



MHG NEWSLETTER

No 53

Talk at the Mountsorrel Memorial Centre at 7.30.

Tuesday 14th June

Members £3, non-members £4

John Ferneley a Leicestershire Artist

by

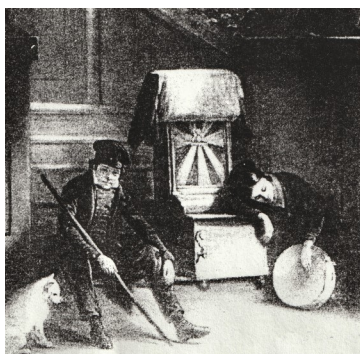
Derek Holloway



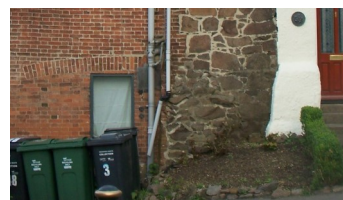
This painting of the Market Place in 1840 has been attributed to both John Ferneley and his daughter Sarah.

The pub sign of the White Swan is on the right and the White Swan itself is on the far right of the painting. The figure in the white apron looks like he might be the landlord, either Thomas Brown or Edward Hickling. Behind the pub sign this building is still there, No 38 Market Place. Next to No 38, although in Watling Street, this building was once two dwellings Number 40 and 42. They were demolished in around 1950. The site is now occupied by The Butter Market Café.

The three story building on the left with its very recognisable windows is still there. On the gable end of this building is what looks like a shop, and you can see that this building and the one next to it are two separate buildings. Compare this with a modern photograph and you can see where the shop was, and where the two buildings have been joined with Mountsorrel granite.



This painting by John Ferneley is called 'Two children with a Hurdy Gurdy', the same instrument as the one seen in the Market Place painting. In fact the instrument is more likely to be a barrel organ.



Mountsorrel Methodists

Wesleyan Methodists

According to a newspaper article published in 1881 the first Wesleyan Methodist sermon was preached by a Mr Woodcock one Sunday afternoon in about 1770. It took place at the Old Cross, now in Swithland, and he was supported by a few friends from Barrow and Woodhouse. A crowd gathered and started shouting and talking but did not resort to violence. A toper, who had been indulging at a public-house, emerged with a full tankard, made his way through the crowd, and asked the preacher to drink. Mr. Woodcock, however, simply replied, "Go take it first to thy brother Dives to cool his parched tongue, and if he refuse it then bring it to me." *[The parable of Dives and Lazarus]*

This unexpected response at once turned the laugh against the bibulous obstructionist amid the derisive shouts of the bystanders. He lowered the frothy "pewter," and slunk away.

A few years later a barn belonging to Mr. Castledine, near the Quorndon end of Mountsorrel, was transformed into an unpretentious little chapel. It was here, now Stonehurst Farm, where Wesley preached when he came to Mountsorrel in 1783 (and preached in the rain which lasted for 48 hours) and 1786 (not one drunken person in the congregation). The Methodists continued to worship here until 1810

On the 30th November 1810 a license for a dissenters' meeting house in Mountsorrel was applied for by Francis West, William Snow, Simeon Brewin and Benjamin Fowkes. The building was described as "a certain newly erected building called and known by the name of Methodist Chapel" It was certified on 22nd December 1810. It was on the Loughborough Road near to what is now Hugh Lupus Court.

The chapel would have been in the 'Loughborough Circuit' and one of the local preachers in the Circuit, Robert Pearson Jacques, thought that there was too much authority and power in the hands of the preachers and so, in 1836, he opened his own chapel in Mountsorrel next door to where he came to live, at 28 Market Place. He later joined the Association Wesleyan Methodists in the Leicester Circuit. Shortly before he died in April 1847 he sold the chapel to the Association and they reported in their March 1847 magazine that *the chapel is filled to overflowing; even on a week-night, wherever standing room could be obtained, it was quickly occupied; every step of the pulpit stairs was filled, and many went away that could not possibly gain admission.* The Association extended the chapel and it was reopened on 18 April 1847, the day Robert died.

Both chapels thrived. In the 1851 census of religious worship in Mountsorrel on March 31st of that year the recorded total attendances of the two Sunday services were:

Wesleyan Methodist [Loughborough Road]:180
Wesleyan Association Methodists [Market Place]: 190
Primitive Methodists:90
St Peter's Church:120
Christ Church:81

It is not known when the chapel in Market Place ceased to be used for worship but it was after used as a dwelling and finally demolished in the 1950s.

The Loughborough Road chapel, by 1860, was raising money for alterations, and by 1881, it was not large enough for their increased congregation and to raise funds for a new building they put on a lecture on "The physiology of digestion, and the action of alcohol on the human system."

The chapel was directly against the quarry bridge which crossed the main road. The Mountsorrel Granite Company (MGC) wanted to demolish the chapel and widen the bridge and the Methodists wanted to build a new chapel.



The Old Cross



**Wesleyan Methodist Chapel
Loughborough Road**

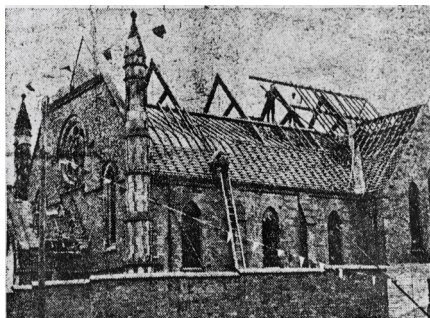


**Wesleyan Methodist Association
Chapel Market Place**

Wesleyan Methodists

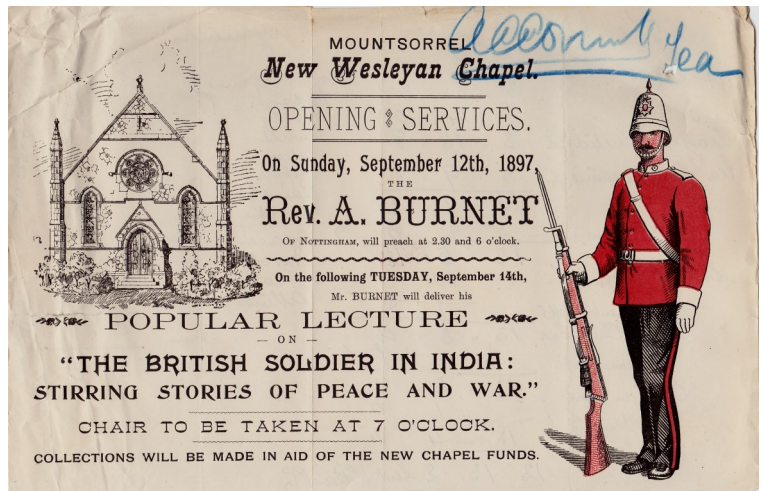
In September 1895 the trustees agreed to sell on condition they were paid £1500 for the chapel and ground, that a covenant was included to prevent desecration of the graves, and that the MGC provided a site for the new chapel. Regarding the selling price the reply from the quarry manager, Robert Martin, was *'the figure is so largely in excess of anything we have considered I fear no good would come from continuing the negotiation'*. On June 11th 1896 the trustees agreed to sell for £733.

Alderman William Smith of Accrington a native of Mountsorrel provided a site for the new chapel and school a few yards from the old chapel and near to the Red Lion coffee house. The new chapel was built to accommodate a congregation of 350 at a cost of £2237. A schoolroom to seat 200 was built at the back of the chapel.



Demolition of the 1897 Chapel

Many years later the Wesleyan, Primitive and United Free Methodists in Mountsorrel united and built a new chapel in Church Hill Road. When the 1897 chapel was demolished in 1972 the new Methodist Church was already in use.



1897 Wesleyan Chapel

United Free Methodists

Shortly after the split into Wesleyans and Association Wesleyans there were further divisions. About 1840 a small branch was thrown off, and it became known as the Christian Methodists and some years after there was another severance. Both of these later united and called themselves the Free United Methodists and built their own chapel in Leicester Road, which opened in 1864

It closed in 1963 and was used by the football club for changing rooms.

It was then sold on in 1985 and became the offices of Vision Projects



Interior of United Methodist Chapel



United Methodist Chapel
Leicester Road

Primitive Methodists

The first primitive Methodist Chapel was built in 1848 in Watling Street. During the service on the Sunday evening of September 15th 1895 the St John Ambulance Association was called to carry home the body of Mrs Marriot who died in the old Primitive Chapel in Watling Street

In 1897 a new chapel was built on the corner of Crown lane , one of four in the Sileby circuit. But the new chapel was no improvement on the old one as regards sudden deaths. In 1905 another death occurred as reported by the local paper 'At the Primitive Methodist Chapel on Sunday evening the service was brought to an abrupt termination by the death of Mr Walter Barrs. The body was conveyed home on an ambulance stretcher.'

In the 1950s it became the Central Methodist Church having lost its Primitive status and became part of the Methodist Church. It moved from the Sileby circuit to the Loughborough circuit.

Around this time the three Methodist churches [Wesleyan, United Methodist and Central Methodist] combined their congregations and assembled for worship on Sunday mornings using each church once every three weeks in rotation.

The three Methodist societies amalgamated and in January 1963 the United Methodist and the Central Methodist chapels were closed leaving just the Wesleyan Chapel, until the new Methodist church was built in Church Hill Road.



Primitive Methodist Chapel Watling Street



**Primitive Methodist Chapel
Loughborough Road**

Free Church Councils

In 1895 a network of Free Church Councils was set up across the country. This was a coming together of non conformists, including Methodists, with a more political and educational agenda. In 1908 the Mountsorrel Free Church Council purchased the Robin Hood pub in Leicester road, which had been closed down some years earlier by the magistrates. The council intended to use the building for young men of the village to hold debating classes and other activities. A library and a reading room were also to be provided. Together with adjacent buildings it was demolished in the 1960s and replaced by the Leicester Road flats.



**Mountsorrel Free Church Council
Leicester Road**



Methodist Church

The new Methodist Church was opened in 1970. It cost £28,000 and the photo shows the 18 ft glass fibre spire being lifted into place, assisted by the minister the Rev. Norman Peck. Few Methodist churches have spires and Mr Peck believes this is because they are usually associated with the Church of England. 'The fact our new building is to be called a church and not a chapel and the spire illustrate two religious units are moving together' he said.



**Methodist Church
Church Hill Road** that the

87 CROSS LANE

Margaret Manning, one of our longest-serving members has provided material about 87 Cross Lane – the house her parents moved into when they married.

Nowadays, Cross Lane runs from Rothley Road to Walton Way where it then becomes West Cross Lane, but previously it ran from Rothley Road to the junction with the Ridings and was mostly surrounded by fields. It was also in the parish of Rothley though that changed in the 1970s when the boundary moved to Walton Way.

Margaret's parents – Frank and Phyllis Burton – moved into number 87 when they married. The house was – and still is – one of a pair of semi-detached houses that were built in 1934.

Although the two houses are now incorporated into the rest of the housing on Cross Lane, back in the 1930s and 40s they stood alone, with John Baum's market garden to the east and fields to the west. Also at that time, Cross Lane was actually called Waugh's (pronounced Woff's) Lane [believed to be the name of a local farmer], a historical fact which is reflected in the naming of one of the roads on the newer development just off Castle Road.

The nearest neighbour to the east was a builder called Mr. Coltman who lived at number 73 and to the west it was number 123 which is now 1 West Cross Lane. Opposite number 87 were fields owned by Rothley farmer, Jack Wright and offered a view of the top end of Rothley. Fields were also to the rear of 87 so it was quite an isolated spot. The adjoining house, number 85 was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Bunney and their son, Don who was a playmate of Margaret's.

The house had two downstairs rooms and a kitchen with a pantry. The back door was on the side of the house and opened onto a passage which had a toilet and coal-house to one side. The back room had patio doors leading to the garden which was a fair size and was partly lawned. The front room had a pleasant view over the fields and the lane itself. Upstairs were two large bedrooms and a smaller one, plus a bathroom. All the utility services had been laid but although mains water and gas had been connected, the electricity hadn't – and wouldn't be till 1938, which meant that the family had to use hurricane lamps to light the house!

Most of the houses which have since filled in the gaps on Cross Lane were built in the 1950s and 60s. It's remarkable that the house numbers were never changed, so someone must have known, even all those years ago, that Cross Lane wouldn't remain isolated for many more years!

(Thanks to Margaret Manning for the information about number 87 Cross Lane).



87 Cross Lane



**Home Guard 1941
Frank Burton and
Margaret, age 3**

My War

by

Kathleen Mackie

Kathleen, who was born in January 1928, now lives on The Green and this is her story as told to Mary Geary.

I was eleven when war broke out and seventeen when it ended.

My home was Pooks Green Marchwood on the edge of the New Forest, close to Fawley oil refinery, Southampton docks and Southampton Water and Flying Boats.

In our house we had a large wooden radio with fancy cut-outs on the front. It had an accumulator with it which had to be taken every Saturday to the local garage to be recharged. It was only switched on once a day for the news. It was at 11 am on the 3rd September when the plaintive voice of the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, announced that the nation was at war.

Father dug a dugout, deep with supported sides, a door and a mud roof. We went in at night when a raid was on. One night a bomb was dropped nearby, trying to hit the Fawley to Southampton railway line. We were safe asleep in our dugout.

Close by was a pretty Norman church which was hit by an incendiary bomb. It burst into flames. The incendiary was bomb shaped with a fin on it. My father would go out every night looking for them.

A farm at the bottom of our lane was taken over by soldiers with anti-aircraft guns.

The enormous food store for the area got a direct hit. The store contained butter. It took a week to burn. Fortunately the ammunition dump in Magazine Lane never got hit.

Most frightening of all were the buzz bombs. When the noise stopped they dropped. I was standing at my bedroom window when one exploded. I dived under the bedclothes and saved my life. Our windows were damaged and the trees had all the bark stripped off, giving them the appearance of poles.

Petrol was rationed, if you could get it. My friend Margaret's father had petrol buried in cans under the coal in the coal shed.

As D-Day approached the American GIs appeared ready for the invasion. One GI warned me to get away from the area but could not tell me why.

After the war I enrolled as a student nurse at the Royal Hants County Hospital in Winchester. Florence Nightingale had chosen the site. By this time I was 18.

One day walking with a group of nurses a gentleman asked us for directions to the hospital. It turned out to be the renowned burns surgeon [the airman's surgeon] who worked on many cases-Mr McIndoe

The war was over, we had peace at last. I had attended grammar school, survived the bombs and started my nursing career. I was alive.

Southampton was the seventh heaviest bombed city in Britain. It was considered an obvious target; it was Britain's Number One Military Port, and the home of Spitfire production

Wildlife

Navins Wildflower Meadow

The mass of Cowslips that we saw through to the end of April are now gone over and the larger flowers and grasses are developing fast with clumps of Ragged Robin and Red Clover being the most noticeable at present although it looks as if there will be a good show of Ox-Eye Daisies once the sun comes back out and things really warm up again.

Nearby on Cufflin's Pit Lane there was a mass show of Cow Parsley in mid May which in the early evening sun was really striking.



Birds and Butterflies

For the first time for several years a Cuckoo was heard calling over Broad Hill although it may only have been passing through, but what we have got is a reliable pair of Song Thrushes that sing in the early evening and of course the annual visiting Chiffhaffs. What is noticeable by their absence, at least in the numbers we have seen in the past, are Swifts, Swallows House and Sand Martins. There a few about but numbers are really down on what we expect.

On a more positive note the Spring has been good locally for butterflies with notable numbers of Holly Blue being seen.