a local infirmary. The next day, he was interrogated, the Gestapo demanding to know what had happened to his parachute. When he told them he hadn't used one, the interrogators laughed at him and accused him of being a spy and burying it. A search of the wood soon bore out Alkemade's story and he was sent to a prisoner of war camp.

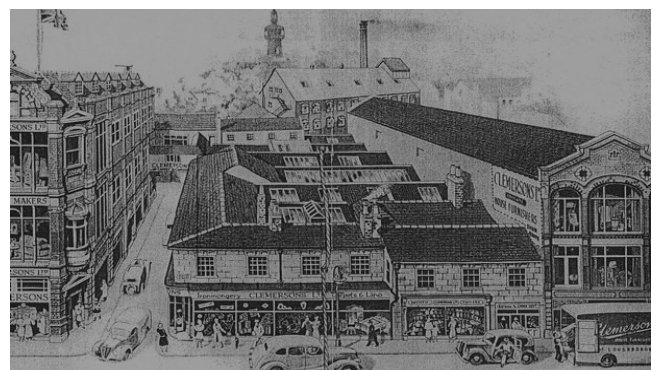
After the war he returned to Loughborough, finding work in a chemical plant, where he cheated death again. He was electrocuted, poisoned by chlorine gas and sprayed with sulphuric acid. In the last incident he dived into a 40 gallon drum of limewash to neutralise the acid.

After this he thought that enough was enough, and became a furniture salesman with Clemersons in Loughborough.

He died in June 1987.



Nicholas Stephen Alkemade



## Website

We have received a few enquiries on the website recently and this sometimes results in an exchange of emails. Below are extracts from emails received from Valerie Roche nee Upton who now lives in France

I was born at the Old Vicarage Nursing Home and my maternal grandmother was Martha Bowler of Dobb Hall. *[the granddaughter of Dobb Bowler]* My paternal grandmother was Martha Upton and my grandfather John Upton was a bootmaker. He lived on Leicester Road until about 1918, then moved to Union Lane (Linkfield Rd) where he had his workshop until his death in 1943.



Grandma Upton often referred to Dobb Hall's donkey, though I never understood why.

My great Aunt Lou (Louisa Newbold), the sister of John Upton, lived in the small house on the Main Road next to the Baptist Chapel. It was a double fronted house with quite a large garden. A front door is on the far right of the picture and just to the left in the single storey part of the house is Aunt Lou's small shoe shop. Further down is the arched gateway into her garden.

My mother's sister married an American in the late 1940s, she met him when he was stationed at Quorn. She died some years ago, but I am in touch with some of my cousins. All the family were Primitive Methodists. I believe for some years my Aunt Doris Upton owned a house- or more than one almost opposite the butchers. Michael's meat was always so good! My grandparents, I think, moved from there, and at some point lived in the 1st house in Ashley Terrace. From there they moved to Britannia Lodge, I believe on Armistice Day, certainly 11th November.



As I lived in Linkfield Road many of the shops were familiar to me. Charlie Kendall delivered our bread and I remember his delivery bike, a bit like the ice cream stop-me-and-buy-one. I also remember Margaret Burton, I seem to think we were friends at school.

## Wildlife

The autumn migration is now in full swing with birds both passing through on their way south but also the arrival of our winter residents. The last week of September saw Redwings arrive in the local area and Whooper Swans arrive at Rutland Water. The Redwings and others are fortunate to be able to feast on the glut of berries, haws and hips that we have this year.

The annual cycle of scything the Navins Wildflower Meadow has now been completed.

Routine work continues on raising the standard of the Peace Garden with our next planned work party morning being 28<sup>th</sup> October 2020 when we'll concentrate on the shrubs and a final weeding prior to Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday. If you are able to help please let John know on [johncdoyle@outlook.com](mailto:johncdoyle@outlook.com)

## Chairman's Chat

Hi everybody I hope you are all well and keeping safe. I think it is nearly time to baton down the hatches & prepare for winter. I am hoping we don't have too much of the white stuff this year.

Terry Shepherd of the Rothley Heritage Trust has very kindly donated the workhouse exhibition to the museum, where some of it will go on display as and when we can open.

Very good news that the community café is re – opening with Niki doing the cooking again, & as a group we will be working closely with them, giving talks to their users who are very interested in the history of our village.

We will be holding talks again, just don't know when, but could you give some thought to what talks you would like and by whom, when we can all get to together again. ( Have faith it will happen ).

That's all for now folks, take care.

Maggie

## Contributors:

Dr Roy Loveday, John Doyle, Pat Neal, Valerie Roche