



# MHG NEWSLETTER

No 48

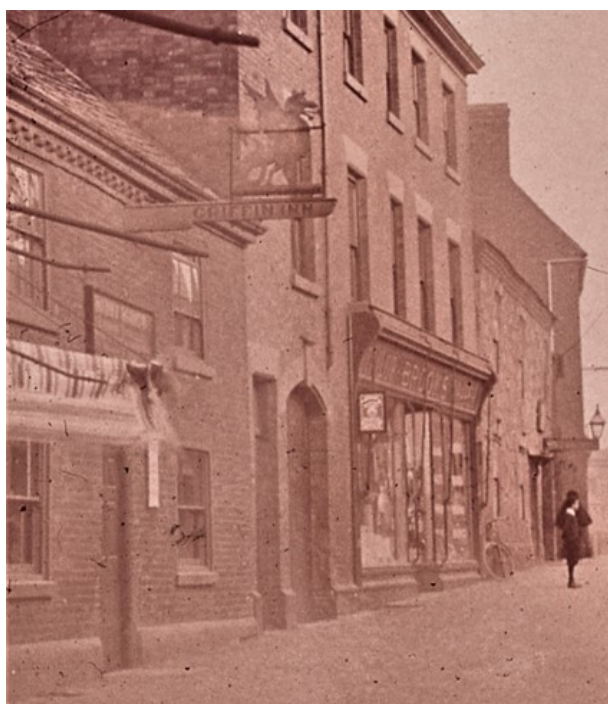
Group Notes and News

In light of the continuing COVID situation we have decided to re-schedule the Monthly Talk for January (Mel Gould talking about the Loughborough Carillon) until later in the year. We realise this will be a disappointment but feel it is better to err on the side of caution. We will keep members updated with changes through this Newsletter and through the Group's Facebook page [www.facebook.com/mountsorrelarchive](http://www.facebook.com/mountsorrelarchive)

## Now and Then

### The Griffin Inn and The Buttermarket Off Licence

(7 & 7a Market Place)



c1900



2021

For some 145 years the Griffin Inn stood on the east side of the Market Place serving villagers and visitors alike with ale and victuals. For the majority of that time the licence was held by members of the Gill family, for the most part the matriarch of the family, but the building had been a Gill residence prior to it becoming an inn.

In early photographs the building always appears to be "squeezed in" in between those standing to the north, on what is now the Peace Garden, which bore "1718" on the outer wall and the three-storey Victorian building to the south. In overall frontage size and height it is similar to Dodson's Bakery (now demolished) on the Green that dated from the early 1600s. Although the frontage is brick, parts of the rear are Mountsorrel Granite and its construction may well have predated that of its neighbours.



c1910

There have been Gills in the village since at least the late 1600s through to the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and there seems to have been a John in every generation. In August 1769 John Gill, who was a successful barber-surgeon, married Elizabeth Clarke at St Peter's (then still known as the North End Chapel). The mid-18th century was a time of change for the barber-surgeon whose trade had been led since 1540 by the Company of Barbers and Surgeons of London as, in 1745, a Bill was passed in parliament and the Surgeons left the Company forming what eventually became the Royal College of Surgeons of England. John seems to have kept up the medical side of the business as in the County Records Office there are two of his papers, the first, a bill for services to Eligha Hampson in 1765 for treating a leg problem, and the second, a recipe for cough medicine

Feb 7 2: 1765  
 Eligha Hampson Dr<sup>r</sup> to John Gill for curing his Leg  
 Feb 7 3 Bleeding - - - - - 5-7  
 July 9<sup>th</sup> Bleeding - - - - - 0-6  
 3 Ounces of Tincture - - - - - 1-8  
 2 Ounces of Ointment - - - - - 1-0  
 24 times Dressing and Attendance - - - - - 3-8  
 March 7 10 1765 Recd<sup>d</sup> in part  
 of paym<sup>t</sup> 2 Shillings

For a Cough of the Lungs  
 ʒij of Sweet Oyl  
 ʒib of Honey  
 ʒij of Rhubarb  
 ʒij of fresh Butter  
 half a pint of Water  
 Oyl them till digested

In February 1776 John died and bequeathed the house to Elizabeth with the provisos that; she pay the mortgage and that on her death, the house passed to his daughter Ann who was married to Joseph Wise, a framework knitter. In his will he also left his "linens and apparels" to his grandson, John. Later that year Elizabeth gained a licence by the Justices of the Peace, signed by John Danvers to run the house as "a common ale-house, inn or victualling house".

The house remained licenced as such until 1921. Whilst Elizabeth, and subsequently Ann ran the inn John (the grandson) took to barbering and amongst the cost of refitting part of the house in 1799 is a charge of 5 shillings for a "barber's pole".

The decision to name the inn "The Griffin" is possibly a reminder of the use of the building by a barber-surgeon as the heraldic crest of the Company of Barbers and Surgeons is an opinicus, a variation of the griffin in English Heraldry. Designing an opinicus for an inn-sign seems to have



proved to be challenging and The Griffin ended up with a Wyvern as its sign. This may have been easier to source as it was the crest of the Danvers family of Swithland who were then, Lords of the Manor of Mountsorrel. The crest can still be seen on the village pump on the Green.



**Opinicus**



**Griffin**



**Wyvern**



The licence remained in the names of the ladies of the family until about 1851 when John Gill took over and remained until his death, aged 60 in 1875. Elizabeth Gill, his widow at first took over the house but shortly afterward retired and went to live with her son, John, who had a drapers shop a few doors away.

Joseph Billson took over the Inn although he seems to have left the day to day running of it to his wife, Mary, whilst he continued to work at the quarry. Their lack of experience in running licenced premises showed when in September 1880 Joseph was summoned to appear before the Loughborough Petty Sessions having sold whisky watered down and under the legal strength. Joseph pleaded guilty and apologised to the Bench but in mitigation said that his wife had done it without his knowledge. As this was the first such case in the area, he was fined a nominal £1 and costs.

Joseph continued as Landlord until his death in 1901 although ownership passed in 1895 to Sharpe's Brewery of Sileby who paid £1120 for the property. Latterly he was assisted by his younger son, Mark, who had returned home following the untimely death of his young wife in 1897.



*The Belgrave Cyclists Club visiting in 1896 – Mark Billson is thought to be the man in shirt sleeves with to his right, J Graber later captain of Leicester Rugby Football Club*

**STEAM \* BREWERY, \* SILEBY.**

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NOTED ALES.  
**SHARPE'S** Celebrated Stout.  
 DOUBLE STOUT.  
**BITTER BEER.**

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Patronised by Gentlemen of the Medical Profession whose opinion is unquestionable.

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ONE TRIAL WILL SUFFICE.



Mark was a well-known sportsman in the county being, amongst other things, an association football referee and later, Chairman of the county Football Association. Mark remarried in 1901 and continued to help his mother run the Inn after Joseph's death, but when she died in 1908, he moved to take the tenancy of the Eclipse Vaults on East Gate in Leicester. The Griffin was then run by Harry Rudkin who may have been a relative by marriage of the Billsons. Harry does not appear to have lasted long in the tenancy as by 1912 Sharpe's had got Samuel Stenson and his wife, Annie, who had been running the Greyhound at Burton on the Wolds, to take over and they ran the Griffin until Samuel's death in 1920.



***A fancy dress parade outside the Griffin in the summer of 1914 – Samuel Stenson's name can be seen as the Licen-see. The parades were held annually to raise money for the LRI***

In March 1920 Samuel had been fighting the Police who wanted to close the Griffin as part of a wider movement of thinning down the number of inns in the county. Superintendent Agar of the Police argued that the Griffin was redundant to need and had structural defects, he said the doors were only 5 feet 3 inches high and 2 feet wide and that he could not stand up in some of the rooms. Despite counter arguments by Sharpe's and Samuel, renewal of the licence was refused. Before the decision was fully ratified, Samuel died and the Griffin ceased as an Inn.

The building was now became one and later two shops but licences continued to play a part over the years as several were wine and spirit merchants or off licences and even today it functions as The Buttermarket Off Licence. Other uses have been as an upholsterers, a grocers, a gun shop, a golf shop and a chemists.



## **NEWTON'S CASH CHEMIST,**

**MOUNTSORREL, LIMITED**

*Pure Drugs and Chemicals.*

**PATENT MEDICINE AT STORE PRICES**

*Private and National Health Insurance Prescriptions  
Accurately Dispensed.*

**CAMERAS : KODAK and SELO FILMS IN STOCK**

**— AGENT FOR THE NURO ALL-BRITISH FILM —**

**DEVELOPING AND PRINTING, QUICK SERVICE**

## Wildlife Notes

It has been a quiet winter season so far although the Redwings are back on Broad Hill their numbers are well down on the past and, to date, we have no Fieldfares. In the local area, including Swithland Reservoir, there have been some Bewick Swans which fly in each winter from Siberia. They are slightly smaller and have different bill colours to both our resident Mute Swans and the Whooper Swans that fly in from Iceland for the winter.



Bewick's swan

Whooper swan

*Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust comparison chart*



*Mute Swan on River Soar*

As with each winter the Christmas and New Year sees (or rather hears) the sound of Tawny Owls seeking territories and partners and this year is no different with them calling over and around the Navins through the night.

Remember the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch talks place on 28th – 30th January, full details are on the RSPB's website at <https://www.rspb.org.uk/get-involved/activities/birdwatch/> and will be in newspapers and magazines shortly.

## Once Upon a Time in Mountsorrel in January

### 21 January 1829 Leicester Herald

John Collier, aged 18, was convicted of stealing an iron drill, the property of Thos. Simpson of Mountsorrel, on 8<sup>th</sup> November. Being an old offender he was sentenced to be transported for seven years.

### 6 January 1838 Leicester Chronicle

To Schools and Families

A Lady, who is competent to instruct in the general branches of female education, together with French, Drawing, and rudiments of Music, is desirous of engaging as a Teacher at a School, or Governess in a family, after the vacation. Most respectable references can be given. Letters, addressed M.A.F., at Post-office, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire, will receive immediate attention.

### 24 January 1840 Leicester Journal

John Whyman, servant to Mr. Ives, miller, of Mountsorrel, was charged by his master, with embezzling a quantity of shorts. The Bench were unanimous, that the charge was not true, and dismissed the case, ordering the complainant to pay costs.

### 2 January 1841 Leicester Herald

Christmas Cheer – Last week, Mr Biddles, of Mountsorrel, distributed among the Poor inhabitants of the South End of the above village, upwards of two hundred and fifty pounds weight of excellent beef, and which the poor were very grateful for.

### **15 January 1842 Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser**

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, 1841, the wife of John Hawkins, of Mountsorrel, was delivered of a son which has been duly registered, Robert Emmet Hawkins, in honour of that illustrious patriot who fell a victim to factious cruelty in 1803.

**Notes:** The Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser was the voice of the Chartist Movement that espoused a variety of radical ideals.

Robert Emmet was an Irish nationalist who had taken part in the abortive 1798 Rebellion by the United Irishmen led by Wolf Tone, hoping, in vain, for support from revolutionary France. In 1803 Emmet led a further insurrection in Dublin that failed. Fleeing to the countryside he was captured, charged with High Treason and on being found guilty, sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered which was still then the standard sentence. He was in the end hung and then beheaded.

John Hawkins, of Watling St, was one of the framework knitters who gave evidence to the Royal Commission into the conditions of the trade in 1845. He eventually became quarry worker, his son, Robert, followed him into the quarry where he worked until his death in 1906.

### **4 January 1845 Dover Telegraph and Cinque Ports General Advertiser**

Important to Pensioners – Annexed is a correct list of the Head-quarters of Districts, as well as the Out-Stations, at which Out-pensioners are paid:

Captain H. F Hawker – Leicester. At Mountsorrel, Loughborough, Market-Bosworth, Melton, Oakham, Deeping and Stamford

**Notes:** Out-Pensioners were retired soldiers who were paid a pension through the Royal Hospital Chelsea, “Chelsea Pensioners” were, and still are In-Pensioners at the Royal Hospital.

Captain Henry Frederick Hawker, of 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Foot arrived in post in the early 1840s and was eventually promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. He lived at West St, South Fields and died in post in 1856. He was assisted in the role by Staff Sergeant Pensioner William Ashby and Quarter-Master Sergeant Pensioner John Cooper. It is assumed they travelled to inns at the Out-Stations including Mountsorrel to carry out their pay duties.

### **5 January 1850 Leicestershire Mercury**

National School – A clothing Club for the children of this school was established two years ago, through the exertions of the master, together with the aid of the kind friends of the children, who contributed liberally to the club-funds. The contributions from the friends of Mountsorrel, together with the kind donations of the Countess of Lanesborough and the Rev. J. Babington, of Cosington, have enabled the master to give 5d. in addition to every shilling paid by the children themselves. This system is worthy of being generally carried out, as it enables children to appear at school decently clad throughout the year.

Christmas Gifts – During the past week several gifts have been distributed from the Earl of Lanesborough to his poorer tenants at Mountsorrel, such as flannel, blankets, coals and a portion of beef; for which they feel duty bound to return their most grateful acknowledgements.

### **Leicester Journal 17 January 1845**

Porter and Taylor have received instructions to sell by auction on Thursday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1873, at the White Swan Inn, Mountsorrel, at Five for Six o'clock in the Evening, subject to such conditions of Sale as will be then produced. All that highly attractive and conveniently arranged residence, situate in the main street, Mountsorrel (North End), now in the occupation of William

Paulson, Esq., Surgeon. The house is most substantially built, and contains spacious entrance hall, dining and drawing rooms, surgery, 8 bed rooms, large cellars, kitchens, scullery, wash house, etc. There is capital stabling, coach-house, cutting room etc., also an extensive walled kitchen and flower garden, well stocked with fruit trees, greenhouse etc. The garden adjoins the river Soar, in which there is excellent fishing.

Mountsorrel is within a few minutes walk of Barrow and Sileby Stations, on the main line of the Midland Railway. For full particulars apply to the Auctioneers, Bowling Green Street or to Messrs Berridge and Morris, Solicitors, Leicester.

## **Answers to the Quiz Section in Newsletter 47**

### **Picture Quiz**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1 Crown Lane                      | 13 Work house                           |
| 2 Danvers Road                    | 14 Mill House Loughborough Rd           |
| 3 Bond Lane/Swithland Lane        | 15 113 Leicester Road                   |
| 4 Hawcliffe Road                  | 16 147 Leicester Road                   |
| 5 Bond Lane                       | 17 143/145 Leicester Road               |
| 6 Crown Lane                      | 18 Stag and Pheasant, Crown and Thistle |
| 7 Halstead Road                   | 19 The Black Horse                      |
| 8 Rothley Road                    | 20 The Black Swan                       |
| 9 Drill Hall                      | 21 The Crown                            |
| 10 Christ Church Vicarage         | 22 The Exhibition [Demolished]          |
| 11 Rural Kitchen & Deli           | 23 The Nag's Head [now The Swan]        |
| 12 Constitutional Club Watling St | 24 The Anchor                           |
|                                   | 25 The Black Swan                       |

### **Children's Quiz**

1. Cockerel
2. School
3. Gilbert
4. 1871
5. Swithland Hall
6. Dick Turpin and Black Bess
7. Christ Church & St Peter's School
8. Parish Rooms, School, Mechanic's Institute and Reading Room
9. William Marshal, Earl of Pembroke
10. 134 years (2021)

## Dates Quiz

**Apologies the formatting of the location clues went a bit adrift in the questions marked with an asterisk**

1. Wall of the Constitutional Club, now Castle View Nursery
2. The Swan (The Theakstons Brewery sign)
3. Set into the wall on the west side of the junction of Crown Lane/Loughborough Road
4. Gates of the former MGC Laboratory and Offices
5. Former St Peter's Parish Rooms now a private house
6. Private house by Stonehurst Farm
7. The former Anchor Inn now a Care Home
- 8.\* The former Poor Boys school on the Navins
- 9.\* In Christ Church Lych Gate – Memorial stone to Rev. Shakespeare
10. Private house opposite the school
11. Private House Close to Bargain Booze
12. Last house alongside Alpine house Surgery
13. Danvers Rd on the right as you walk down
14. Danvers Rd on the left as you walk down.
- 15.\* Danvers Road at the bottom on the right as you walk down
16. Castle Gardens by the Knight statue
- 17.\* Castle Gardens by the Leicester Road gate
18. The former Methodist Chapel on Leicester Road
19. Set into the wall at the junction of Barons Way and Leicester Road
20. On the new housing by the junction of Barons Way and Leicester Road