

The Loughborough Job

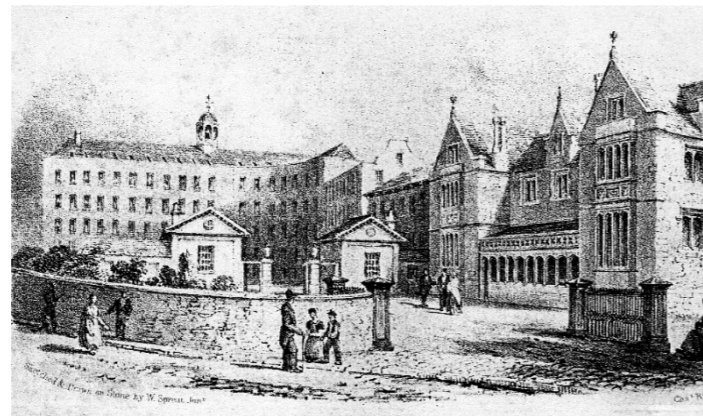
I couldn't believe it! You could have knocked me over with a feather. I need to start by explaining that I am a Bristolian – born and bred in Bristol, as were my parents, grandparents and great grandparents. So when I started researching my family history, I fully expected my ancestors to come from the South West of England. And so it appeared to be, until one day, when I was tracing my great grandmother's family on my father's side. I found her in the 1851 census living in Bristol. I then found her grandfather, also living in Bristol. But he gave his birthplace as Inkley, Leicestershire!

Now it may not have been surprising to find that he didn't come from Bristol, but of all the places in which he might have been born, for it to have been Leicestershire was amazing. Of course, it wasn't difficult to work out the town's name. Perhaps, when asked, he told the census Enumerator that he was born in 'inckley, with a dropped "H". In any event, it was recorded as Inkley – the poor Bristolian Census Enumerator wouldn't have known any different.

So now the quest started – why did a Leicestershire-born man end up in the South West. As I traced his life back, I found that he had been married in Tiverton, Devon, in 1821. Interesting, but I was no further forward – until one day I came upon a thesis that had been lodged with the Leicestershire & Rutland Family History Society. It explained that in 1816, a gang of Luddites had attacked the lace factory in Loughborough belonging to John Heathcoat. They smashed the lace-making frames and burnt the lace. Heathcoat was incensed. He felt that the County Council had done nothing to protect his factory, despite the activities of the Luddites being well known. So despite being offered compensation, he decided to up-sticks and relocate to Tiverton. In actual fact, he had already bought a factory down there, so he was probably just accelerating his already-formulated plans.

Since my ancestor was a framesmith – an engineer responsible for maintaining lace-making frames, everything now fell into place. Heathcoat offered a job in Tiverton to any of his workforce who would relocate there with him. Either at that time or a few years later, my ancestor moved down there and eventually married a Tiverton lass.

If you ever visit Devon, you might like to see Knightshayes Court, built by a grandson of John Heathcoat and now in the hands of the National Trust. You can view it as a grand mansion, built on the back of an exploited workforce, but I see it differently. John Heathcoat built houses and a school for his workers and their families. In the Victorian age, when there was a chasm between the rich and the poor, he did look after his workers and was respected by them.



The lace factory and school at Tiverton

The attack on the lace factory was called "The Loughborough Job", but mystery surrounds it. By 1816, most of the activities of the Luddites in the Midlands had started to dwindle. The perpetrators were caught, but appeared to be a motley crew of criminals, rather than a heroic band of workers who supported the common man in an age of industrialisation and job losses. The suspicion was that they had been put up to it by Heathcoat's competitors, but it was never proved.

I found that my ancestor's sister also moved down to the South West, with her husband and family, and for many years, I thought that was the extent of the exodus from Leicestershire to the West Country for my family, although I did know from the original thesis that hundreds of other people also made the trip, pushing hand-carts and carrying what they could of their personal belongings, walking down the old Roman road, the Fosse Way. Then, as you may have read in the article about the Wilshere family in a previous Newsletter, I was loaned a book of letters written by a travelling preacher named Thomas Hardy, who had been born in a cottage on Blood's Hill in Kirby Muxloe. Some of these letters were addressed to John and Rebecca Quail, first in Tiverton and then in Chard, Somerset. I realised that they were the parents of my framesmith ancestor and his sister. Eventually, I worked out that at least eight extended family members made that long journey.

So I had unwittingly completed a circle when I came up to Leicestershire to work. Over a century earlier, my ancestor had done the reverse journey. When he gave his occupation in the censuses, it was sometime Framesmith and sometimes Engineer. And my occupation before I retired? Didn't I mention it – I was an Engineer!

MG

Are you enjoying our Newsletters? Are there any history-related subjects that you would like us to cover? We welcome feedback, either directly to a Committee member or by email – see right:

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Newsletter No. 5 September 2020

Hi and welcome to our fifth Kirby Muxloe Local History Group Newsletter

Since the Covid-19 virus pandemic continues, we've produced another newsletter to keep in touch with you, so please accept it with the compliments of our Committee:

Mike Gould (Chair) Val Knott (Secretary)
Kate Traill (Treasurer) Judith Upton (Archivist)
Kerry Burdett

We start by again turning back the clock and continuing on our virtual walk around 1945 Kirby

① **Woodlands** - stands around halfway down Woodlands Lane. The house is one of the oldest in the village with the original part dating back to the second half of the seventeenth century. Now, in 1945, most people refer to the lane as "Wheeler's Lane" due to the fact that Mr Wheeler, owner of Alexandra Stone, lived in this house for many years. During WWII, the house has been used as the Headquarters of the Home Guard and also the Pioneer Corps. The windows are all blacked out and the guard is always on patrol. The garden belonging to Woodlands stretches right back to Main Street and many stories have been told of the antics of the Home Guard when based in this house. At one time, Mr Leach, who was a member of the Air Raid Precaution team, was walking along Woodlands Lane late at night, when suddenly there was a shout "Who goes there?". Without further warning, a guard raised his bayonet and in doing so tore a hole in Mr Leach's jumper; he was not pleased! At other times, some of the Home Guard were found to be hiding in the high hedge which bordered the property, only to jump out at any unsuspecting young girl and shouting "Boo!"

② **The pet monkey** - 106, Main Street. In 1939, this large Victorian semi-detached house had been split into two flats, one of which was occupied by Mrs Gertrude Nattle, who was a widow. The other flat was home to two R.A.F. flight lieutenants stationed at Desford Airfield Flying School. However, Mrs Nattle has moved out and during the last few years, Mrs Watson has been living there. There is one unusual pet for which this lady will be especially remembered. She has a pet monkey and it has been said that the monkey has the complete run of the house and can often be seen sitting in the windows or climbing up the curtains. Mrs Watson's daughter Vivienne married Francis Mercier in 1940 and in later years will return to live in the village. Viv will be remembered as running boarding kennels for dogs, which will be situated behind the stackyard at Castle farm. When Viv gives up the business, it will be taken over by Mr Leach.

③ **Mrs Mawby's goldfish** - 126, Main Street. We are told that the lady living here performs a certain ritual on Fridays. Thinking that her goldfish must get very bored just swimming round and round each day in its bowl, she gives it a special treat. It is said that she fills the kitchen



sink with water and puts the goldfish in so that it can get some "real exercise".

④ **The Chestnuts** - As we reach the end of Main Street, we turn the corner and after passing Faith cottage which we have already featured, we arrive at a square white house named "The Chestnuts". Around 1911, the house had been home to Mrs Mitchell, the widow of Mr Thomas Mitchell, who was head teacher at the National School.

⑤ **Forest Lodge** - Round the corner into Desford Road, after passing by several villas, we arrive at Forest Lodge, a "private" hotel. The tall central part of the building was originally known as the "Red Barn". From around 1879, this building was used for about twenty months as the meeting place for the village's non-Conformist Church. Soon it became apparent that a larger building was required and funds were raised to build the first purpose built non-Conformist church, named the Zion Chapel. In 1883, the Red Barn was purchased by a Miss Sharpe, who built an extension on both sides and opened it up as a hotel. Now in 1945, the most recent owners have been Reginald Greengrass and his wife Mary. They employed a waiter and a chef. Reginald was a captain in the Indian Army and died in India in 1943. He is buried in Delhi War Cemetery. Later, after her husband's death, Mary will move into a nursing home in Surrey. She will pass away in 1954. In times to come, the bungalow to the right of the property at present occupied by William Clarke and his wife Alice (grandparents of Jan Timson), will become part of the hotel. The hotel will grow in popularity, with its heydays during the 1960's and 70's. In 2005, it will be demolished to make way for a housing development. JU

What's in a Name (cont. from middle page)

Blood's Hill has been known by several other names – Cope Lane (just above the brook was Cope's Gate or Queen's Gate) is mentioned in the building accounts of the castle, but this may also have been called Coalpit Lane. This road was an important route for pack horses bearing baskets of coal from Swannington, where coal had been mined since 1293. The name Blood Hill or Blood's Hill was named after a Mr. Blood and not after any fanciful story involving blood! "Big Hill" is often talked about by locals and can be accessed from Oakcroft Avenue and Court Close.

Information for this article has been obtained from :

"The Historic Parks & Gardens of Leicestershire & Rutland" by Leonard Cantor & Anthony Squires.

"Old Kirby Muxloe" by Jonathan Wilshere.

"Leicester Forest" by Levi Fox & Percy Russell.

VMK

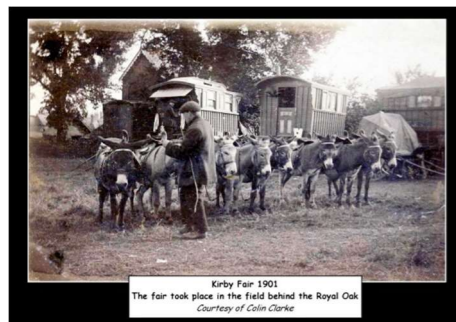
The Wakes

Originally the wakes week was a religious celebration or feast. Each church was given the name of a patron saint when it was consecrated, and either the saint's feast day or the day of its consecration became the church's festival. During the industrial revolution, wakes week was adapted into a regular summer holiday in some parts of the country, and in the midlands each locality nominated a week when local factories, collieries and other industries closed for a week, enabling essential maintenance to take place.

St Bartholomew's feast day is 24th August, but in 1752 the Gregorian calendar was introduced and 11 days were lost, which resulted in Kirby changing their feast week to the Sunday after September 4th. This was not the case for all villages. The Church at Thornton was consecrated to St Peter, whose feast day was 29th June, but the village continued their celebrations during the last week of June.

The feast day wakes which first took place at Castle Field were later to become "The Wakes" and of course "The Fair" which took place in the field next to and behind the Royal Oak Public House. The railings at the side of the field were taken down each year by Tom Moore the wheelwright and his nephew Charlie to give access into the field for the engines and caravans. It has also been said that Philip Bosworth, landlord of the Royal Oak, would get help to clear out the rats before the fair arrived.

Furborough's fair, and later Holland's, was the highlight of the year and there was growing excitement in the village towards the end of August in anticipation of the great event. A procession of fairground people with their horse drawn caravans would proceed along Station Road and turn into Main Street on the way to the Royal Oak, eagerly watched by the villagers. Mrs Holland, who needed electricity for her television, would back her caravan right up to the window of the Old Forge. The children would run straight from school to watch the setting up process, (and sit on the fence watching whilst they dismantled it).



Kirby Fair

Fair week was a popular family occasion, where all the villagers mixed, and relatives from surrounding villages came to join the fun, all dressed in their Sunday best. Visitors came on the train from as far afield as Ashby and Coalville.

The first night would be Friday, when Eliza or Philip Bosworth would pay for the first ride on the carousel for the local children, but the favourite night was Saturday. The fairground organ would be playing, and with the sounds and the smell of the steam engines "Prince of Wales" and "Victory", the fun would begin.

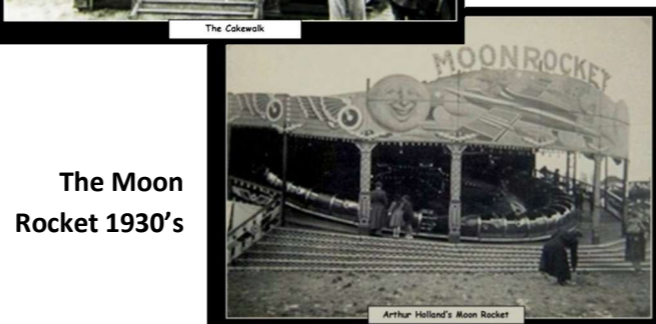


Fowler Showmen's Locomotive "Prince of Wales"

The attractions remembered the most were the gallopers (carousel with horses), the cakewalk, dodgems, swing boats, high strike (test of strength with mallet & bell) and the moon rocket. Amongst the side shows were the coconut shy and roll-a-penny, with toffee apples and brandy snaps also on sale. Harry Webster from the fish and chip shop on Church Road would set up a temporary stall and sell chips in a cone made from newspaper. The stalls had a roaring trade. There was also a fortune teller who would read your palm from her old Romany caravan. The side shows would have huge teddy bears as prizes but it seems they were rarely won!



The Cakewalk first appeared in 1909



The Moon Rocket 1930's

Each year a united Church service would be held on the dodgem stand on the Sunday. The dodgems would be moved to make way for the officiating minister and the choir.

In the early 1960's, the County Council made a compulsory purchase order on the field to make way for the bungalows, which are now The Keep, and unfortunately the beautiful Oak trees were felled. The fair moved to Back Lane opposite Fox Lane at this time, but it was not a successful move, and as support dwindled, the last fair was held in 1965.

"The Happening" by Norman Lally

Coconuts had to be knocked off their perch to claim a prize. The prizes, which consisted of tea sets and various pieces of crockery, were arrayed at the front of the stall. 6 balls for 6d or similar to throw at the coconuts.

One evening some of the older village lads were at the shy, my elder brother among them. Someone among them claimed that a coconut had been dislodged and

What's in a Name?

Have you ever wondered about the name of a road or street in our local area – why is it called that and what's the history behind that name?

Hopefully this article will provide a few answers about some of these names that we see every day and never really think about – how and why they were so named.

A recent enquiry to the History Group about Joseph Bassford who lived at Baron Park set me thinking about how these local names - Barn Park, Baron Park, Barrons Park, Barons Park originated. This area off Gullet Lane towards Desford was a medieval hunting park and was situated on the edge of the Lord's manor in order to provide shelter for the deer on land that was unsuitable for agriculture, but which was well wooded. It would have been surrounded by a deep ditch, on top of which there would have been a stout fence to stop the deer from escaping. We can assume that the name Baron was given to the park as it belonged to William 1st Baron of Hastings, whose residence was Kirby Castle. Later in the 1600's, Barrons Park spanned about 250 acres and contained enough pasture for a total of 250 bullocks and horses, in addition to that reserved for the deer.

Barons Park was situated to the righthand side of Gullet Lane. Here is another name which has its origins in medieval times but was known then as "Le Golet" – the French word for "gullet". Le Golet was an area of woodland and dates from 1364. This area predates the founding of Barons Park and is thought to have belonged to Simon Pakeman, whose farm, Pakemansale, later called Brickman's Hill and eventually Elms Farm, was to be found at the far end of Gullet Lane. Pakemansale was referred to by Simon Pakeman as "my wood".

There were other medieval deer parks near Kirby Muxloe – Tooley Park towards Peckleton, Ratby Park and Leicester Frith Park, which became known in 1526 as "New Park". This park was at one time well stocked with deer, but Henry VIII became tired of his new venture and by 1606, the area was fenced and drained and used for sheep pasture. In the middle of the present-day housing estate, which we all know as "New Parks", one can still see the mound which contained a hunting lodge, known as Bird's Nest Lodge (a moated site on a map), from the days when it was a hunting forest.

"Leicester Forest East" and "Leicester Forest West" were part of the medieval Leicester Forest, which throughout the middle ages belonged to the powerful earls and lords

of Leicester. The forest was a private hunting ground and contained important woodland. This was vital to Leicester as a source of fuel and timber for building, as many of Leicester's medieval shops and houses were built from wood.

The road to Enderby in LFE we know as "Beggars Lane", but it was originally known as "Moll's Lane". If anyone knows who Moll was and when the name was changed, we would love to hear from you. We assume that the name of Beggar's Lane was given because it was an area frequented by beggars in times gone past.

In the middle of the David Wilson estate is a thatched Elizabethan house known as "Boyer's Lodge". Boyer was a keeper who acquired his own dwelling and land from the Crown in 1628. This too must have been the site of another hunting lodge in medieval times.

Also in LFE as part of the David Wilson estate is a road known as "Warren Lane". This name was used because of the number of rabbit warrens to be found in this area. Rabbits were highly valued for their meat and fur in medieval times and areas of land were preserved to rear rabbits for domestic and commercial purposes. You can still see if you look in the field to the right of Beggar's Lane (near the new houses at New Lubbesthorpe) a mound which is the remnants of a rabbit warren.

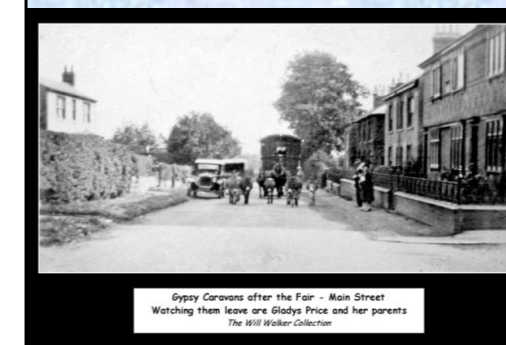


Meynell's Gorse, now the site of the 'Park and Ride' service, was originally known as "Gallard's Warren", possibly after a Roger Gallard mentioned in the castle building accounts. It was part of the "King's Wood" and eventually also became an area of rabbit warrens.

The old inn and public house known as "The Red Cow" at LFE was probably named because the fields leading up from the village to the Red Cow were named "Kirby's Milking Hill" dating from around 1628. It was originally a smithy and two or three cottages. The "Milking Hill" must have been where the villagers used to keep their cows and where there may have been some sort of milking parlour.

Continued on front page

The Wakes (continued)



Caravans leaving after the fair – Gladys Price and her parents are watching them leave

the stallholder had refused to give him his prize. They all brought more balls and proceeded to smash up as much crockery as possible.

All hell broke loose. A fight started between village lads and fairground workers, resulting in the fair being closed down for the night.

This was the story of legends, talked about for years, often with much hilarity.

If you have any photographs of the fair or a memory to share, we would love to hear from you.