



No 46

# MHG NEWSLETTER

MHG News

## Talks

The November Talk, entitled, 'What's in a name? - Exploring the history of Charnwood through its place-names', will be given by an old friend of the Group, Dr Julie Attard.

Julie will be talking about the way in which place-name evidence can provide us with insights into many aspects of Charnwood Forest's history and the communities that have lived in the Forest across the centuries.

The talk will take place in the Memorial Centre on Tuesday 9th November, starting at 7:30pm. Members £3 and Non-Members £4

There will not be a Talk in December but on Tuesday 14th we will be holding our Annual Quiz and Social Night at the Memorial Centre starting at 7:30pm. Tickets are £9 pp which of course includes the buffet, will be on sale at the November Meeting or by contacting: Pat Neal on 01162106717 or E Mail: [patrick.neal7@ntlworld.com](mailto:patrick.neal7@ntlworld.com).

The Quiz Master, Steve, runs quizzes several nights a week so this year we are in the hands of a professional! He will be holding general, Christmas and table quizzes.

The bar will be open and the room set out with 6 tables each of ten places to maximise the use of space. There will be prizes for each person on the winning table and there will also be a raffle for which we would welcome donations.

The Committee says a big Thank You to Pat who in addition to being Treasurer does sterling work as our Social Secretary!

## Mountsorrel War Memorials

As November sees the commemorations of Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday we look at the various War Memorials in the village.

Most village memorials reflect the losses suffered in the two World Wars but in St Peter's church is a family memorial that dates from the Boer Wars. Dr. Paulson and his family placed a plaque there to mark the loss of their son Cyril Hugh Paulson. Cyril and his brother John had gone to South Africa as volunteers, both serving with irregular light cavalry units. Sadly Cyril died of enteric fever (typhoid) at Potchefstroom on 25th November 1900.



He is also named on the Boer War Memorial in Town Hall Square in Leicester. The effect of his loss was clearly felt across the village as when John returned safely from service in November 1901, he was met by a crowd of 2000 villagers accompanied by the town Brass Band.

It is with the enormity of the losses suffered in the Great War that War Memorials to honour the dead of the nation came to the fore, there were only 53 villages in England and Wales where every serviceman returned and none in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

† **Sergt. Ernest Foulds** joined the first company from Mountsorrel, in August, 1914, as a private. He soon gained his sergeant's stripes, and became a very smart and efficient N.C.O. He was recommended for a commission and went through part of the course at the Cadet School in France. He was at home on leave after Christmas. At the end of June the sad news came that he had been fatally gassed. He was an old choir boy and Sunday scholar at S. Peter's. Our deepest sympathy is given to Mrs. Foulds and his sister and brothers. He was a nephew of Mr. A. O. Foulds.

† **Corpl. Wilfred Baum.**—We were extremely sorry to hear at the end of June, that he had been fatally gassed. He had become a very useful N.C.O. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Firley Baum, have now lost both their sons, their only children. The brother, Alwyn, was killed in the spring of 1916.

† **Pte. Claud Harold Barrs** was reported missing at the end of 1915, and it is now feared that he was killed.

**Gunner John T. M. Lewis** has been at the Front since the end of May. News came on July 24th that he had been wounded and was in hospital, but we are thankful to know that he is progressing favourably.

The first village casualties came from the "Old Contemptibles" as the Kaiser so insultingly referred to the British Expeditionary Force of 1914. By the end of November 1914, the village had already suffered four dead, three reservists, Walter Broad, John Smith and Tom Gilbert, who had been called back to their old regiment and John Riddle, a regular soldier. As the months and then years went by their names were added to by many others. News of losses and other news from the Front in this pre-radio and TV world came in the church Newsletter of St Peter's. From 1916 the lists of the fallen and those serving were posted on the church gates and included all those from the village, not simply those of St Peter's parish.

*East Akeley Deanery Magazine – St Peter's Notes*

*August 1917*

In 1917 a decision was made at St Peter's, as in other villages, to obtain a "War Shrine" to honour all those away serving the country but particularly those who had fallen. That at St Peter's was made of teak and copper taken from the hulk of the old timber line of battleship HMS Britannia. Subscriptions to cover the cost came from across the village and beyond and at a public service on 4th December 1917 the shrine, set on the outside wall of St Peter's, was unveiled by Mrs Violet Martin, widow of Major William Francis Martin of the Poplars on Watling St and formerly Managing Director of the Mountsorrel Granite Company.

The War Shrine stayed in place for many years and was updated with the names of the fallen from St Peter's in World War 2 but during a major renovation of the outside of the church in the 1950s it was removed and is now held safely in the village Museum.



**St Peter's War Shrine, now in Mountsorrel Village Museum**



**St Peter's War Shrine, on the wall of St Peter's**

With the signing of the Armistice on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1918 and subsequent Versailles Peace Treaty in 1919, came the need to recognise the sacrifices made. Nationally this was marked by the unveiling of the Cenotaph in Whitehall and the burial of the Unknown Soldier in Westminster Abbey in 1920. But in Mountsorrel as in other villages and towns the need was felt to mark the sacrifice of the local community.

Initial meetings were held as early as March 1919 and although decisions in principle were made, progress was slow. In the meantime the church communities set about their own memorials.

On 28th October 1920 a parish plaque in bronze was unveiled in Christ Church by Lt Col Robert E Martin. The church already contained a personal memorial to his brother Maj W F Martin in the form of the altar cross given by their mother Mrs Henrietta Martin. That gift had caused some furore amongst the church council as Christ Church was historically a church without ornament. It was only through the receipt of letters from Christ Church men fighting in France and Flanders supporting the gift that it was accepted, but a lead Church Warden resigned on principle

**Christ Church War Memorial**





There was a memorial in the Wesleyan Methodist Church on Loughborough Road which was sadly lost when the Chapel was demolished in the late 1960s. Recently we have discovered a photograph taken in 1969 of the Harvest Festival being held there with the Memorial visible.

**Wesleyan Methodist Church 1969**  
**Memorial visible to the right of the organ**

The first village-wide memorial of the Great War is the stained-glass window in St Peter's which is now recognised as an important piece of stone and glass artwork. It was fitted in 1923 after a wide ranging subscription. The top panels show the insignia of the Leicestershire Yeomanry and the Leicestershire Regiment. The main panels; on the left – surmounted by an airplane and representing purity, the Virgin Mary carrying a Crown of Thorns with the Cross of Calvary behind. In the centre – surmounted by a plough, representing peace, an angel with child and doves, a lion and a lamb. On the right- surmounted by a warship, St Michael representing valour.

Adjacent to the window is the St Peter's Parish memorial, a stone of Sicilian white marble bearing the names of the men of St Peter's who were lost and this has been added to by a subsequent lower stone bearing the names of those lost in World War 2.



**St Peter's — War Memorial Window**



**St Peter's Parish War Memorial**

St Peter's also has plaques to individuals. Mounted almost opposite the Parish War Memorial and above the pew used by his family prior to the Great War, is a plaque to Major William Francis Martin who was still a Church Warden at St Peter's at the time of his death. On the north wall above the choir stalls is a plaque to the Rev'd W.J. Lewis, the Vicar of St Peter's between 1888 and 1918. Set into that plaque are the "Dead Man's Penny" for both his elder and younger sons who were killed in action during the war.

Rev'd Lewis never recovered from the loss of his sons and moved to become Rector of Eydon, Northamptonshire in 1918, but died two years later.



**St Peter's — Martin Memorial**



**St Peter's—Lewis Memorial**

An unusual memorial is that of the Verger's Cross at St Peter's. This was produced by Mrs Lewis as a memorial to her elder son. It was mounted on a shaft produced by Mr Burrows of Quorn, who taught woodwork at the St Peter's School Adult Night Classes. At the end of the war a plate was added to the reverse side of the cross bearing the names of those St Peter's men who were bell-ringers or choristers.



**St Peter's — Verger's Cross**



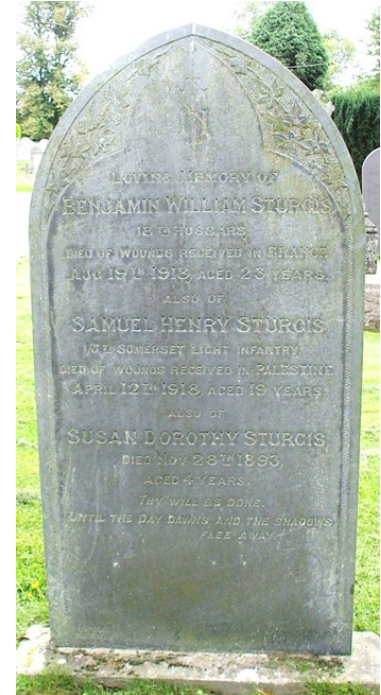
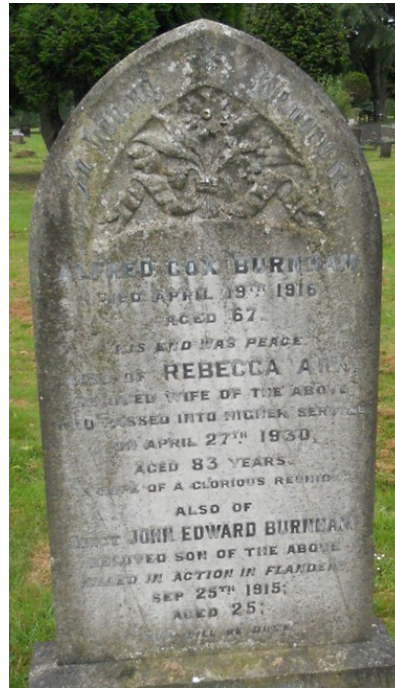
Finally at St Peter's there is a small Memorial Table carved by the joiners of the Mountsorrel Granite Co. in memory of their workmates who did not return in 1918

It is not simply within the village churches that there are personal memorials. With casualties being buried overseas families here in the village added the names of their relatives to family grave stones in Mountsorrel Cemetery.

**Mountsorrel Cemetery**

**Burnham Family gravestone (left)**

**Sturgis Family gravestone (right)**



Although the initial meeting about the main village memorial took place in 1919 the various consultations and deliberations took quite some time but eventually work started in 1926 on the memorial that today stands above the village on Castle Hill.

The design chosen was by Shirley Harrison the Leicester architect who designed De Montfort Hall and represents an open doorway facing the rising sun. Final approval for the design and location required the building of a timber and hessian mock-up but the night this was completed there was a storm and it was wrecked. At first light the next day with the decision makers arriving that morning, the three Granite Co. joiners, Arthur Attenborough, Billy Butherway and Stanley Wakeling all set to and did a rapid repair job which gained the approval required.

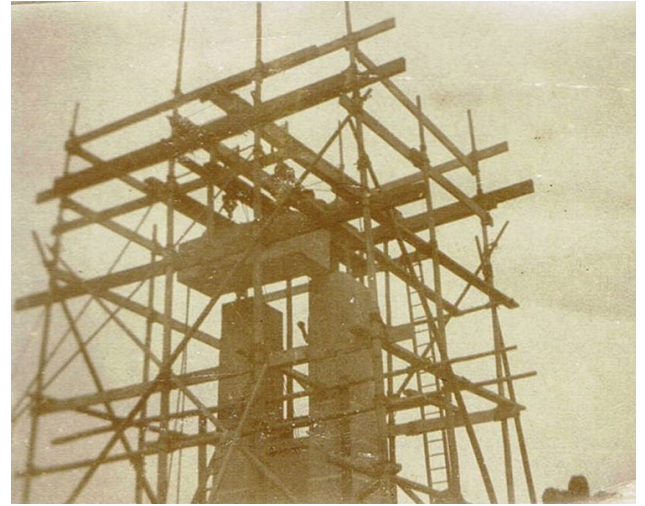
Building the memorial was a task for the quarrymen who must have had great personal investment in the job, as many had served together on the Western Front, first in the Leicestershire Regiment and later in the Royal Engineers and others will have been relatives of the casualties.

A concrete base was laid at the highest point of Castle Hill, and a trolley tub line laid from the quarry yard (then between Crown Lane and Bond Lane) along the top of Crown Lane and Watling Street and then up a cutting on the north western side of Castle Hill to the top.



**Castle Hill War Memorial**

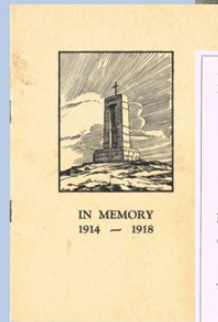
**Preparing the base and moving the capstone up the trolley tub line**



**Castle Hill War Memorial - Raising the capstone**

On the afternoon of Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1926 the unveiling ceremony took place. Some 300 village ex-servicemen led by Lt. Col Robert Martin marched from the Drill Hall on Loughborough Road to the memorial where there was a joint guard of honour from C Squadron, Leicestershire Yeomanry and the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Leicestershire Regiment. At the ceremony wreath laying was led by the village veterans and widows.

**Castle Hill War Memorial Unveiling – 15<sup>th</sup> August 1926**



**MOUNTSORREL  
WAR MEMORIAL**

UNVEILING &  
DEDICATION  
AUGUST 15th, 1926  
at 2.45 p.m.

Unveiling by  
Major-General Van Straubenzee  
C.B., C.M.G.  
(General Officer commanding the North Midland Division)

Dedication Service conducted by  
THE VENERABLE  
THE ARCHDEACON OF LOUGHBOROUGH  
(Rev. W. F. Harpell)

REV. C. R. CHAPPELL, Hon. C.F.  
REV. G. M. COLLINS, Hon. C.F.  
REV. R. H. OSBORN  
REV. S. H. SHAKESPEAR



**Veterans Wreath Laying**  
**Ernest Woolstan (Leicestershire Regiment & Royal Navy)**  
**Roland Goodman MM (Leicestershire Regiment)**  
**Fred Darby MM (Seaforth Highlanders)**  
**William Hallam DCM (Leicestershire Regiment)**

**Widows Wreath Laying**  
**led by Mrs Henrietta Martin and Mrs Violet Martin**



The plaques on the memorial bear the names of 73 men lost in the Great War and these were added to by a further 19 names from the Second World War.

This striking memorial, commanding views out across the valley of the River Soar and north to Loughborough was the place for the village's Act of Remembrance for many years but with an aging population finding the climb up Castle Hill more and more onerous in winter, the service is now held in St Peter's church and wreaths then mounted on the small memorial in the Peace Garden.

With the centenary of the unveiling of the Castle Memorial coming in 2026 the Parish Council is working with TARMAC, as successors to the Mountsorrel Granite Company, to carry out essential repair and renovation work to ensure the Memorial will continue to stand above the village marking the sacrifices of the two World Wars.



A further memorial dating from the Great War and one that is often not recognised as being such are the War Memorial Playing Fields alongside the Soar Valley Centre. These fields were purchased after the Great War to provide a practical memorial for future generations. As some of the land was lost in the building of the Leisure Centre there is also within it a small



Although thankfully not on the scale of the losses of the Great War the village also lost men in World War 2 and those losses are marked by a plaque in the main bar of the Working Men's Club.



The Memorial Hall which stood for 50 years on the site of the present Memorial Centre was built by public subscription both as a much needed multi-use social facility but also specifically as a memorial to the men lost during World War 2. In the entrance hall was a plaque bearing the names of 19 of them. Later it was discovered there was a twentieth casualty, his name had been missed as his family moved from the village during the war. Since the demolition of that building the plaque has been held in store by the Mountsorrel War Memorials Trust.



Like the Memorial Hall the new Memorial Centre forms part of the war memorial infrastructure of the village and the planning for it included a new memorial in memory of all those lost in both World Wars. Research carried out by the Heritage Group and information received by the Mountsorrel Branch, Royal British Legion led to the new memorial bearing a total of 96 names for the Great War and 20 for World War 2, of villagers who did not return from the wars.

The design of the new memorial in the foyer of the Centre deliberately picks up the features of the Castle Hill memorial and a shadow on the floor reaching out from foot of the memorial to the opposite wall.

Whilst not strictly a war memorial the memorial in the Peace Garden is these days used as such with the wreaths and poppy crosses being borne on it throughout the year. It was built to mark 50 years of peace since World War 2 and the Anniversary of the Parish Council in 1994.

The Peace Garden was used as the centre piece of the village events to mark the Centenary of the 1918 Armistice when two trees were planted by pupils of Christ Church & St Peter's Primary School assisted by our two Members of Parliament, who also supplied the trees.



In 2017 a villager who had recently visited New Zealand and seen their "Poppy Places" initiative suggested the roads in the two new development areas in the village that are named after village Great War casualties bear a poppy on the road sign. Jelson's took up and implemented the suggestion for their "Fieldfare" development.



## **Once Upon A Time In Mountsorrel In November**

### **1st Nov 1792 Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette**

The first stone of an elegant market-cross, to be erected at the expense of Sir John Danvers, was laid at Mountsorrel, on 8th instant.

### **23rd November 1816 Leicester Chronicle**

On the 1st inst. An ewe sheep, belonging to Mr. Fry, of Loughbrough, was killed and the whole of it carried away except for the entrails. – and on Saturday night last, a wether sheep belonging to Mr. Barrs, of Mountsorrel, was also feloniously killed, and all taken away except the skin and entrails. In the latter case the skin appeared to have been skillfully taken off.

### **6th November 1830 Leicester Chronicle**

Statute – Notice is hereby given, that a STATUTE, for the Hiring of Servants, will be held at the house of Mr. Johnson, The Crown Inn, Mountsorrel, on Wednesday next, the 10th November inst.

### **25th November 1836 Leicester Journal**

Dreadful Accident – Thursday the 17th inst. Another Inquest was taken, before the said Coroner, at Mountsorrel, on view of the body of Samuel Glover, who was killed by the falling of a piece of rock. Deceased, with others, was engaged in separating a large mass of stone, (in the quarry of Mr. John W. Wood, at the above town.) which had been blasted from the rock, one of the men hearing a noise, called out to deceased, to run away as quick as possible; while in the act of doing so, his foot slipped, and he fell down, a piece of the rock (upwards of 20 tons) fell upon him, cutting one of his legs off, and nearly severing his body in half. Verdict – Accidental Death.

### **9th November 1838 Leicester Journal**

To Publicans and others. To be sold by auction by B. Payne and Son, On Monday the 19th day of November instant, the whole of the brewing vessels, Barrels, Household Furniture and other effects, at the Black Swan, Mountsorrel, comprising in part, 220 and 63 gallon coppers, complete, mash tub, cooler and pipe to cellar, seven gathering tubs, underbeck, sieve, spouts, 80 gallon barrel, two 66 ditto, four 60 ditto, two 46 ditto, beer barrels, spurgers, taps, jugs, glasses, pewter measures, plated cups and about 100 lots of household furniture. Sale to commence at 10 o'clock.

### **1st November 1845 Leicestershire Mercury**

Cricket – On Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, last week, a match of cricket was played at Barrow-upon-Soar, between eleven of Barrow, and eleven of Mountsorrel, which ended in a dispute on Wednesday. Every preparation was made on Monday last, for the return match, but the Barrow players did not make their appearance. Whether this was from fear of their being beaten by their opponents, or whether they were ashamed of the disgraceful proceedings of the Barrow people on the Wednesday previous, in using the most disgusting language and ill-treating the Mountsorrel people by pelting them, our correspondent says is unknown.

### **5th November 1853 Leicestershire Mercury**

Mountsorrel (North End) Lighted with Gas! – This portion of Mountsorrel was lighted up with gas for the first time on Monday night last, on which occasion the Old Church Bells rung merrily, and the Town Brass Band enlivened the inhabitants with their most melodious strains. The streets

were thronged till a late hour with visitors to witness this novelty. The lights shone with purity and brilliancy which reflect great credit on the Gas Company and their servants. The inhabitants, rich and poor, seemed greatly delighted ; and were heard to exclaim one to another, "What an improvement is this to the town," "Oh! What a let-down it is to the South-enders that their parish is not lighted also". "In leaving the North End to enter the South End, (one continuous street, good reader!) we can now compare it to nothing less than leaving a shining palace, to dwell in some dark, dreary dungeon!" We are happy to state that most of the resident gentry and shop-keepers have availed themselves of this facility thus afforded of having good cheap light at night. There are also two chapels supplied with gas, and it is decided to have it in the Old Church. Mr. Isom, of Mountsorrel, is appointed gas lighter.

### **25th November 1854 Leicestershire Mercury**

Mountsorrel Gas Meeting – A meeting of the rate-payers of Mountsorrel South End was held at the Mechanics' Reading Room, on Monday evening last, to take into consideration the propriety of having the streets lighted with gas. A lengthy discussion took place between the higher and lower classes, respecting the use, and uselessness of having gas on the town street. A proposition was made by Mr. Watts, seconded by Mr. Woolley, "That the streets of the South Parish be lighted by gas". John Antill, a quarryman, moved, as an amendment, "That this meeting be adjourned for twelve months", which was seconded by Mr. Priestly and carried by a majority of 30. At the close of the meeting a poll was demanded which will shortly take place, when we hope, as the estimates of the expense for lighting appears very small, it will be gained, and that the inhabitants of the South End will never rest satisfied with remaining in darkness after having seen the comfort of a beautiful brilliant light in the North End during the past winter.

### **10th November 1855 Leicester Chronicle**

Guy Fawkes Day at Mountsorrel – The commemoration of this day was rather more than usually noticed by the younger branches at Mountsorrel. About six o'clock in the evening the reports of guns, pistols, crackers, and the ascent of rockets was heard and seen throughout the place. An effigy of Guy Fawkes was also exhibited on Castle Hill, where it was shot at and burnt to pieces.

### **Loughborough Monitor 30 November 1865**

Salmon in Leicestershire – Mr E. Gosling, of Mountsorrel Mill, writes to us as follows:- "Sir, it may perhaps be interesting to some of your readers to know that I caught a salmon in my eel traps on Monday last. The fish was very much out of condition, and although it measured 2 feet 10 inches in length, weighed only 7 lbs. I cannot learn that salmon have been taken so high up the Soar as this place, but there are a few instances of sea trout having come up as high as Barrow."

### **Melton Mowbray Mercury and Oakham and Uppingham News 20 November 1884**

Price of Bread – On Tuesday night last the Town Crier announced by bell to the inhabitants that the bakers of this place charged their neighbours in the town one halfpenny per quartern loaf more than the residents of the villages around, and that if they did not do the same to this place as to others means would be adopted to make them.

### **Melton Mowbray Mercury and Oakham and Uppingham News 27 November 1884**

Mountsorrel – Price of Bread. The bakers of the town having now reduced the price of bread and flour 2d. per stone, it is now the same as they have been delivering it at in the neighbouring villages for some weeks, viz 4d. per quartern loaf.

## Mountsorrel on the Stage

Whilst we know of the “Lordship of Mountsorrel”, a position held latterly by members of the Lanesborough family as Lords of the Manor of Mountsorrel, it came as a surprise to find mention in the late Victorian newspapers of “Lord Mountsorrel”. Our interest waned though on realising he was a character in a play, well two plays actually and neither got rave reviews!

The first mention is in Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper of 9th February 1873 reviewing a new drama entitled “Passion” at the Vaudeville Theatre in London. The original story was taken from the novel “Strathmore” by the writer Ouida, the pseudonym of Maria Louise Rame, a lady writer of some forty romances of which “Under Two Flags” is possibly the only one that may be known of today. The synopsis of the play describes how Lord Mountsorrel kills his best friend in a duel, then adopts the friend's only daughter, falls in love with her and marries her. The critic's view was that “...it is scarcely likely to obtain an enduring position upon the stage” although he did rate Mr Henry Neville who played Lord Mountsorrel “with an earnestness and power that saved many scenes”.



**Henry Neville — “Lord Mountsorrel”**



**Helen Barry — “Ethel”**

In 1876 there was another attempt to bring the book to the stage, this time under the title, “Ethel's Revenge”. The critics were even more damning of this than the previous attempt with The Graphic of 16th September 1876 reporting it as “artificial in tone, as unreal in incident, as offensive in suggestion, as tawdry and as falsely rhetorical in language as the worthless book on which it founded”. The critic did say that both Helen Barry, the heroine of the piece and Charles Kelly playing Lord Mountsorrel were both capable actors but let down by the piece.

The Sporting Gazette of the same date didn't bother with a formal review but printed their “version” of the script including:

Ethel - *“All men madly adore me”*

Lord Mountsorrel - *“They do. Your fascinations have even given rise to a faint rumour that I, Mountsorrel, the biggest brute in Europe, am at last subjugated by them.”*

Unsurprisingly, the play was clearly not a hit!

## Wildlife

### Navins Wildflower Meadow

Most work for the year has now been completed but we plan to plant two (very) small oak trees over winter, to join one that we planted during the early phases of work on the meadow and which is now quietly growing and becoming a sapling. We will also clear some scrub growth to bring a little more light onto the western side of the meadow and finally, clear out the bird boxes ready for the next nesting season.

### Peace Garden

As with the Wildflower Meadow most work is now completed although one of the team will be doing a final clearance of some of the the weed and scrub growth by the river and also adding to the shaded fern bed in the south east corner.

### Fungi

We mentioned Fungi in September and in October we saw some large and varied growth along Buddon Wood Farm Path (Western side of the Common), with some excellent Shaggy Inkcaps on show, but also The Sickener, yes the clue is in the name, it is poisonous, as are many of the others!



*The Sickener*



*Shaggy Inkcap*



## Birds

There's been a really slow start to the autumn migration into UK probably due in part to the continuing southerly and westerly wind flows, however in the last week there have been reports of large flocks of Redwing and others arriving in north-east Scotland so there's time yet for us to see the usual winter visitors on Broad Hill.

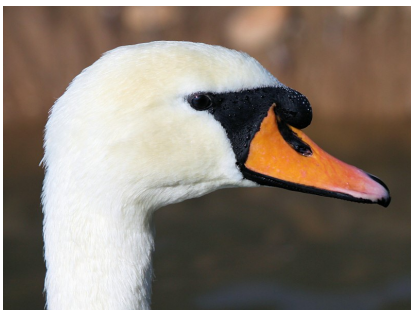
What we have had locally on Swithland Reservoir for the last couple of weeks of October is a Glossy Ibis. Although these are not common visitors there was one at Cossington Meadows a couple of years back. Also at the reservoir at the end of the month were Great White Egret (think Grey Heron only white and with a yellow beak) and Whooper Swan. (Yellow beak with black at the end as opposed to the resident Mute Swans which have orange beaks with black near the head). Well worth the walk down Kinchley Lane for your daily exercise.



*Glossy Ibis*



*Whooper Swan*



*Mute Swan*