



MHG NEWSLETTER

No 56

Group News

Revival 2022

Thank you to everyone who supported our stalls and visited the Museum at Revival. A long and tiring day for the Team but well worth the effort. Our thanks to Mountsorrel Community Team for the huge amount of work that went into organising a brilliant day.

MCT's photos of Revival are at <http://the-mct.co.uk/revival-2022>



Revival 2022

MHG Stalls and The "Three Wise Men" of MHG keeping in the shade and staying hydrated

September Talk

Our next Talk will be given by Mel Gould at Mountsorrel Memorial Centre on Tuesday 13th September starting at 7:30pm. Members £3, non-members £4

That Fateful Night – The Zeppelin Raid on Loughborough

31st January 1916



Football

Those of you who follow our Facebook page will be aware that we are working alongside Scott Green of Mountsorrel Amateurs FC on building up an archive of the village's footballing past, so have you got photos, newspaper cuttings or other memorabilia tucked away about former players from the village's various teams? If so, both Scott and ourselves would be really interested in getting copies.

Farming

The name Mountsorrel will conjure up thoughts of quarrying, the castle, framework-knitters, Rolls Royce and perhaps the boot and shoe trade but it was also important agriculturally and the site of several farms. One of these was Home Farm, originally the Crown Inn on the corner of Crown Lane and Loughborough Road. The tenancy of the farm, which was owned by Lord Lanesborough, was taken in 1905 by William Pepper Jr. He also had Buddon Wood Farm (now lost with the development of Buddon Wood Quarry) and had grazing land by the river along Betty Henser's Lane. As the Home Farm site was quite limited due to the expansion of the quarry behind the farm, he concentrated his work there on breeding Shire horses and large pedigree pigs. He held the tenancies until 1948 when he retired, and the farm equipment and land put up for sale. The farmhouse is now a private house and the immediate farmland is the site of The Homestead

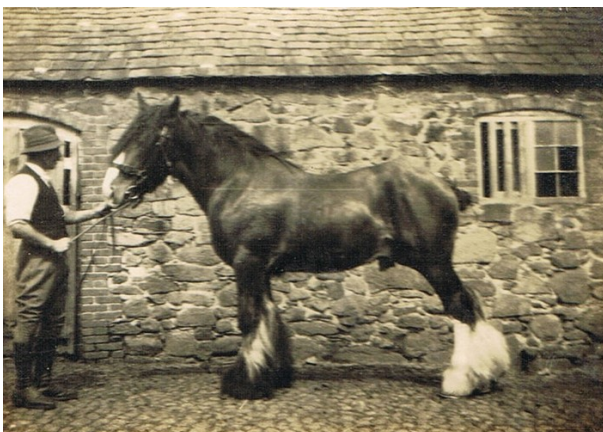


Home Farm c1960



The farmyard c 1930

Throughout the 1920s and 30s William Pepper Jr., showed his horses at the local shows, in particular the Melton Mowbray Horse Shows and the Kingston & District Horse Society Shows at which he won prizes. He also sold horses at the Melton Horse Sales in the same period. In the 1930s as trade slowly recovered from the Great War and the 1920's Depression, specialist shows again started up including the Grantham Pig Club, which in 1932 held it's first show since 1913. By now William Pepper acted as a judge rather than showing his animals.



Home Farm c1925—Shire Horse being prepared for showing and the prize breeding sow

Bells of Mountsorrel

Introduction – An Overview of the History of Bells and Bell-ringing in England

The earliest bells started to appear some 4000 years ago as metal working developed in China. Connected from the start with religion their use also spread as a means of conveying messages and marking the passage of time. The early Christian missionaries are known to have used handbells to call people to worship and by 400AD they were being used in churches in Europe and by 680AD there were bells here in England at the Abbeys of Wearmouth and Whitby.



During the early Middle Ages bells were hung on a simple spindle and chimed by Deacons pulling a rope but by the mid-1400s there were developments using a quarter and then a half wheel with the spindle as an axle and the rope attached to the rim.

The Reformation and in particular the dissolution of the Abbeys and Monasteries set back the development of bells and ringing but as life settled after that and despite the upheavals of the subsequent Civil War, churches once more started to rehang their bells and moved to the use of a whole wheel mounting. This was further developed with the use of a slider and “stay” allowing a bell to be “set” and the ringer to rotate the bell 360 degrees and stop and start ringing with ease.



St Peter's model of a bell in the down position with the "stay" upright



St Peter's model of a bell in the ringing position with the "stay" against the slider

This level of control allowed the development of change-ringing in which the bells are first rung 'up', with the angle of swing gradually increased until the bell is swinging full circle and it can be balanced mouth upwards on the stay - known as being 'set'. The bell ringers, then pull the bell at each 'stroke' to make it rotate again for another full circle swing. Each time the bell ringer pulls the rope the bell swings and sounds. The ringers then alternate the pattern of their strokes to produce a particular pattern of sound. The bells of St Peter's here in Mountsorrel are rung in this manner

Bells of Mountsorrel

Part 1 – The Chapels of St John the Baptist (now St Peter’s Church) and St Nicholas

In the early Middle Ages there were two chapels in Mountsorrel, St John the Baptist, founded c1240 (this is now St Peter’s church) and the Chapel of St Nicholas, founded possibly somewhat later but was certainly in existence by 1344. St Nichols’s chapel is now lost but was sited on Castle Hill either adjacent to, or possibly under, what are now the two private houses, 2 and 4 Castle Hill. The existence of two chapels reflects the historic division of Mountsorrel between the parishes of Barrow upon Soar and Rothley, controlled by the Earl of Chester and the Earl of Leicester. There is evidence that both chapels had bells as would be normal for a medieval church or chapel.

In the tower at St Peter’s is an opening (now hidden by a Victorian era ceiling) looking down into the original chapel space and may have been associated with the need to ring bells at a particular point in a service such as the ringing of the *Sanctus* bell prior to communion.

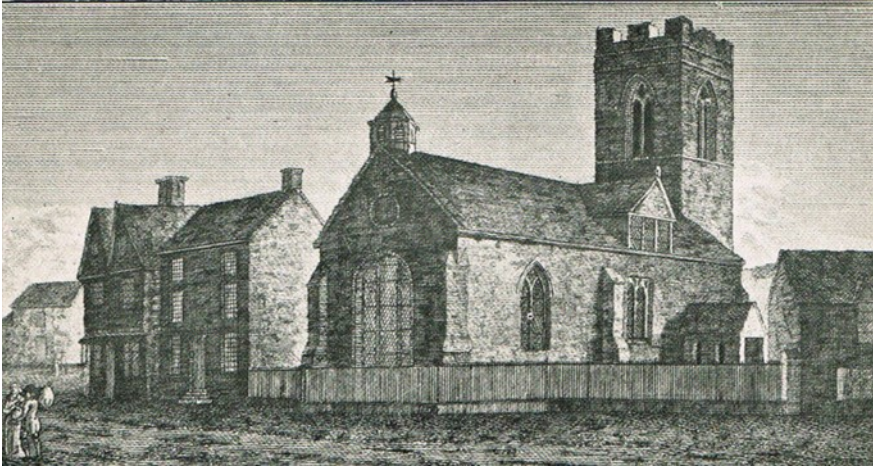
The first documentary evidence for the bells at St John the Baptist’s is the survey undertaken on 1st August 1552 of *“all the goodes, plates, juels, and ornaments of everye church and chappell within the west parte of the Hundred of Goscott”*. This survey was undertaken on the orders of King Edward VI’s Council to enforce the Reformation of the church, but also to raise cash by identifying items that could be seized and sold.



*St Peter’s – tower opening into the body
of the church*

Along with items associated with pre-reformation services the survey also listed *“seven little bells in the steeple ther.”* The use of the word steeple in this context meant tower and not a spire which would be noted as a spire or broach. At St Nicholas’s the same survey noted *“a sacringe bell, a hand-bell, a saunce bell, wythe other tow bygger belles in the steeple.”* All these disappeared as did St Nicholas’s under some rather questionable trading arrangements during the reign of Elizabeth I (see the article “The Concealers” in Newsletter 20 available on the website at: <http://moundsorrelarchive.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Newsletter-No-20-July-2019.pdf> .)

What became of the “seven little bells” at St Peter’s is not known but much of the chapel was enlarged in the mid-1400s and gained a bellcote at the eastern end where, presumably, a Sanctus bell was hung. This will have become redundant with both the effect of the Reformation and the significant re-ordering of the structure of the chapel started in 1795.



St Peter's (then the North End Chapel or "Old Church") 1792

The bellcote is shown in the engraving dated 1792 in John Nichols' *"The history and antiquities of the county of Leicester"* (published in eight volumes between 1797 and 1815). In the same work he states that there were three bells in the tower.

It is possible that the bell from the bellcote was that referred to in entries in the Church Wardens' books of 1836 which note that following a Bishop's Visitation a bell that was out of use and damaged was to be disposed of and the proceeds to be used for church purposes. It was eventually sold to a Mr John Larrad, a machine maker of Leicester, for £3. 10s (170 lb at 5d per lb). The three bells in the tower were inscribed:

- God Save His Church 1614 R Smalley R Hood Wardens
- IHS : NAZARENVS REX : IVDEORVM : FILI ; DEI MISERERE : MEI 1627
- T MEARS OF LONDIN FECIT John Spicer Thomas Brierly Churchwardens 1813

In 1860 the chapel, which was by then known variously as "the old church, "North-End Chapel" and occasionally as "St Peter's", became an independent benefice with the chapel curate Rev. Thomas Pruen becoming Vicar. He and his successors set about improving the fabric of the church which had, prior to an initial refurbishment started in 1794, been much neglected. In 1881 Rev. Pruen's successor, Rev T. Drake, started to raise funds to rehang and increase the number of bells to enable change ringing. This proved a challenging project, and it took some two years to achieve his aim. His fundraising included a bazaar which The Leicester Journal of 15 September 1882 reported on. At this, Mr Robert Frewen Martin, founder of the Mountsorrel Granite Company, then living at The Poplars on Watling St., and a Church Warden at St Peter's, recounted that "Mountsorrel once had a peal of bells, and that a member of the Danvers family offered a peal to Mountsorrel but by some mishap it went to Swithland instead".

In 1759 Sir John Danvers purchased an orchard at the rear of St Peter's to extend the very small burial ground and save families from having to take their dead to either Quorn or Rothley for burial. He appears to have balanced out his support of his tenant villages by now providing bells to St Leonards at Swithland, where their bells are all, save one that was recast later, dated 1760 and inscribed as being a gift of Sir John Danvers.

The bazaar did the trick raising £240 which was sufficient for an order to be placed with Taylor's of Loughborough and on 20th January 1883 the new ring of six bells were dedicated and ringers from Long Eaton gave a demonstration of change ringing. With the space in the tower being very restricted the increase in bells required the building of a second frame within the tower to hold the bells, with two bells in the upper frame and four on the lower.



It is thought that St Peter's also acquired a set of 6 handbells at this time which would assist in the training of ringers on the main peal. A further two handbells were donated in 1912 when the main peal was augmented to 8 bells. These last two handbells were given by Rev H Drake the son of Rev. T Drake who was the Vicar in 1881.

With a peal of six bells a band of ringers were formed who, under the leadership of Tom Collins, took seriously the challenges of change ringing and gained notable proficiency as is recorded by boards in the tower.

By 1910 the regular use of the bells was starting to affect the wooden framework, part of which must have dated from at least the early 17th century, in which they were hung. By the end of that year the frame was found to be in a really dangerous state and ringing was ceased whilst funds were raised for renovation work.



It was now realised that this problem also provided a major opportunity and fundraising resulted in not only new frames but an increase in peal to eight bells thanks in no small part to a donation from the Mountsorrel Granite Co. Surprisingly the work went not to Taylor's of Loughborough but to Gillett & Johnson of Croyden who seriously undercut Taylors estimate by offering the eight bells for the price of six.



The new peal of bells were hung on 24th May 1911 and dedicated at a service led by the Bishop of Leicester who also opened the newly enlarged schoolroom at St Peter's school at the same service. The first full peal took place a month later to mark the Coronation Day of King George V on 22nd June.

THE BACK SIX BELLS OF THIS RING OF EIGHT READY TO BE HUNG AFTER BEING RECAST FROM THE OLD SIX BY GILLET AND JOHNSON OF CROYDON 1911

W. SMITH (BELL FUND TREASURER) B. COLLINS. (TOWER CAPTAIN.) J. KIRCHIN.
 H. PERKINS. L. BOWLER. REV. J. W. LEWIS. (VICAR OF ST. PETERS.)
 G. BOWLER. W. W. JONES. (HEADMASTER ST. PETERS SCHOOL.) A. SMITH.

The new peal of eight bells hang in a two-tier frame, an "H" frame for 2, 4, 5 6 & 8, with bells 1, 3 & 7 in a grillage frame above. They weigh in total 1 ton 13cwt and 6lb with the Tenor Bell (that tolled at funerals) being the heaviest at 8cwt and 27lb.



The Seventh Bell

Despite the COVID related closures of the last two years the bells of St Peter's are once more in regular use for services and events and also sounding the hours of the day during daylight hours.

Part 2 of this article will follow in future Newsletters and cover the bell at Christ Church, the school bells and that of Church House, now the village Library.



St Peter's 2012 - Brian Johnson, Steeple Keeper, carrying out maintenance on the Seventh bell and stood between the bells on the lower frame

Wildlife

Fishing (Now and Then)

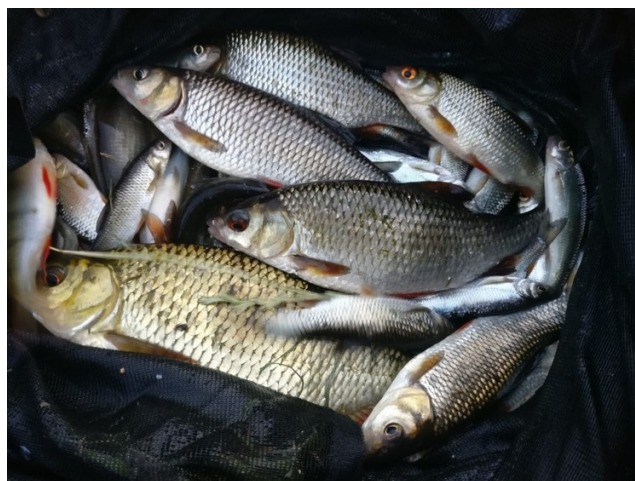
The river Soar is an important wildlife resource in the village supporting many creatures but mostly of course fish and as such provides our local anglers with many hours of enjoyment (and occasional frustration). The waters are home to a wide variety of fish as can be seen in these photos of a catch made recently by the 1860 bridge.



A Rudd caught in early July by the 1860 bridge. A surface feeder, the Rudd is coloured dark olive on its back and bronze/yellow below with reddish fins. Found in slow moving waters, it feeds on small insects, crustaceans and plant material.

A mixed keep net of small fish, again from by the 1860 bridge, namely Roach, Chubb, Perch, Dace, Bleak and some Little Rudd. All typical within this stretch of the river at this time of year.

Also present in the Soar are of course Pike and these have been fished here for many years.



4th February 1871 - Leicester Chronicle

Angling – Some of the members of the Barrow-on-Soar Angling Club, notwithstanding the late unfavourable state of the weather, met with some good sport. J. F. Scott, Esq., Mountsorrel, landed a fine pike weighing 7 lbs.; Mr William Jacques, one weighing 4 lbs.; Mr Charles Newbold, one of like weight, and another of 5 lbs., besides many others of 2 lbs. And 3 lbs. each. The river keeper, Mr Summerfield, seems to be vigilant in the discharge of his duties, and takes much pride in preserving sport for the members.

Although this is the Barrow-on-Soar Angling Club, the anglers named are all Mountsorrel men.

One fish not on the list is salmon which it seems has appeared here in the past.

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 1/2 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.”

The ability of the angler to fish with ease (and licence!) has not always been the case and landowners enforced their claims forcibly.

28 August 1812 Leicester Journal

Notice

Whereas the Game and Fish in the Lordships of Swithland, Thurcaston, and Mountsorrel, have of late years been much destroyed by persons sporting thereon without leave; all such persons are desired to desist for the future; other-wise prosecutions will be commenced against them according to the law. - Augustus Butler Danvers

For the non-angler the river does provide (occasionally!) views of fish as this photo from One-Man Bridge shows:



Grass Fire on Castle Hill – 14th August

Those who were around at Revival will have seen the extensive grass and scrub fire on Castle Hill from Watling St across to the Navins that afternoon and the rapid action by the Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service that doused it. The fire is thought to have been accidental and was a result of the extremely dry weather that we've experienced over the previous weeks. Whilst the fire burnt off a large area of natural habitat with the rain this last few days the area is already starting to slowly green over once again.



Castle Hill—grass fire 14th August (Photo courtesy of P. Hodson)

Once Upon A Time In Mountsorrel – September

21st September 1811 Northampton Mercury

Freehold Estates, Leicestershire, To Be Sold By Auction at the Bull's Head Inn, Loughborough, on Thursday, the 24th of October 1811, in Lots,

The following very valuable freehold estates:-

In Mountsorrel. Five Messuages, with good gardens fronting the street, and in Part adjoining the river, with two Parcels of excellent Pasture Ground immediately adjoining the Town, and a very valuable parcel of Ground in Rothley Field abutting the southern boundary of Mountsorrel and adjoining Leicester Road, in the occupation of J, Tyler, Joseph Snow and others.

5th September 1827 Leicester Herald

A very desirable freehold property at Mountsorrel (Seven miles to Leicester, and Four to Loughborough.) To be Sold or Let. A modern built dwelling house, late in the occupation of the Rev. A Jenour, consisting of two convenient sized parlours, kitchens, and other suitable offices on the ground floor; four excellent chambers and two attics; also a large orchard, well planted with fruit trees, in full bearing, and capital garden, through which there is a carriage drive from the public road to the house. The house stands in a pleasant, elevated situation, on the western side of the town of Mountsorrel, and is sheltered from the north-west, by the Mountsorrel Hills.

Possession can be given immediately. Application to be made to Mr. William Parsons, Architect and Surveyor, St Martin's, Leicester. N.B. If required, the purchaser may be accommodated with about 16 acres of land, in the immediate neighbourhood.

21st September 1832 Leicester Journal

To be Let or Sold by Private Contract, A valuable Wharf, situate in the middle of Mountsorrel, containing about 1717 Square Yards, with a frontage to the Leicester Navigation of 200 feet, now in the occupation of Mr. Jackson. This wharf is well situated for the Stone, Coal and Lime Trade etc., and well suited for business of a Fellmonger or Tanner. There is also adjoining the Wharf Eight Tenements, which may be let or sold if required.

Possession may be had at Michaelmas next – for particulars apply to Mr. Jackson, the occupier, or to Mr Jackson, Solicitor, Granby-place, Leicester.

Also, To Be Sold

At reduced prices, several Thousand Feet of Granite Stone in Curbs and Flags and Millstones of different dimensions for grinding Colours, Roman Cement etc., also a quantity of Granite Paring and other Stones, now lying on the above Wharf. For particulars apply to Mr Jackson of Mountsorrel.

22nd September 1843 Nottingham Review and General Advertiser for the Midland Counties

On Wednesday evening week, a lecture was delivered in the Independent Methodist Chapel, Mountsorrel, on the chemical and physiological bearings of the temperance question, by Mr. John Dyer, from Northampton. The lecture was illustrated by drawings of the human stomach, which Mr. D. explained with general satisfaction, to the very crowded and attentive audience.

28th September 1844 Leicestershire Mercury

James Cooper, apprentice to Mr Edward Crawford, brush maker, of Mountsorrel, was convicted of absconding from his master's employ, and committed to prison for six weeks.

16th September 1848 Leicestershire Mercury

Mountsorrel – The Potato Crops Persons are now busily employed in getting up their late crops, and we are glad to say that they are not so much affected with the disease as were the second earlies. They turn out abundantly, and although there may be many bad ones among them, the abundance of the produce will fully supply an average crop of good ones.

Note: 1845 -1848 were the worst years of the Potato Famine caused by blight that affected the whole of Europe leading to the era being called the Hungry Forties

29th September 1849 Leicestershire Mercury

On Saturday last a dog chased a flock of sheep on Mountsorrel Hills, and forced one of them into one of the granite quarries, which so much injured it, that Mr. Cuffling, the owner of the sheep, had it killed directly. The owner of the dog has since had it drowned.

2nd September 1939 Leicester Daily Mercury

Mountsorrel Parish Council. The Chairman (Mr WA Smith) presided at the monthly meeting of Mountsorrel Parish Council last night. The quotations of the Loughborough Gas Company for the lighting of all street lamps from September to April, was accepted, subject to a reduction being made when black-outs were in force for any extended period. Notice has been given to the Parish Clerk, from the War Office, that the Parish Room is to be available for use as barracks or other military requirement at short notice.

7th September 1939 Leicester Evening Mail

Mountsorrel Woman Among Survivors – News of her rescue from Athenia flashed to her parents.

News of the rescue from the torpedoed Athenia of Mrs Isobel Reymes King of Mountsorrel was flashed from Toronto today, by her husband, to her parents, Mr and Mrs Reymes Cole, who have been anxiously awaiting information for three days. The cable, from Mr. John King, formerly organist at Holy Trinity church, Leicester stated, "Isobel reported rescued from Athenia by City of Flint, American ship. Probable destination America, Thank God". The brief message means to Mr and Mrs Reymes Cole that though they may not see their daughter for a long period, the suspense that followed after her holiday trip to her home in Rothley Road, Mountsorrel, is over.

Note: The Anchor Line passenger vessel SS Athenia was the first British Merchant Navy casualty of World War 2. She had sailed from Glasgow on 1st September on her normal Glasgow to Montreal via Belfast and Liverpool route with 1102 passengers and 316 crew aboard. As war was declared at 11am on 3rd September, she was well out into the Western Approaches heading west for Canada when she was spotted by a German U-Boat flotilla that had been pre-positioned in the Atlantic ready for war. Just after 7pm U-80 fired four torpedoes one of which hit on the port side. Although the crew managed to launch all 26 lifeboats the attack still left 112 dead. The US freighter City of Flint was one of several civilian vessels that came to the rescue along with Royal Navy destroyers that were despatched to the scene on the alarm being raised.