



# MHG NEWSLETTER

No 52

## Group Notes and News

### Monthly Talks

Our next Monthly Talk at the Mountsorrel Memorial Centre will be

#### **Wildlife in a Mountsorrel Garden – What you might find and how to observe it**

The talk, given by Jeremy Robson, will be on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> May commencing at 7:30pm.

Members £3 Non-Members £4

Mountsorrel Heritage Group  
**Wildlife in a Mountsorrel Garden**  
**– What you might find and how to observe it**  
 A talk by Jeremy Robson  
 Mountsorrel Memorial Centre  
 Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> May 7:30pm  
 Members £3 non-Members £4

### HM Queen’s Platinum Jubilee

We have a small display planned to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee and would welcome the loan of any Jubilee Artefacts that Members may have or photographs of previous Jubilee events here in the village. The display will be in two sections, a small photographic and information display in the Memorial Centre Foyer and a similar display along with Jubilee artefacts in the Museum. If you are able to loan us items for display, please leave them at the Museum during our usual opening times (Thursday and Friday afternoons and Saturday Mornings) along with a note of your name and address in order that we can return the items afterwards. Similarly photographs of Jubilee Events here in the village can be left with us for copying and later return or scans can be sent to [johncdoyle@outlook.com](mailto:johncdoyle@outlook.com) Thank You!

### Revival – 14<sup>th</sup> August

We are starting to plan our stall and the Museum opening for Revival and are looking for some help from Members (please!). We are going to have our now infamous “Wine or Water” stall and Pat Neal is seeking some assistance in filling the water bottles. Bottle filling will be done at the Museum on afternoon of Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August. Please contact Pat if you are able to help – Thank you.

## Recent Donations

Recent donations for the Museum and the Archive include:

A copy of the Mountsorrel Coronation Day Programme - this will form part of our planned Platinum Jubilee display.

A Short Cross silver penny found in a member's garden on Rothley Road – this will be on display in the Museum when we have found a suitable secure methodology for display.

## The Short Cross Silver Penny

The penny, in its many forms, has been the standard everyday coin in use in England from Anglo-Saxon times right up to today. The Short Cross Penny was only issued for some 67 years from 1180 in the reign of King Henry II (1154-89) until 1247 in the reign of King Henry III (1216-72). An “interesting” period in our village's history as it coincides with the building of the Castle, the Baron's Wars with both King John and King Henry III, the siege and subsequent destruction of the castle.

The penny we now have shows some damage and at only 18mm across is proving quite difficult to photograph adequately



## Test Pit Dig – Watling St

An Archaeological Test Pit was dug in a garden on Watling St on 28<sup>th</sup> April. Sadly the diggers only got down to the fourth level before hitting a dense clay base and we made the decision to infill. There were a few shards of pottery found, these are currently being properly examined and we will report more on them next month. This was a disappointing result for both diggers and the garden owner as Watling St is part of the village ancient core and has potential to reveal more about our forebears in the village.



*Studied concentration as the turf is cut*

*Meanwhile the rest of the team look on and drink tea!*

## Who was “Albert”?

Ten years ago this spring, LaFarge, the then owners of the quarry, opened the permissive path over Broad Hill and placed at the summit a sculpture of a quarryman working on a sett. At the time there was great discussion as to who “Albert” really was, a question that was never satisfactorily resolved.

The sculpture was cut by Graeme Mitcheson MRSS, a sculptor based in Coleorton who lived in the village whilst at College. The basis for the work was a photograph of a sett maker taken in Broad Hill Quarry in the 1890s.

### Carving out a tribute to quarrying industry

A SCULPTOR is crafting a memorial to mark 250 years of quarrying in a village. Graeme Mitcheson, of Castle Donington, is putting the finishing touches to the giant stonework, which he is chiselling from Mountsorrel granite.

The artist has spent the past month in his studio in Coleorton turning the lump of rock into a representation of a Victorian quarryman.

It will form a lasting legacy at Mountsorrel Quarry, which is marking the anniversary with a series of open days next month.

Graeme, 39, who lived in Mountsorrel during his time as an art student at Loughborough University, said: “I have fond memories of Mountsorrel, both the village and the quarry.

“When I was an art student my friends and I used to go up to the wood at the quarry to make tree sculptures.

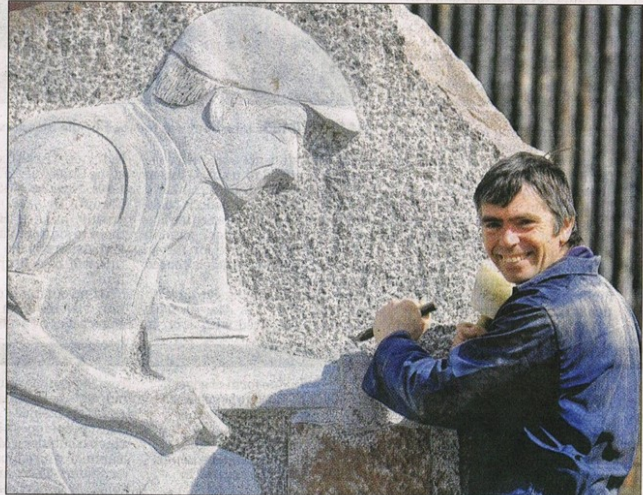
“I’ve really enjoyed the work, although I had forgotten how difficult granite is to carve. “I broke two chisels in the first 10 minutes.

#### IMPORTANT

“I hope that people who get to see Albert – as he has been named – will be impressed and will take a moment to think how the quarry has played an important part in the community for more than 250 years.”

The work was commissioned by Lafarge Aggregates, which operates the quarry.

For details of the upcoming open days, visit: [www.mountsorrelquarry.com](http://www.mountsorrelquarry.com)



PICTURE: BETH WALSH / LEBW20120424C-683

CRAFTSMAN: Graeme Mitcheson works on his granite sculpture of a Victorian quarryman

*Leicester Mercury 25 April 2012*



Many people will have seen Albert but how many have found the lizard? (It’s somewhere on the stone).



## Civilian Bravery Awards

We have a good number of men who served in the Great War who received awards for bravery in battle, but we also have two (that we know of – are there more?) who were recognised for acts of bravery in civilian life here in the village, Mark Billson and Albert Seaton.

### Mark Billson

Born in 1874, Mark was the son of Joseph and Mary Billson who ran the Griffin Inn in Market Place (now the Buttermarket Off-licence). Mark seems to have been a natural sportsman and was involved from an early age in athletics, boxing, swimming, cricket and in particular, football.

Late on the afternoon of Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> July 1894 two young boys were seen in difficulties swimming in the river. Another boy ran to get help and Mark Billson and Herbert Burton ran up and jumped in to try and save the boys however one, Herbert Hardy, aged 7 died.

The following Monday the Inquest was held at the Mechanic's Institute (now the Parish Rooms) and the Deputy Coroner, Mr A D Bartlett examined the witnesses. Joseph Hawkins, the 7 year old son of a coachman living near the Market Place said that he had seen Herbert Hardy and Arthur Thornton playing on the tow path and then stripping off and jumping in the river for a swim. He then saw that they were in difficulties and William Green, who was with him, ran for help.

The survivor, Arthur Thornton, said that they had bathed there before and that they got some rushes, tied them in a ring and lay on top of them. This time however they got out of there depth, he said he tried to get hold of Hardy but could not and they both went down.

Herbert Burton, a quarryman, said that when he got to the riverbank, he saw a boys head come to the surface and he jumped in but the boy went down again before he could reach him. He eventually found him three or four yards from the tow path where he could just stand and pulled him out. He tried artificial respiration but to no avail.

Meanwhile Mark Billson had also jumped in and managed to get hold of Thornton and pull him to the bank only just alive. Dr. Skipworth, the village Doctor, arrived and saw to the recovery of Thornton but declared Hardy dead, he was later buried in Christ Church churchyard.



*The Belgrave Cyclists Club visiting the Griffin 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*

The Jury returned a verdict of Accidentally Drowned and both Mark Billson and Herbert Burton were commended for their actions. The Deputy Coroner later wrote to the Royal Humane Society to arrange a commendation for Billson.

Mark Billson went on to run the Griffin on the death of his father and later moved to run the Eclipse Vaults in Leicester's East Gates. He continued his sporting connections becoming a county football referee and Chairman of the County Football Association.

### **Albert Theodore Seaton**

In 1912 Albert Theodore Seaton was 18 years old living at home on Danvers Road and assisting his father, Arthur, in his business as a local carrier and coal merchant.

On Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July, Harry Holmes, another village carrier was driving a heavy bay horse pulling a four-wheel dray out of the village towards Leicester with a lady passenger on the front seat. As they left the village the horse took fright at something in the road and Harry jumped off holding the reins to try and quieten the horse. This was unsuccessful and the horse reared around back towards the village and the reins snapped under the strain. The horse now galloped back to the village pulling the dray with the lady passenger hanging on and screaming for help.

Albert Seaton who was cycling out of the village saw the horse and dray galloping towards him and jumped off his bike and grabbed the horse's head as it passed him to try and hold and slow it down. As he did this Holmes's dog which had been running along by the horse tripped him and as he fell he was dragged along the road for several yards until he was caught by the wheels of the dray which ran over his legs. The horse was eventually stopped near the Buttermarket, its pace having been slowed by Seaton.

Seaton, with blood running from his arms and legs, was tended to at the roadside by Dr. Skipworth who had him carried home. Dr. Skipworth reports serious wounds on the right arm and right thigh and the left leg being heavily damaged above and below the knee where all the skin was torn away where he had been dragged along the road and the wounds being full of dirt. He lay at home dangerously ill for over a week as tetanus and lockjaw set in and Dr Skipworth arranged for a nurse to assist and also for a Specialist to visit.



***Albert Seaton***

His parents spent their savings of some £20 ensuring that he received proper medical attention but, as the incident did not qualify under the Workmen's Compensation Act, went into debt to support their son.

The Vicar of St Peter's, Rev. Lewis, supported by Dr. Skipworth and the Chief Constable, wrote to the Carnegie Hero Fund Trust about the case and Albert Seaton was awarded an Honorary Certificate and his name was inscribed in the Trust's Roll of Honour. More importantly, given the expense of his medical treatment, the Fund also sent a cheque for £30.

Albert did eventually fully recover and followed his father in running the carriers business and served in the Army in both 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> World Wars.

## **Once Upon a Time in Mountsorrel - May**

### **11<sup>th</sup> May 1816 - Leicester Chronicle**

Genteel neat and useful household furniture, gig and harness, horse, cow, brace of high bred greyhounds, brewing vessels etc, also five hundred volumes of books and other valuable effects, to be sold by auction by Mr. Brearey, on the premises of the late Mr. Whitehead, Surgeon, Mountsorrel, in the county of Leicester, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> days of May 1816 – the sale to commence each morning at ten o'clock.

This sale consists in part of one new-calved cow, gig and harness, a general assortment of kitchen requisites, brewing vessels, and dairy utensils, a variety of neat and genteel mahogany tables, chairs, window curtains etc several mahogany four-post and other bedsteads, a number of good feather beds, large blankets and counterpanes, and the necessary appendages to lodging rooms, a quantity of linen, three sets of tea china, silver tankard, spoons etc., a quantity of glass and sundry earthenware, double-barrell'd gun, duck gun, brace of pistols and a multiplicity of other valuable property.

Also, five hundred volumes of books, many are old and scarce, amongst which are some valuable medical and surgical publications.

Catalogues to be had at the premises; the Crown Inn Mountsorrel; at Rothley House; Cross keys, Loughborough; and of Mr. Brearey, Derby

### **29<sup>th</sup> May 1824 - Northampton Mercury**

Deaths – Yesterday se'ennight, at Quorndon, deeply regretted by his friends, Mr. Thomas Owen, of the Unitarian Chapels at Loughborough and Mountsorrell.

### **24<sup>th</sup> May 1833 – Leicester Journal**

To Hosiers, Framesmiths and Others, To Be Sold By Auction by G. Gamble, On Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1833, at the White Swan Inn, Mountsorrel in the County of Leicester. 50 Plain and Ribbed Stocking-Frames, of various widths and gauges, the property of the late, Mr G Woollerton, of Mountsorrel. Sale to commence at Two o'clock in the afternoon. An on Tuesday June 1<sup>st</sup>, will be sold by auction, on the premises of the said Mr Woollerton, Mountsorrel, all the household furniture and effects. Sale to commence at ten o'clock

### **18<sup>th</sup> May 1838 – Nottingham Review and General Advertiser for the Midland Counties**

William Place, beerhouse-keeper of Mountsorrel, was charged by Moses Pegg with selling ale before one o'clock on Sunday week. A decrepid *old man* (although a *young* "vagabond") named Thomas Jacobs, said that he went to the house about half-past seven, and was served with some ale by a little boy.

Mr Jackson (on the part of the defendant) produces the servant-girl (Mary Lowe) and grandson of the defendant, both of whom swore most positively that no ale was drawn on the morning in question.

Pegg (finding that the game was going against him) insolently told Mr Danvers (with whom was Colonel Cheney) that he was putting words into the grandson's mouth, for which Mr D. sharply reprimanded him, at the same time agreeing with Colonel Cheney and Mr Jackson, that a boy like the grandson was a far preferable witness to an adult in many instances.

Mr Danvers then asked the Colonel what he thought of the case, to which the latter replied that he had no hesitation in saying that he preferred the evidence of the defendant's witnesses to that of the "poor haggard old informer" produced by Pegg.

Mr Danvers cordially agreeing with the Colonel (Mr. Dudley fortunately being absent), the case was dismissed. Pegg, who "grinned horribly a ghastly smile" being ordered to pay the costs.

### **26<sup>th</sup> May 1843 – Leicester Journal**

Sudden Death – An inquest was held on Wednesday, at Mountsorrel, before J. Gregory, gent, coroner, on the body of Thomas Figures, aged 79, who died suddenly of a disease of the heart, in the hall of the Barrow Union Workhouse, while waiting for relief. Verdict – "Visitation of God".

### **23<sup>rd</sup> May 1845 – Leicester Journal**

Mathew Newbold was charged with assaulting his wife, Sophia Newbold, of Mountsorrel, in January last. The complainant is mother of the child which was so brutally treated at Mountsorrel some time ago, by a man with whom she was living in adultery. The Magistrates, considering great provocation had been given, admonished defendant, and merely ordered him to pay costs, from which they afterwards liberated him; and the constables expenses were paid out of the magistrates' fund.

### **24<sup>th</sup> May 1861 - Leicester Journal**

Barrow-upon-Soar Union – The following are the census returns for this Union:

Whether Parish, Township or Liberty etc	Population in 1851	Population in 1861
Mountsorrel, North, in Barrow Township	802	857
Mountsorrel, South, in Rothley Township	795	896

### **30 May 1863 - Leicestershire Mercury**

A great temperance demonstration was made at Mountsorrel on Monday, to which no fewer than 2700 went by special train from Leicester, and intermediate places. The Mountsorrel granite hills assumed a very lively appearance by such a vast concourse of visitors, and the depressed state of our commerce seemed for a time, at least, entirely forgotten. The immense masses were supplied with tea on the premises of Mr Cuffling, who has always taken a great interest in the temperance movement.

## **Leicester Evening Mail 13 May 1935**

### **Mountsorrel “Queen” Chosen for Whitsuntide Parade**

At a dance organised by the Hospitals Committee to provide a second Mountsorrel cot at Leicester Royal Infirmary, Miss Mary Sharman was chosen as the Queen for the annual Whit Tuesday fancy dress parade at Mountsorrel. Her maids of honour will be Miss Ethel Preston, Miss Freda Butherway, Miss Elsa Lovett, Miss Esme Underwood, Miss Lily Barker and Miss Norah Cresswell.

## **Leicester Evening Mail 10 May 1935**

### **Land From Quorn – Mountsorrel Boundary Extension**

The application of Mountsorrel Parish Council for the transfer of an area of land containing their cemetery and sewage works, situated at the south end of Quorn Parish, is now to be considered by the Barrow-upon-Soar Rural District Council.

The R.D.C. General Purposes Committee, to which the representatives of both parishes are to be co-opted, have been instructed to carry out the negotiations for the transfer. The Quorn representatives have already expressed a willingness to make the transfer

## **Wildlife**

### **Wildflower Meadow**

The Wildflower Meadow that the Group has developed at the foot of the Navins continues to surprise us every year. In previous springs we have had an increasingly good show of primroses but this year there has been a mass of self-seeded Cowslips and False Oxlips. The Snake’s-Head Fritillaries that we first sowed two years ago now seem to be establishing with small groups of self-seeded flowers now appearing. With the dry April this year the fritillaries haven’t stayed in flower long but are again setting seed.



***Navins Wildflower Meadow 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2022***