



# MHG NEWSLETTER

No 38

## Roy Bennett

Roy sadly passed away last month. He was born and bred in Mountsorrel and a few years ago he agreed to be interviewed by the MHG. You can listen to this at:

<http://mountsorrelarchive.org/category/oral-histories/>

Those who watched Bridgerton will remember the promenading around the park, exchanging knowing glances. Roy describes the Sorrel version in the 1930's and 1940's.

*"The prom was along the A6 from The Green to Linkfield Road. It was called after the promenades at sea-side resorts that we had heard about but never visited (beyond our wildest dreams). Boys and girls, known as teenagers today, would parade up and down the prom after church on Sunday evenings talking and hoping to make new friends. Many romances started there"*

Roy was a keen fisherman and, as the proprietor of Bennett's Stores, devoted an ever expanding section to fulfilling the needs of those who shared his passion. At one of our monthly meetings he came and talked to us about his fishing exploits and demonstrated how to use some of his old fishing rods.

In 1944 Roy was the first scout in the village to gain the King's Scout badge. In this photograph, some forty years later Roy has just presented the prizes in a scouts' cooking competition held in the Scout hut in the 1980's



Roy with his wife Trudy-guest of honour at a MHG exhibition



On behalf of the MHG we would like to send our sincere condolences to Trudy and the family.

## Now and Then-The Railway Inn



56 Loughborough Road, now the site of Domino's Pizza, is better known to many as The Railway Inn. First opened as an Inn in 1870 by Thomas Barrs, it eventually became a tied house for Shipstones Brewery of Nottingham until at the end of the twentieth century, as Shipstones was taken over by Greenalls and the company was reshaped, the Railway was closed and sold. It restarted life as an Indian Restaurant and then morphed into an Italian one but both failed and the building eventually became a Domino's Pizza takeaway. Prior to becoming a pub the building and workshops behind were the home and business premises of Charles Harrald, a Master Plumber and Glazier, who carried out much of the stained glass work in St Peter's church during the late Victorian renovations. He sold the site, probably in the mid to late 1860s, to Thomas Barrs, a blacksmith, who applied for a licence in 1870 and set up The Railway whilst still maintaining his blacksmithing trade on site.

Thomas had been born in Swithland but was apprenticed as blacksmith to William Shuttlewood, a blacksmith in Church Close Sileby. He later worked as a journeyman blacksmith in the South End of the village to where his father, Joseph, a cooper, had moved. In 1853 he married Elizabeth Bodycoat, also from the South End, at St Mary & St John, the Parish church in Rothley. Although by 1853 Christ Church had been built, consecrated and serving those living in the South End of the village it only had the status of a district church within the Parish of Rothley and was not able to be used for matrimony until 1857.

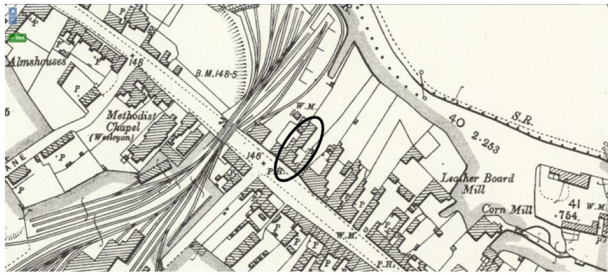
The Railway was quickly established in the North End and, like other Inns, was used for important community business including the holding of inquests such as that of John Attenborough and Charles Harris. On Tuesday 10th July 1877, these two seven year old boys had, whilst playing, run backwards out into the street when they were knocked down and killed by a pony and trap. The Coroner returned a verdict of accidental death.

Later that year the Coroner was again at the Inn but this time it was for an event that struck the Barrs family directly. On Tuesday 28th August 1877, Mary Ann Barrs, Thomas and Elizabeth's, 23 year old eldest daughter was found dead in the River Soar behind the Inn. The local press was quick to claim she had committed suicide and had been corresponding with a local widower, a matter over which she and her mother had "had words" on the Monday night. Later that evening she had been heard playing the piano and then went missing, her body being found at 10:00 the following morning. Despite these lurid press claims the Coroner could find no evidence to support the idea of suicide and the jury returned a simple verdict of "Found, drowned".

Two years later tragedy again struck when on 30th August 1879, Thomas suddenly died aged only 47. Father and daughter are buried in adjacent graves in Mountsorrel Cemetery. Elizabeth continued to run the Inn until going to live with her younger daughter, Emma Annie and her son-in-law Albert Mills on what was then, Quorn Road. Elizabeth died in 1894 and is buried with Thomas. On her retirement Elizabeth appears to have sold to Shipstones Brewery







Ordnance Survey Sheet XXXV.2 1903

Following Elizabeth's retirement the tenants were

1892– Thomas Boadman

1901 – George Chapman

1908 – William Swain

1912 – Isaac Wheeldon

1925 – Arthur Matts

1939 – Thomas Underwood

1945 – Albert Edward Ouzman

1954 – M Wilson

At some point in the 1930s the frontage of the Inn was radically altered with an archway being constructed to the right and a new entrance instituted.

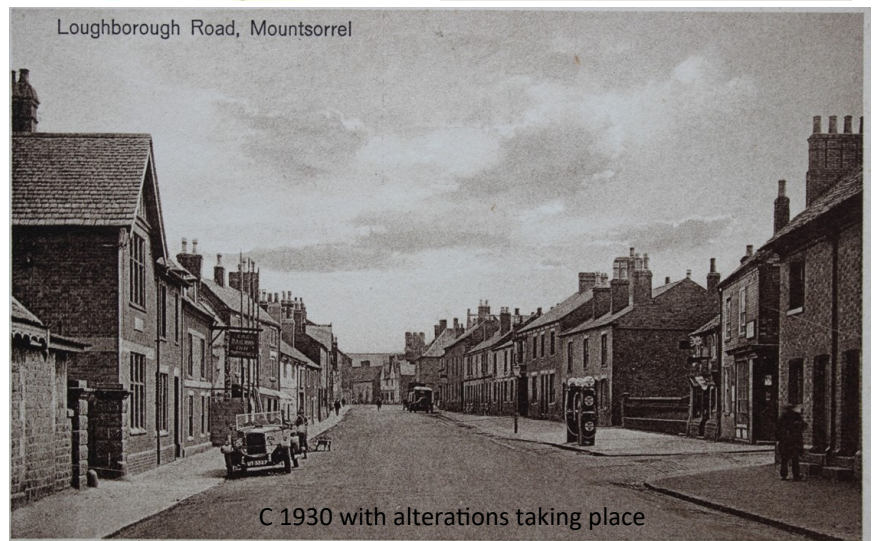
As with all tied houses there can be the occasional problem with tenants and the Railway was no exception. On 27th December 1945 a fire was discovered at the Inn by Minnie Flewitt of Loughborough Rd., the domestic help. She had returned after work to check on Albert Edward Ouzman, the Landlord, about whom she was very worried. Ouzman's wife had died the previous July and subsequently he had started drinking very heavily. Finding the fire in the scullery and the building filling with smoke she ran for help from William Job Spence who ran the shop opposite. He found Ouzman in bed, his hands and head covered in soot and incapable through drink. With the fire extinguished the Police took Ouzman into custody and charged him with attempted arson. On 29th December he appeared before Loughborough Magistrates who remanded him on bail, stipulating that he go to live with his niece and receive medical attention.

Ouzman appeared before the Derby Assizes on 20th February 1946 where evidence showed that he was drinking to excess, he stated to the Police that he drank four or five bottles of rum a week. Giving evidence for the defence, the village doctor, Dr Strachan stated that he was treating Ouzman for hallucinations and an enlarged liver which was consistent with chronic alcoholism. The Judge, having directed the Jury that to be guilty Ouzman must have committed the acts "wilfully", accepted their finding of Not Guilty. Prior to releasing Ouzman the Judge said that he hoped that he never be allowed to hold a licence again as he was not fit for it. Ouzman died in 1951.

After that sad event the Railway became once again a popular drinking haunt for villagers and others from around the area and remained so to the downturn in the pub trade in the late 1990s.



The Railway c1880. Jenkins Cottages to the left of the Railway were demolished 1888/9 to make way for the new offices of the Mountsorrel Granite Company



## Once upon a Time in Mountsorrel in March

### **7th March 1818 - Leicester Chronicle**

A valuable in calf cow, the property of Mr Rowland, of Stanford, near Loughbrough, that had been bitten by a mad dog, was destroyed on Thursday last, in consequence of its shewing unequivocal symptoms of that dire malady. The dog was killed about a fortnight ago. It has been reported that another mad dog had recently done considerable mischief in Mountsorrel; but, we are glad to find, that this animal was not mad it was merely unwell, and the owner, Mr. Prior, wisely determined to have it hanged to quiet any apprehensions amongst his neighbours.

### **2nd March 1832 Nottingham Review**

On Tuesday, a stocking-maker out of work, who applied for relief for himself, wife, and three children, was ordered by the Parish Officers of Mountsorrel, to wheel a barrow up and down the streets! This is about as wise, humane, and a profitable a way of employing a poor man's time, as that recommended by the late Lord Castle-reagh; who said rather that let paupers remain idle, he would cause them to dig holes and fill them up again.

### **24th March 1832 Leicester Chronicle**

William Smith (husband of Sarah Smith, charged with the murder of Elizabeth Wood, of Mountsorrel), was placed at the bar for stealing a sack-bag, foot iron, desert-knife, table cloth, silk handkerchief, and a pair of shears. The above articles having been missed, were found by Benjamin Brown, constable of Mountsorrel, in Smith's house. Verdict – Guilty of stealing the knife, handkerchief, and shears. – To be imprisoned six weeks to hard labour in the House of Correction.

### **5th March 1836 – Leicester Herald**

Mountsorrel – The Poor Law Commissioner, Mr. Hall visited this place on Thursday week, for the purpose of forming another Union, under the New Poor Law Bill. A surgeon, celebrated for his queer nose, and commonly known by the familiar cognomen of “the pug nose doctor,” attended the Commissioner, and gave him, it is said, a great deal of useful information. On the Commissioner leaving Mountsorrel, he was followed to the town-end by the crowd, hooting and shouting him out of the place. One man, an old soldier, declared that sooner than be separated from his wife, under the present system, he would die in the attempt. The Doctor, who is not very popular, declared in the course of the day, that the soup about to be provided for the Union, was capital, and that he would dine out of it any day. – This was quite enough for the populace of Mountsorrel, and that night they determined to give the doctor a flare-up, and very soon after they burnt him in effigy opposite his own door. – The figure was well stuffed with straw, and the likeness excellent, particularly about the nose.

### **Leicestershire Mercury 21 March 1840**

John Antill, William Blower. Henry Hunt, and Chas. Limbert, four youths from Mountsorrel, were charged with trespassing in Swithland Wood, and destroying several ash plants, the property of G.J. D. B. Danvers, Esq., and were each fined 1s and the expenses, or one month's imprisonment.

### **Leicester Journal - Friday 05 March 1897**

MOUNTSORREL. Proposed Temperance Hall.—The Good Templers of Mountsorrel have purchased a site on which they propose to build a Temperance Hall. The spot is on the main road in the centre of the town, near the Market-Place, and the area is sufficiently large for a commodious hall to be erected, with a commanding frontage.

### **Leicester Herald - Wednesday 26 March 1834**

#### COMMISSION ON LUNACY.

Yesterday a Commission of Lunacy was held at the Crown Hotel, in this town, to enquire into state of mind of Mr. Lambert Fowkes, late of Mountsorrel, in this county.

The writ was taken out by the relatives of the lunatic. About three years ago the lunatic went on a visit to Birmingham and appeared very uneasy in his mind, caused by jealousy towards his wife and having joined the Methodists of Rothley ; he retired to bed at a friend's house and in the morning before it was light, he was discovered in a field which adjoins the house, among the snow, without any clothing on except his shirt. It appeared that he had jumped out of a window, the height of ten feet, and began to call out " murder" and threw his money about. His brothers also spoke to various acts of insanity in neglecting his farm and business, when he joined the Methodists, his mind being entirely taken up with religion. The death of his son, a youth about 17 years of age, was the cause of great affliction to him, and which he had buried in the Methodist ground but feeling offended at the conduct of some of the party, he had the remains disinterred and afterwards buried in Rothley church yard — Since the death of his wife, he had been under the care of Harrison, the lunatic keeper. On being asked if he thought he could manage his own affairs he replied, that he could not. The jury returned a verdict that he was, of unsound mind, and incapable of managing his own affairs

### **26th March 1881- Leicester Chronicle**

Our hopes of gathering a bouquet of pretty wild flowers in the course of a walk from Sileby to Mountsorrel was suddenly dashed by an unexpected and awkward phenomenon. The district being unexplored ground one important thing had been overlooked – the possibility of floods. Leaving the train at Sileby, the bold outlines of Broad Hill and the Mountsorrel cliffs stood out prominent in the distance, with the village nestling at their base. A few paces more through Sileby, and striking out on the high road for our destination, we were suddenly confronted by – not the anticipated flower-decked green fields, but a vast expanse of water. The whole of the Soar valley, stretching from Sileby across to Mountsorrel, a distance of over a mile, had become transformed into a broad inland lake. To cross on foot was obviously impossible; to reach the village by a circuitous route was practically out of the question, and there was therefore no alternative but to wait until a vehicle could be procured. In some parts the flood was nearly two feet deep and it drifted across the road and swept down the open valley with a powerful current. When, added to this, arose the necessity of driving to the side, with its ditches, in order to make way for approaching vehicles, and the possibility of being behind an animal that was neither quiet nor sure footed, the venture by "flood and field" was not entirely without its discomforts and its dangers. Doubtless, however, the good folks of Sileby and Mountsorrel have at length become accustomed to this form of temporary isolation, and now bridge the inland channel with semi-contemptuous equanimity. This was at all events said to have been the fifth flood this year.

### **Leicestershire Mercury - Saturday 31 March 1838**

#### BRUTAL OUTRAGES.

William Jones, Thomas York, John Morre and John Pearson four athletic ruffians employed on the railway near Mountsorrel were charged with assaulting John Antill and his wife and two girls named Mary and Elizabeth Warner on Monday evening. Complainants stated that were proceeding from Mountsorrel to Quorndon when they met the defendants, who assaulted the women in a shameful and indecent manner. Antill then sought the assistance of the constable of Mountsorrel and they proceeded to the Travellers' Guide, (a public house at Mountsorrel) where they found the defendants and about a dozen of their companions, who used such dreadful language and made such a violent resistance that they were compelled to get other assistance before succeeding in capturing the defendants. The Magistrates (remarking on the necessity there was to protect the peaceful inhabitants of the villages from the brutal attack of ruffianly strangers) very properly fined Pearson £1 or two months' imprisonment, and the others 10s each and expenses, reminding the constables that they were also at liberty to proceed against them if they pleased

### **Leicester Chronicle - Saturday 04 March 1899**

#### CHESS.

MOUNTSORREL v. LOUGHBOROUGH. Played at the Mountsorrel Granite Company' Reading room on Saturday, 16 players on each side being the largest number ever taking part in a match here. After a close contest the home team won. Both sides were strongly represented.



## 11 March 1814 - Leicester Journal

### To Be Sold or let

A Genteel House, pleasantly situated in the Market-place, Mountsorrel, late in the occupation of John Doughty, Gent. Deceased. The ground floor on the front consists of entrance hall, two parlours, and a carriage gateway into the yard, three chambers on the first floor, and two good attics, one back parlour, kitchen and cellar, two back chambers, barn stable, and yard, garden, walled all round and well planted with fruit trees.

For a view of the premises apply to Mr. Thomas Kirk: Mountsorrel, or Mr Kirk, Brandy Merchant, Silver St., Leicester

This house is now 28 Market Place.

John Doughty was a well to do yeoman who owned land and property in and around Mountsorrel. He was baptised in 1744 in St Peter's church where he married Anne Simpson in 1768. He died in 1813. In his will he left land he owned to the children of his sister Mary Kirk. This included Hoth Potch Close in Rothley and Cuckoo's Nest in Quorndon. He left what is now 28 Market Place to his nephew Richard Kirk and another house in the North End to the grandson, Doughty Spencer, of his other sister Alice Spencer. Also various cash amounts to other members of his extended family.

John's father, George Doughty, was a cordwainer born in 1714. He died in 1792 and is buried with his wife in St Peter's church. The mural tablet in the church reads "*Deposited below, the mortal part of George Doughty, who departed this life the 19th day of June, 1792, aged 78. Also of Ann his wife; She died May 17, 1790, aged 76 years*".

John and Ann Doughty are also buried in the church, as is his sister and her husband, William Kirk, and four of their children, who all died in their minority. So having the privilege of being buried in the church did the Doughty family have some connection with the church? In 1795 some inhabitants had fixed numbered pews. Pews 1,2 and 3 were reserved for servants except Mr Doughty's servants who shared pew 19 with the curate's tenants. Mr Doughty himself shared pew 14 with two others.

The earliest recorded burial in the church appears to be "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.

Until 1759 the only place in Mountsorrel to bury the dead was the small Baptist burial ground once on the corner of Barons Way. In that year Sir John Danvers purchased a cottage with an orchard attached from Richard Fowkes of Rothley and, "out of regard for the welfare and convenience of the inhabitants of Mountsorrel, he made a free gift of the orchard as a burial ground for the townfolk". Until then "there was no burying ground belonging to the town of Mountsorrel which was a very great inconvenience to the inhabitants who are obliged to carry their dead to be buried in the adjacent towns with great trouble and expense". In 1782 he removed the wall and erected a handsome uniform iron baluster and iron gates on a piece of ground at West end of the Chapel of Mountsorrel for a burial place of the Inhabitants and those staying in the Township of Mountsorrel. The burial place to be fenced from north east corner of the shop to the House of Edmund Frier to the Chapel, through to south east corner of House of William Snow, with suitable convenient Iron Gates towards each."

In 1677 about half of the individuals recorded in the burial register of St Bartholomew's church in Quorn are from Mountsorrel.

"The dead of Mountsorrel Superior were buried in the northern half of the ground at Rothely Church. Their journey was along the aptly named bier way or way of the dead identified in the enclosure award."



Doughty Memorial



Clarks Stables, now Bier Way

## Wildlife

The Snowdrops on the Navins Wildflower Meadow are the best so far with the singletons planted up over the last few years now starting clump up and give us a show for the start of the year. Next up are the Primroses and the first clump came out in time for St David's Day. We have some socially distanced planting happening the first week of March – pots of woodland edge wildflowers that have been grown on over winter from seed planted last year. They are a mix of perennials so it may take a couple of years for the benefit to show through.

We are starting to think of trying to arrange a socially distanced work party for the Peace Garden at the back end of March (weather and COVID restrictions permitting). We try and arrange a monthly work party morning throughout Spring/Summer/Autumn and although we will contact the "usual suspects" to see if they are interested we will always welcome new hands to the job, just let John Doyle know if you are able to help (johncdoyle@talktalk.net).



Navins Primroses



Navins Snowdrops

**Can anyone help with this request. I have sent her what we have in our archives**

TV Central News request

Hello

I'm doing some research for our regional news programme about Mother and Baby Homes and forced adoptions . I understand the care home on Leicester Road used to be a pub called The Anchor, and in the sixties it was converted into a home for unmarried mothers and their babies.

I'm looking for photos, and also anybody who may have had a connection to the home at the time. Perhaps they worked there or knew someone who had lived there?

The idea of the home was the brainchild of a Mrs B Heydecker from Loughborough.

Any help would be appreciated

Kind regards

Jane Hesketh