

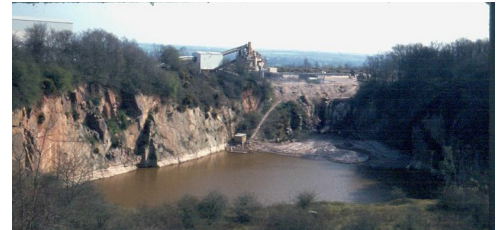


MHG NEWSLETTER

No 35

Broad Hill

Most days during lockdown I have walked around and across Broad Hill. There was once a range of three hills aligned east west behind Mountsorrel. It's difficult to imagine what it was like when, for example, in the summer of 1864 a young teacher on her last day at a school in Market Place recorded in her diary 'After tea we had the usual ramble over Hawcliffe hill, and back again to the school-room'. All three hills have been affected by quarrying. Hawcliffe Hill has been quarried away, Castle Hill has been nibbled at and Broad Hill has been quarried away, filled up with landfill and been made good again with overburden.



Hawcliffe Quarry



Broad Hill Quarry



Broad Hill Land Fill



Broad hill Restitution and Gas Collection



Broad Hill Greening Over

There was once a windmill on Broad Hill for 110 years. There is a date of 1764 inscribed on the windmill in the drawing and it was auctioned off at the Black Swan in 1874. It was advertised as being in perfect working order with two superior wheat stones and two barley stones. The whole to be sold and removed by the purchaser, in consequence of the near approach of the Mountsorrel Granite Works.

Animals can be seen grazing in the picture and at one time there was a cricket pitch between the windmill and the quarry.

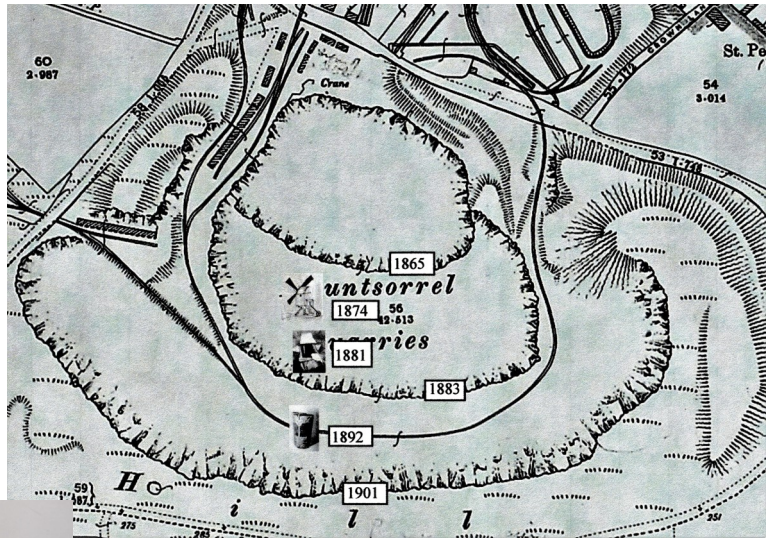
The drawing shows the approach of the quarry and the reason it had to be removed. Although the inhabitants regret the necessity to remove this old acquaintance, as to many a weary traveller it has served as a land mark and a reminder of "Home, sweet home." The Granite Company used it as their logo



Broad Hill was once regarded as the very embodiment of all that was stable and eternal, hence the saying, "When Mountsorrel Hill walks to Barrow or Sileby believe it, but not till then." But when quarrying started in earnest Squire Smith's well-known (in 1881) verse became more appropriate :

*'A wondrous sight
Is Mountsorrel Height,
Frowning o'er the vale of Soar ;
But the time shall be
When the cliff shall flee,
And the Broad Hill be no more.'*

And so it was that it was dragged piecemeal across the adjoining valley to Barrow.



It's difficult to imagine the extent of Broad Hill but this photo of around 1861 gives some idea. *The town practically consists of one long street. It is "cabined, cribbed, confined" on the east by the towering rocks of the Broad Hill [1881]*

In February 1892 a well was discovered by men working in the Broad Hill quarry. Mr R F Martin the Managing Director of the quarry invited Baron Anatole von Hugel , who was curator of the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, to inspect the well. Anatole recorded that 'On my first visit the quarrymen had already entirely cleared out the well. We searched through the slimy mass of well earth and found a few fragments, some of which were missing parts of the larger objects already picked up by the workmen. The well was a rectangular vertical shaft 7ft by 4ft and 60 ft deep sunk in a fault in the granite near the top of the hill, one side of which had been entirely quarried away. In the steep cliff the whole vertical section of the well had been exposed to view. The upper 20ft of the well passed through soil which was faced with thin slabs of blue lias limestone. Some Roman pottery was found including a vessel with loops under the rim and a Roman Grey Ware Jar. The bucket when found was practically intact but had received such rough treatment from the quarrymen that when Anton arrived it was completely broken up. Only one of the wooden staves remained, the rest had been trodden under foot after the bronze bands and fittings had been wrenched off. Parts of the bronze work were missing, several of which we was able to find'.

The bucket was reconstructed at the British Museum.



It is said these men discovered The Bucket



Mountsorrel Bucket



Late Roman Grey Ware Jar

Also found in the well was a bronze age cinerary urn, portions of roof and flue tiles, tesserae and animal bones. These included pig, sheep, ox, dog and deer. All the ox skulls bore marks of having been pole-axed.

Although the Mountsorrel bucket is Roman in date it is an object whose origins are Iron Age and international. The tradition of metal plated buckets are best known from cremation graves, but are found in other contexts. When it was discovered it was a rare example of a Romano /British metal plated bucket. But in recent years with the advent of metal detectors many more have been found. By far the most common form of the escutcheons, like those on Mountsorrel bucket, is an ox head. The use of ox heads as ornamental symbols goes back to the prehistoric iron age, especially in Britain

The practise of animal sacrifices from pre Roman times continued in Romano British society. Accompanied by music and the burning of incense the animal would have been pole-axed, the throat cut and the liver removed. The liver was then inspected by the "gut-gazers" to interpret will of the gods. This was followed by the ritual feast. Animal sacrifices, in Roman times, would have been done by official temple priests.



Early Bronze Age Pigmy Cups, often found buried with human remains as grave goods. Found on Mountsorrel Hill in the 19th century



Bronze age Cinerary Urn

In 1879 and 1881, two sepulchral chambers were found about a foot below the surface a few yards from each other as workmen cleared away the surface soil.



In 1217 Mountsorrel Castle, in the hands of Saer de Quincey, one of the rebel barons, was under siege. The leaders of the besieging party were William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke (then Governor to the infant King, Henry III), Ranulph de Blondville, Earl of Chester and many others from the garrisons of the neighbouring Castles. Warlike engines, resembling the ballista were placed by the Royalists on Broad Hill. The besieged "manfully hurled back stones for stones, javelin for javelin on their assailants."

So as well as a windmill, a cricket pitch, a ballista site, the inspiration for a local saying and a rhyme, the artefacts found, the ceremonial bucket, the pole-axed skulls, the cinerary urns, the sarcophagi and the roof tiles indicate buildings and activities that can only be guessed at. It has been suggested there was a Roman villa on Broad Hill but perhaps it is more likely to have been a Roman temple or shrine.

Sources

Bronze-workers, cauldrons, and bucket-animals in iron age and Roman Britain.

by C. F. C Hawkes

Shrines and Sacrifices by Ann Woodward

Ancient Well at Mountsorrel by Baron Anatole von Hugel

The Prehistoric Pedigree of Romano-British Bucket Escutcheons: The View from Mountsorrel by Andrew Lamb

Now and Then

2A The Green – a building at the heart of the community for 300 years

With the opening to the public on 10th November (initially as a take-away service due to the pandemic) of Brewards Coffee Shop at 2A The Green it seemed timely to look at the history of the building

Many of you will know the building as the Sorrel Youth Cafe which operated there from 2010 to the spring of 2020. The building was then taken over by Homefield College, an independent specialist college and a charity that offers education, care and support to people with learning and communication difficulties. They are carrying on both the Cafe service and the engagement with the village community. The engagement with the village community is a running thread through the three hundred years that the building has stood there.



November 2020

Beginings - Non-Conformist Chapel and Sunday School

Built originally by Michael Mathews (1661 – 5th April 1723), a dissenting minister who had links with the then Lords of the Manor for Mountsorrel, the Danvers family of Swithland. Mathews had the building erected in the yard of his own house on The Green. Whilst the exact location of Mathews' house is unknown it must have been substantial for the time and in this photo of c1890 there is a large building, then of two cottages, next door to 2A but we have no evidence to show that these were formed from Mathews' home. Mathews matriculated from Jesus College, Oxford in 1658 and then moved to Sherrifhales near Shifnal in Shropshire. Here he appears to have trained as a Presbyterian Minister and married a local girl, Sarah Hood in 1689. He was ordained in August 1690 in Hemphill in Nottinghamshire and by 1691 was in Swithland. In 1694 he was appointed as Master of the Charity School in Woodhouse funded by Thomas Rawlins whilst also serving as Preacher to the Presbyterian community at Bardon Park. He moved to Mountsorrel in 1704 as Minister to the Presbyterian community here. This community had been growing in numbers through the Civil War and the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, and in the turbulent years that followed were a noted numerical presence within the village.



Mathews is clearly a man of some means and is supported in the background by key Dissenting figures locally including, Thomas Rawlins in Woodhouse and the Danvers family in Swithland. It is alongside his own home that he builds what is now 2A The Green possibly as early as 1710. It is used both as Meeting House for Presbyterian worship but also as a school. Whatever support he may have had in the building his personal commitment is recognised in an Indenture of 1st April 1742 in that:

“Michael Mathews long before the time of his death being minister or pastor of a Congregation of protestant Dissenters of Mountsorrel aforesaid did upon his own freehold there and at his own proper costs and charges erect a building or meeting house of four bays to the end and intent that the said congregation or people might with more ease assemble together for religious worship and to attend his ministrations and that same might remain and continue to be used and employed as a Meeting House or place for protestant dissenters for religious worship forever thereafter”

The congregation at that time has been estimated at some 280, almost twice that as worshipped at the Loughborough Presbyterian Chapel despite it being in a much larger town. Not all would have been able to worship at the same time but some 150 years later, an 1851 return describes the chapel as having 60 sittings and 50 in the gallery, some 60 other sittings and standing room in the aisle for 70.

The school, which was run from the large vestry becomes very quickly what was possibly the main dissenting school in the county at that time.

In 1719 a Church of England administrative return for the North End Chapel (originally the Chapel of St John the Baptist and now St Peter's Church) notes:

"There is a private school kept by Mr Mathews the Presbyterian minister by whom a great many gentlemen's sons and others are educated and trained contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. Neither he nor any of his family which is near forty persons do ever come to church."

Following the death of Michael Mathews the building passed into the ownership of his widow, Sarah who was supported by her son in law, James Watson, who was also a dissenting preacher. In 1729 they sought to transfer the building to a group of Trustees from the local dissenting community but this sadly failed due possibly to what were seen as to onerous conditions and the building stayed in the ownership of Sarah Mathews. A further attempt to transfer in 1742 was successful with the building being transferred to the following Trustees:

<p>Jonathon Grundy of Thornton, Esquire Samuel Statham of Loughborough, Gent William Pagett of Leicester, Hosier Samuel Stone of Thurstaston, Gent, Robert Gilbert of Swithland, Yeoman Thomas Parnham of Quorndon, Yeoman Thomas Chapman of Quorndon, Yeoman Arthor Judd of Quorndon, Tanner</p>
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Indenture of 1742 signed by Michael Mathews widow, Sarah

The geographic spread of the Trustees indicates that although there was a still a Presbyterian presence in Mountsorrel the chapel itself was clearly acting as a central focal point for worshippers from whole area. It is also possibly an indicator of the fall in Presbyterian numbers in the area as other non-conformist communities matured.

Certainly by 1843 the numbers of Presbyterians and Unitarians, who also used the building, had decreased markedly and it was decided to transfer use of the chapel to the General Baptists.

The Baptist community used the building for their normal services and the old meeting house in Market Place that had been in use since c1660 for a Sunday School. In the mid 1860s the numbers of Presbyterians and Unitarians in the village had, as elsewhere, fallen even further and the decisions was made to pass the Trusteeship to the Baptist community in 1867. In 1880 the Baptist community's new church on Leicester Road was opened and the old chapel adapted for use as a Sunday School. It continued in use as such until 1927 when new facilities were built at Loughborough Road and the old chapel was rented out. It was eventually sold in 1954.



Baptist Chapel (pre 1910)

Commercial Premises

There is anecdotal evidence that the site was initially used by Bert Bunny as a carpenters shop but later it served as a photographers workshop for TE Bergstrom.

The site was purchased by Frank Norburn who had major work done on the building to fit it out as a chemists shop. This included the complete re-modeling of the front and the insertion of a mezzanine floor

Following use as a chemists shop the building has also been:



Junction of The Green and Leicester Road
c 1960 with 2A The Green as a Photographers



Frank Norburn's Chemist shop 1970s



First Choice Store



Upmarket



Youth and Community Cafe 2020

'Now and Then' by John Doyle

Christmas Past in Mountsorrel

Churches

St Peter's School, on Christmas Eve, hosted a service of song, entitled "The Oiled Feather." given in by an amalgamated choir, in aid of some of our old and sick townsmen. The attendance was not so good as expected, but £5 was taken and this was divided between nine persons.

The Wesleyans held a tea meeting in the schoolroom, and afterwards a service of song was given in the chapel.

The United Methodist Chapel had a tea meeting in the schoolroom for the teachers and elder scholars. After tea a pleasant evening was spent in music and singing.

The Salvation Army had a tea meeting in their barracks,

Charity

Lord Lanesborough supplied his cottage tenants with a double portion of beef this year, in consequence of the coming of age of the earl's eldest son, Lord Newton Butler.

T. A Castledine's cottage tenants received their usual supply of beef.

Mr. R. F. Martin, at the Red Lion Coffee House entertained 50 of the aged poor at dinner. The bill of fare, as in previous years, consisted of seasonable viands. After dinner the tables were cleared, tobacco and pipes were provided for those who chose to "take" the fragrant weed,

Football Matches

On Saturday a match was played on the Mountsorrel ground between the Mountsorrel club and Barrow Liberal Club, which resulted in the home team winning by one goal to none.

Town Band

"Bright and pleasant weather was experienced here on Christmas Day and Boxing Day, with just a suspicion of frost in the air that made it most enjoyable for walking out. On Christmas Eve the Town Band and several choir parties paraded the village, following out an old custom.

Workhouse Christmas Day at the Workhouse was spent in very pleasant fashion. The building bore quite a festive appearance. The larger dining hall was nicely set out with evergreens and suitable mottoes. There was also a large Christmas tree well laden with presents for the youngsters. After breakfast had been served the usual service was conducted by the Rev. F. L. Simpson. Dinner was then served, consisting of the orthodox Christmas fare of roast beef and plum pudding, to which 130 sat down against 140 last year. The ordinary rules and regulations were of course suspended for the day. The men were allowed the privilege of smoking, which was of course, immensely appreciated.



Alf Bowler Euphonium player in Mountsorrel Band



Skaters on the claypit pond Union Lane



Workhouse from the Bypass



John's Christmas Quiz



The Village in Dates (& Numbers)

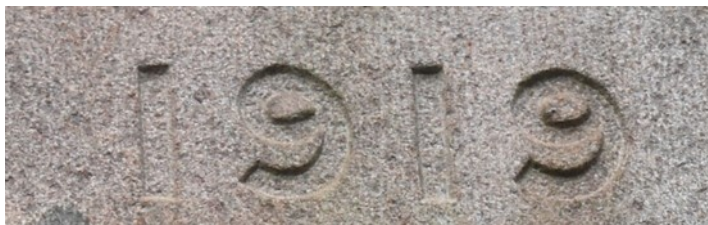
A picture quiz – all the photos, taken in November this year, are from public footpaths around the centre of the village, the basis of a short walk around the middle of the village



Q1 – What was last used in 1919? And what was the job title of the man who looked after it?



Q2 – These two dates are on opposite sides of something at a brilliant view point. But what do they represent and where are they?



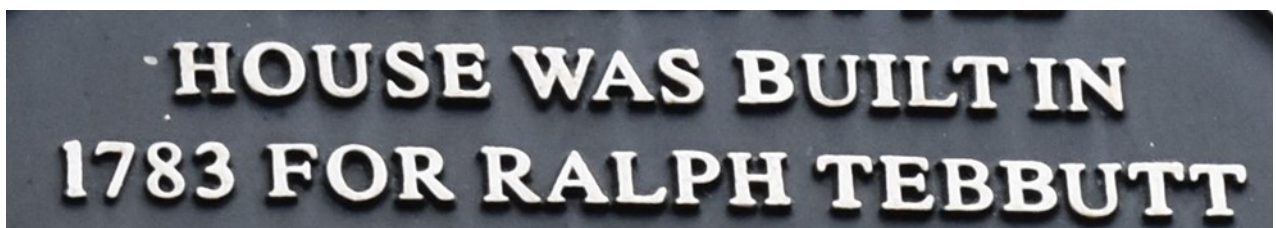
Q3 – This date is on something that has recently been repaired – but what is it and where?



Q5 – What used to go over the structure this



Q4 – Which family was responsible for establishing the buildings this date is on and what are they?



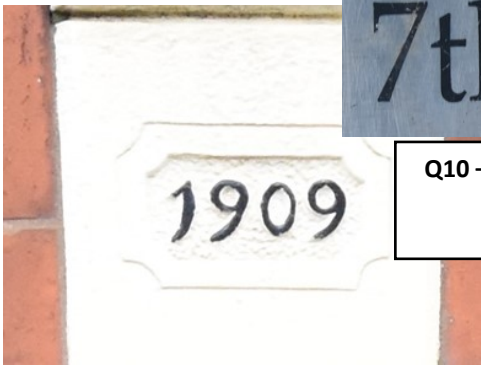
Q6 – Which house and what has it also been beside Mr Tebbutt's home?



Q7 – This is only half the date but everyone should know it, but the structure it is part of used to be unique – why?



Q8 – The building this date is on is now used for what and what was it originally?

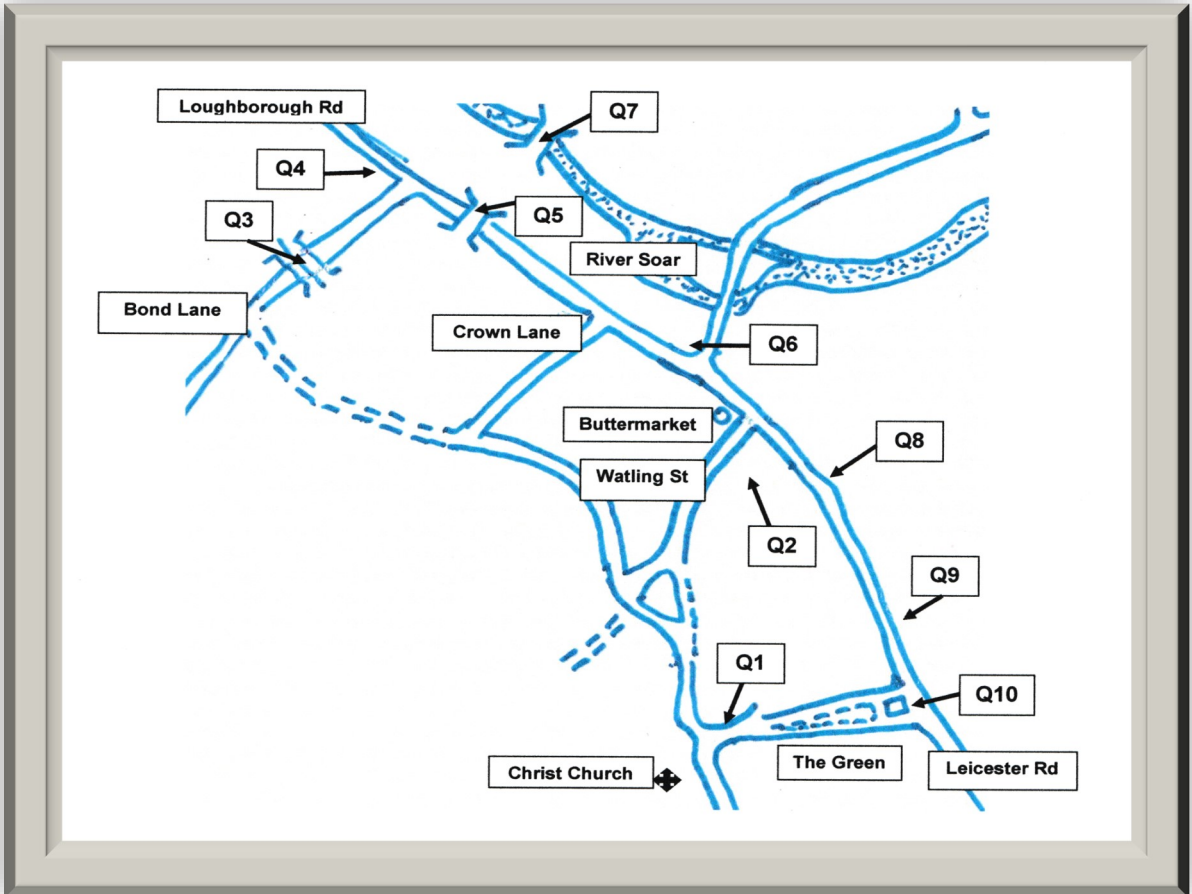


Q10 – This date is on a modern plaque on an older building. What was the building originally and what is it now?

7th December 2007

Q9 – This date is over an archway – what is the building to the left (as you look at it!) used as and where were its predecessors?

Answers to both quizzes in next month's Newsletter



Keith's Christmas Quiz



Q1 Where?



Q5 What?



Q7 What?



Q2 What?



Q6 What?



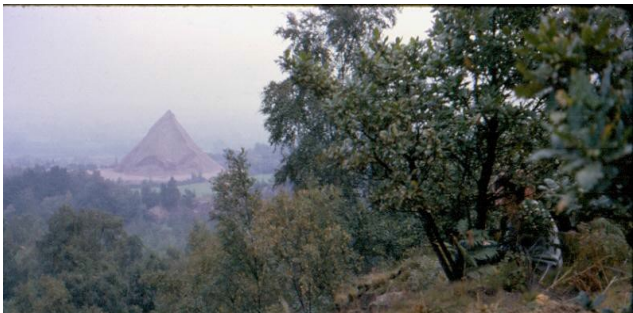
Q8 What?



Q3 Where?



Q9 Where?



Q4 What?



Q10 Two doors, but where?



Q11 What & where?



Q16 Name the Parish Councillors



Q12 Where?



Q17 Where?



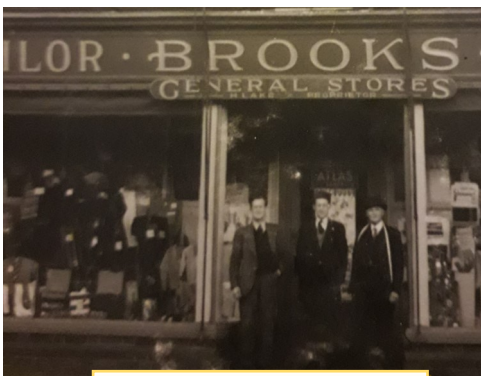
Q13 Whose family's tomb?



Q18 Where?



Q14 What's going on behind the boards?



Q15 What is this shop now?



Q19 What's happening here?



Q20 Name the farm and pub



Q24 Name the farm



Q21 Name the road



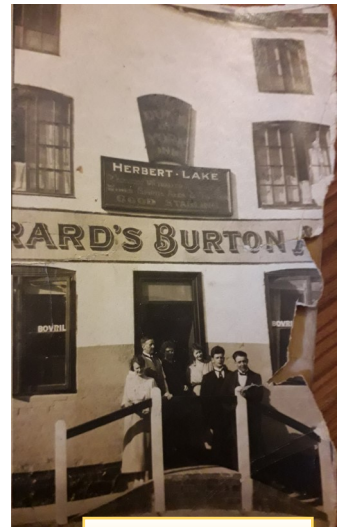
Q25 Name the road



Q22 Where?



Q26 Where?



Q27 Name the pub



Q23 Name the road



Q28 Where?

Wildlife

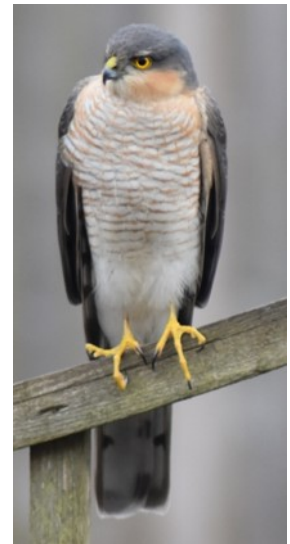
As winter really starts to be felt our winter migrants have started to appear with Redwings and Fieldfares being seen on and around Broad Hill and the garden birds starting to take real advantage of the feeders many of us put out in the gardens.

Two visitors of note around the end of November by the Navins, were a Little Owl (possibly two) and a young male Sparrowhawk. The Little Owl made its presence heard rather than being seen by its late night calling. It's a little early in the winter yet for the other regular late night callers - the Tawny Owls that we often hear calling as they seek new territories and mates in the late December/early January period.



Little Owl

The young male Sparrowhawk has been visiting gardens at the top of the Green/Rothley Road, presumably attracted by the garden songbirds that are his potential lunch. He was on the same fence that was used by an adult male in February.....is it possible that this is one of the young birds that fledged in the copse behind the Wildflower Meadow this summer?



Sparrowhawk February 2020

Chairman's Chat

I would like to wish everybody a Very Merry Christmas in these trying times.



Can I please remind you to use Amazon Smile, if you are buying on line this year, as Amazon donates to charities as you spend and we do need the money.

Good news about the vaccine, so we may be back to having talks again, sooner rather than later. I have volunteered to help with the vaccines, so I will soon zip through them and get them organised.

So stay well, stay safe and have as much good cheer as you can, there is always next Christmas.

Maggie



Wildlife by John Doyle