



# MHG NEWSLETTER

No 57

Talk at the Mountsorrel Memorial Centre

Tuesday October 11th at 7.30.

Members £3 Non members £4

## Growing up in Sorrel

by Barrie Wakeling

Barrie will tell us what he and his brothers got up to that his dad didn't know about

## Once Upon a Time in Mountsorrel-October

**Leicestershire Mercury - Saturday 12 October 1850**

Death of the Countess of Lanesborough.—We regret to have to announce the demise of the Countess Lanesborough, on Saturday morning, at the mansion of the noble earl, Quivvy-lodge, near Belturbet.

Morning Chronicle Wednesday- We learn from our Mountsorrel correspondent, that on the melancholy news being confirmed on Tuesday by the sound of the passing-bell, deep sorrow was felt throughout the town . All his lordship's tenants closed their shutters. The kindness (says the writer) which this good lady always manifested towards all with whom she was concerned, either as tenants or in the schools, will never be erased from their memory. Every Christmas she distributed meat, coals, blankets, &c, amongst her poorer tenantry. It being understood that the interment was to take place in Dublin on Wednesday, the bell of St. Peter's church tolled at the hour of the funeral.

**Leicestershire Mercury - Saturday 14 October 1854**

FREEHOLD PROPERTY FOR SALE FOUR TENEMENTS, with the Yard, Gardens, and Appurtenances thereto, situate on the Green at the South end of Mountsorrel, and under which there is a valuable Bed of Sand, in the several occupations of Chapman, Greenwood, Gee, and Tyler.

*The houses now on this valuable bed of sand are Nos 16 to 22 The Green*

**Leicester Journal - Friday 14 October 1853**

Bad Example.—A month or two ago, order was Issued by the Loughborough Local Health that the new streets recently laid out in that town, should be kerbed and channelled in accordance with particulars furnished by the surveyor. One of those particulars is that the owners of the property shall pave the causeways with " dressed Mountsorrel squares". A member the Board, however, who has recently erected a row of houses, is at the present time paving his causeway with pebbles!

## Bakeries and Missionaries

On a fine spring day on the 25th of March in the year 1825, a crowd gathered before the door of Richard and Lydia Wale's bakery, at the bottom of The Green, to say goodbye to Richard and Lydia's daughter Anna and her missionary husband, the Rev. William Fidler. Lydia's last words were " Goodbye, William, take good care of Anna," while Richard added sorrowfully, and with deep emotion " I shall never see you more." The coach rolled away on the white, hard road in the direction of Leicester, the first part of their journey to St. Vincent in the West Indies. In an hour they arrived at Leicester where Anna's sister Rebecca, diffused in tears, took leave of them.

Anna was 26 and had only been married for 16 days. She went on to have seven children, of whom Anna, Lydia, and Eliza married Methodist missionaries. Of her sons, William became a Methodist minister in Australia and John a vicar in the east end of London. Anna died in 1859 in what was then known as British Guiana.

Anna's father, Richard Wale died in 1827 and never did see his daughter again. He owned several houses, pieces of land and two bakeries which he bequeathed to his children. William Wale received one bakery in the north end of Mountsorrel (46 Loughborough Road). The other bakery and two houses on The Green were given to John Wale, and their sister Rebecca received two houses and an orchard on The Green.

Rebecca married Simeon Brewin who lived at No 30 Market Place next door to Charles Mitchil a baker. Both Simeon and Charles were local Wesleyan preachers. Charles Mitchil's son John trained as a minister and obtained a post in Ceylon under the auspices of the Wesleyan Missionary Society. He was only there for a year when he died of cholera at the age of twenty-seven. Rebecca's daughter, also called Rebecca, was engaged to John but after he died, she married a missionary called Thomas Wakefield. Like her aunt Anna, a few weeks after the marriage she set sail as a missionary's wife, this time to East Africa where she died at the age of 28. (full story in newsletter No 30)

Rebecca Brewin's sister, Sarah, married Robert Pearson Jacques and lived next door to her at No 28 Market Place. Her son William Jacques joined his uncle William Wale in the bakery at No 46 Loughborough Road. By 1861 William Jacques, a United Methodist Free church local preacher, had taken over the bakery.



Richard Wale's Bakery



William Jacques' bakery

One of William's daughters, Harriet Heafford, married the Rev James Proudfoot who was accepted by the Foreign Missionary Committee for service in Jamaica in 1885, where their son Harold was born in 1890. The Rev. James Proudfoot was the first principal of Bo school established in Sierra Leone in 1906 with 32 pupils. It was run on the pattern of an English public school and taught the sons of 'Paramount Chiefs' [a formal title created by the colonial administrators of the British Empire and used as a substitute for the word "king" to ensure that only the British monarch held that title]

It is now a boys-only boarding school. The pupils live in the four dormitory buildings (called Towns) on the school's campus. The four dormitories are called Manchester, London, Liverpool, and Paris. The school motto is "Manners Maketh Man".



Sierra Leone Paramount Chiefs

After William Jacques died his wife took over the bakery and upon his death it was run by their son Joseph and then Joseph's widow Kate. In 1939 Alfred Braybrook was the baker

By 1967 Alec Gibson and his mother were the bakers at No 46

In 1977 Nigel Watson, aged 15, and his friend Ashley Wainwright started 'working' for Alec. Their job at first was to clean the pig sty, but later were allowed to help in the bakery, not for wages but for bread and cakes. Eventually they were allowed to help with making the cakes and bread dough but were never allowed to know any of Alec's secret ingredients. The day would start at 7.30. and at 10 o'clock when they would have toast and tea in the front room of the house.

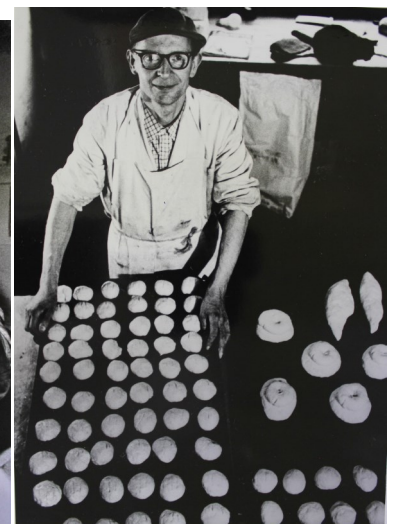
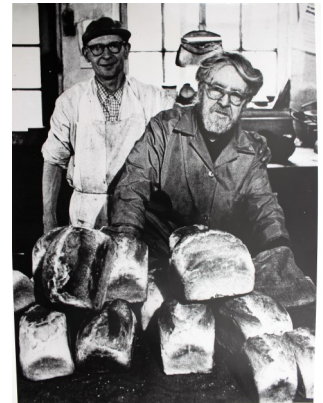
Alec's mum scared Nigel and Ashley when they first met her. They heard a knock, knock, knock coming towards the door. When the door opened, she stood there with her walking stick. She had a long beard and hair so long it was below her knees. "Wot they doing 'ere?" she said. "Helping out" replied Alec.

"During the bread strike", remembered Nigel "we couldn't make bread fast enough. People queued down the yard to buy the bread through the stable door. We still had to go out on deliveries. The blue Morris Minor was loaded up at 4.30. with bread, cobs and cake and then we went to the house for tea before we started deliveries at 6pm. We delivered to all the local villages and to Lord Lanesborough at Swithland Hall. We would drive up the long gravel drive, Alec would ring the bell and the butler would let him in. I would have to wait outside in the pitch-black listening to the owls. In the summer evenings the butler would come out to take the delivery. On one occasion Alec saw the butler sitting in a chair in the garden. He went over and said "Ow ya doin ya ole bugger, are they treatin ya ok? Lord Lanesborough then introduced himself to Alec!"

[In December 1974 the nation's bakers went on strike in pursuit of a 66% pay rise (the 70's were a decade of rampant inflation and huge pay rises); shortages of bread inevitably ensued. In 1977 the bakers went on strike again. The strike also brought a silver lining to small independent bakers who were unaffected by the strike and increased production to try to meet demand.] On Sundays we either sorted out the pigs and then went to Northampton to collect the rent from properties that were owned by Alec and his mum, or we would clean out the ovens. We had to wear 3 pairs of trousers and 3 coats and gloves. Alec would shove us into the oven by our legs and we would sweep all the soot and ash to the door. It would still be hot from the fire the day before".

"The ducks kept by the landlord of the Railway pub used to swim down and lay their eggs at the bottom of Alec's garden. That made them ours, didn't it?"

*This section about Gibson's bakery is taken from a booklet titled 'Memories of Working with Mountsorrel's Midnight Bakery' by Ashley Wainwright and Nigel Watson.*



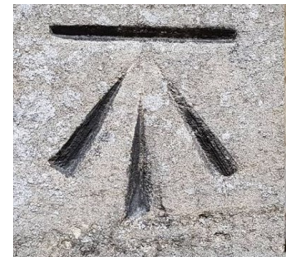
Alec Gibson at work in his bakery at No 46 Loughborough Road



## Bench Marks

Have you ever wondered how high Mountsorrel is above sea level? Probably not. However there are benchmarks in Mountsorrel that can supply the answer. If you are a bit of a nerd and really have nothing better to do you could see how many you can find. You probably won't, but some of us have. Some of the bench marks in and around Mountsorrel are given in the table below

Bench Marks are survey marks made by Ordnance Survey to record height above Ordnance Datum. In Great Britain the Ordnance Datum is the height of mean sea-level at Newlyn in Cornwall measured between 1915 and 1921. The first Ordnance datum was defined as a horizontal line 100 feet below an arbitrary benchmark on St John's Church, Liverpool.



**Cut Bench Mark**

There are some half a million benchmarks in Britain that can be found on walls and buildings across Britain. There are several different types, the most common are Cut Bench Marks.

A map of benchmarks can be found at <https://parallel.co.uk/os-benchmark-archive/>

OS Description	Elevation	Notes	Still there?
BR C SW SIDE RD NE FACE	44.638	Sileby Road	? too much traffic to check
NBM RIVET CUL NW SIDE RD E SIDE STR	43.288	Sileby Road	? Found the culvert not the BM
HO NO 10 WATLING ST E FACE NE ANG	61.341	-	Yes
NBM LAV NE SIDE LEIC RD SE FACE 1.7M E ANG	48.869	Little Lane	Lavatory ?
BLDG NE SIDE LOUGH RD SW FACE W ANG	44.775	By bridge	Yes
NBM HO 174 LOUGH RD NW FACE W ANG	44.880	-	No- wall rendered
P SW SIDE LOUGH RD JUNC NW SIDE PATH	48.997	cemetery	Yes
NBM LB W SIDE ROTHLEY RD JUNC WALL AND HEDGE	70.171		Yes
NBM RIVET BASE GTP NE SIDE CROSS RD	67.468	Rothley Rd/ Cross Lane	Maybe?

### OS Abbreviations

BR-bridge, C-centre of, NBM-new bench mark, CUL-culvert, STR-stream, HO-house, ANG-angle, P-post, LB-letter box

GTP-gate post, LAV= lavatory?

There are two bench marks which are not in the on line archive, One is in Market Place the other is at the bottom of The Green-see if you can spot them. They are on the 1903 OS map but on the other side of the road on buildings that have been demolished,

## Wildlife

With the seasons now really turning work has started on scything and clearing the Navins Wildflower Meadow. This will continue for a week or two getting the meadow ready for winter. We haven't, as yet, found any nests for voles and mice but there's still time for that. What we have found though is a cyclamen in full flower near the "Froggy". We haven't knowingly planted any although in some of the wildflower seed mixes that we've used there could be many things! Although most of us would think of cyclamen as garden plant it is also wild in UK preferring woodland edge and scrubby rock places which sounds like a reasonable description of the meadow. Also on the meadow but closer to Christ Church there is a large Puffball mushroom. There have been a few of these in recent years, on the meadow and in the Church yard and certainly the ones on the meadow are where the badgers have used as a latrine.

Down Crown Lane opposite to the horse field there are some fine looking field mushrooms.

*A Caution! Do not pick and eat any mushrooms unless you are absolutely confident in your recognition skills!*



Wesley History Society (East Midlands)  
Spring Meeting Saturday 8th October 2022 at  
2.30pm

At Mountsorrel Methodist Church  
Speakers

CHRIS HILL and PHILIP THORNBOROW  
Methodist Heritage  
Subject of this talk

Methodist heritage: an opportunity to go on line  
Tea will be provided

*If you intend to come please contact*

*Tel:0116 237 4961*

*This will help with the planning of the tea*

MHG ANNUAL CHRISTMAS QUIZ AND  
BUFFET

This will take place on  
Tuesday 13th December

More details in November's Newsletter