

# The Chapels Society Summer Visit 27<sup>th</sup> June 2015

## Notes

The day will be in two parts. In the morning we shall do a walking tour of part of Loughborough. Following lunch and the AGM we will take the coach and explore Charnwood Forest.

### ❖ The walking tour

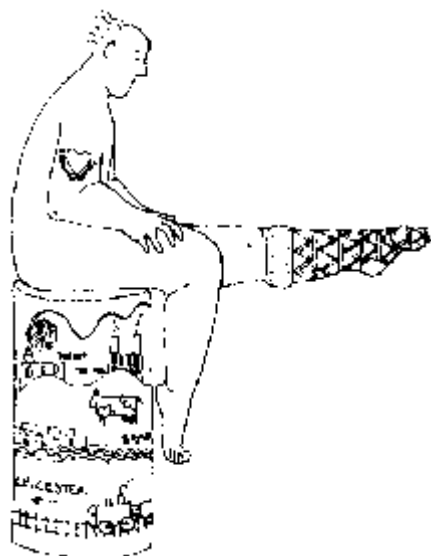
#### Some background information

We find ourselves in an area of Loughborough that was built in the C19th. This area developed outside the medieval centre of Loughborough based around the Parish Church. In 1801 the population of Loughborough was 4,500 but by 1841 it had grown to 10,000. The market town had always been a centre for framework knitters and this expanded as the hosiery industry became mechanised (Paget steam operated factory, 1839 & Towles mill, 1860 which you'll pass on the way from the station.) Loughborough can lay claim to being the centre of Luddite activity. In 1816 a group of framework knitters attacked the recently invented 'Loughborough Frame' at Heathcoat's factory.

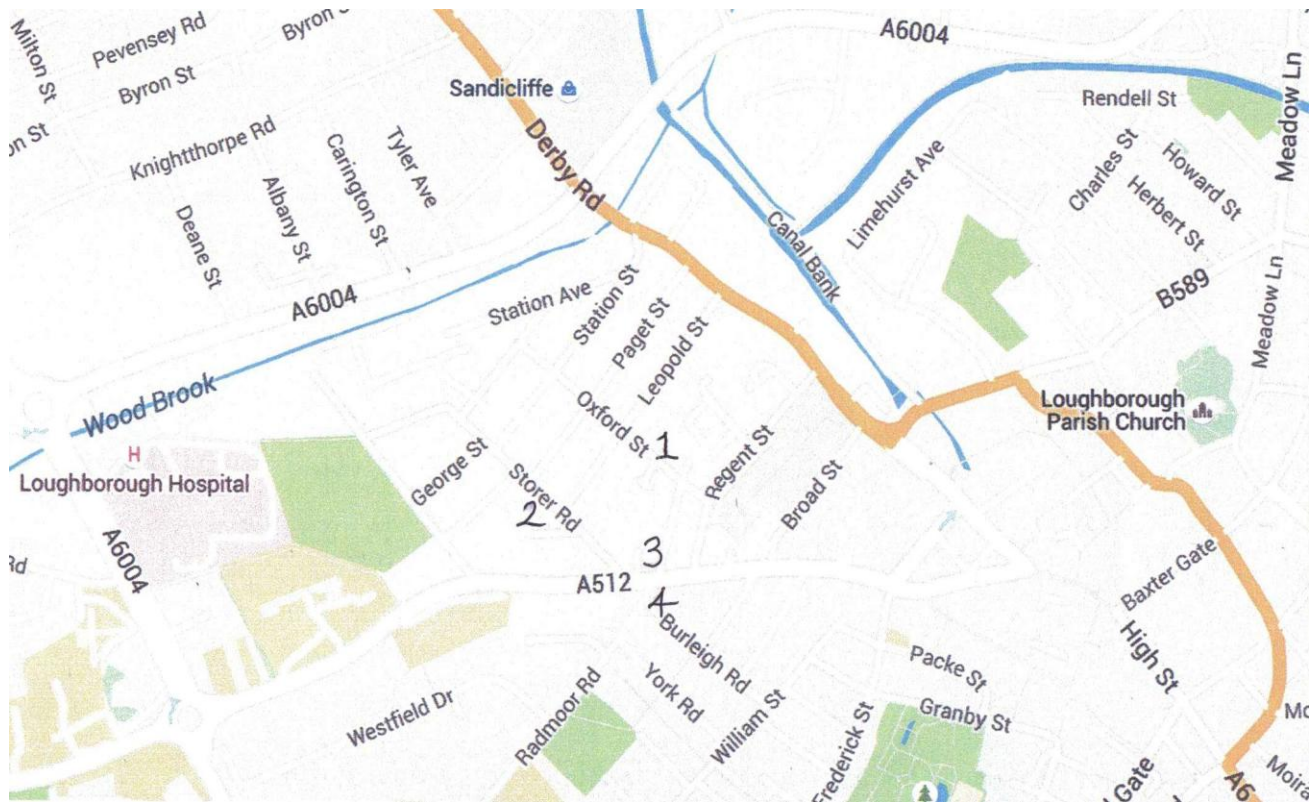
Other industries arrived, such as John Taylor's & Co bell foundry in 1839, The Falcon works (locomotive & horse buses) in 1855, Herbert Morris & Bassett (lifting pulleys and blocks) in 1884. The canals had arrived in the 1770s, bringing coal into Loughborough and taking produce out. In 1840 Loughborough had its first Railway station and by 1899 it had three. In 1841 Loughborough was the destination of first package tour organised by Thomas Cook for a Temperance Group from Leicester.

Shortly after all the housing development in this area, several local businessmen donated adjacent land and funded the provision of Queen's Park (1888) and the building of swimming pool (1901) and a Carnegie Library (1905). Close to the library Loughborough Congregational church (now the URC) was built in 1908 - we won't have time to visit this church today.

As you can see as you walk around this area, the houses were all built during the late C19th and were probably intended for the workers in the developing industries in Loughborough. It is not surprising that amongst these houses we also find evidence of Christian activity and congregations setting up home.



## The 'Storer Road' part of Loughborough.



1. The Churches of Christ
2. St Peter's Centre
3. St Mary's Catholic Church
4. The Salvation Army

Since then this part of Loughborough has seen many changes in population and fortunes. In the 1960s this area became home for incoming workers from the Indian sub-continent and now it is home to many Loughborough University students.

❖ Our first chapel is The **Churches of Christ** (1880).



This is where we shall have our refreshments prior to our walk and will be given a tour and talk by a member of the congregation. We will be returning here for lunch and our AGM (please see the attached article from The Chapels Society Newsletter June 1991 for some background information).

❖ **St Peter's Centre.**

The second point on our tour is now the home of two congregations: Open Heaven & Elim Pentecostal, unfortunately we are unable to go in. These two churches bought the redundant St Peter's C of E and following a very exciting refurbishment re-opened the church for worship in 2013. St Peter's had started as a mission church in 1889 and the tin church can still be seen. In 1912 the Church of local Mountsorrel granite rubble by W. S. Weatherley of London was completed. During the 1970s with a falling congregation and an expanding community of Indian origin families, the incumbent offered the Hindu community space for worship. Open Heaven originally met at Loughborough University and a large part of its ministry is with young people and students hence their move into this part of Loughborough.





The first mission church building next to St Peter's



St Peter's prior to its refurbishment and re-orientation

## ❖ St Mary's Catholic Church (1925)

We have been kindly allowed to go into this church today.



There is evidence that the Dominicans were active in Loughborough in 1824, at the invitation of Ambrose Phillips de Lisle who was taking instruction. The first small congregation met in a room above a shop in Market Street. They then bought land in 1834, and since there was opposition we must assume that this land lay outside of the C of E All Saints boundaries. It was also before either of the later C of E churches: St Peter's and Emmanuel were built (1835). This was served for a time by Mount St Bernard's Abbey (which we shall visit this afternoon). In 1841 the care of the community was given to the Fathers of the Institute of Charity otherwise known as the Rosminians. With an expanding congregation the present church was built on the same site in 1925 by A.M. Barrowcliffe.

## ❖ The Salvation Army

This building has also seen a change of fortunes and purpose. On the side of the building is a commemorative inscription telling us that the building was originally a Methodist School 1899. (Peter & I can't read which strand of Methodism). In the 1960s the three strands of Methodism came together in a new building in central Loughborough; Trinity. This building then became the home of Elim Pentecostal Church. They have now moved to St Peter's and the Salvation Army was outgrowing its building in The Rushes (The Salvation Army had been in this area for some 130 years) and so bought it. Following a complete refurbishment they opened earlier this year. Their original Citadel had been rebuilt in the 1990s, but has not been taken over by another worship community. However, it has to be noted that this great re-shuffle in Loughborough has been due to expanding congregations.



We shall now return to The Churches of Christ for lunch and the AGM.

## ❖ The afternoon tour

The afternoon will be spent exploring Charnwood (previously Charley) Forest.



Some background information.

Charnwood forest is the site of the oldest rocks in the world and has one of the oldest fossils named after it 'Charnia'. Otherwise known as Charley Forest or the 'waste', it was deemed unfit for agricultural purposes. Until the 1800s it was an area of wasteland. Despite the name 'forest' even the trees were seen to be of little commercial value. The land was open and set to pannage. Around this area the local nobility had enclosed several areas of parkland for hunting, most famously the Quorn hunt and the Grey Family's Bradgate Park. However, during the Napoleonic wars there was a serious concern about food security, and so wasteland was called into production. In this instance, the Enclosure Act of 1805 rather unusually stipulated the building of three Churches at: Oaks in Charnwood, Woodhouse Eaves and Copt Oak. There was some concern that the area's sparse population was somewhat unGodly and the incoming of agricultural workers would necessitate some Christian presence. I wonder if Sir Babington, who was responsible for this stipulation was also concerned about the growth of non-conformity in this area. Whilst driving through Charnwood Forest you will notice how straight the roads are; they are not Roman but are the enclosure roads. Interestingly the land enclosed was never very productive and it was not incoming agricultural workers but quarrymen and their families that filled the churches. Our first stop will be ...





### ❖ **Mount Saint Bernard's Cistercian Abbey (1844)**

This monastery was founded in 1836 when Ambrose Phillips de Lisle donated land and invited the Cistercians to create a community. The present building was designed by Augustus Welby Pugin (who gave his services free) and was completed in 1844. In 1848 Mount Saint Bernard's was raised to the status of abbey the first in Britain since the Reformation. Eric Gill is responsible for most of the sculpture in the abbey. Fr Joseph will give us a brief introduction to the abbey.

We shall pass **Charley Methodist Church (1862)** now a private home.





## ❖ Woodhouse Eaves.

Here we shall be able to visit the **Methodist Church** one of the congregation will give us a short introduction. This Wesleyan Methodist Chapel is dated 1887 there was an earlier 1799 chapel on this site. The building was refurbished recently with a suspended floor giving space for worship and community activities.



Woodhouse Eaves is an interesting village since its wealth and popularity lie in tourism. During the C19th it was a local resort, a popular beauty spot on the edge of Beacon Hill. People came out of Leicester on high days and holidays and at one time it was full of tea shops and pubs. It was also an area where wealthy Leicester industrialists built their summer residences. The recently open National Trust property Stoneywell built by the Gimson's, is an example of one. However, despite this very rural position the people in the village were mostly employed at the slate quarries or were framework knitters. Like many Leicestershire villages the main occupations were industrial.



The **Baptist Church** was originally built on this site in 1796 it was then restored in 1883 and completely re-built in 1981.

It is interesting to note that both these chapels were built in an area that was extra-parochial and the nearest C of E church at the time was the C13 St Mary in the Elms at Woodhouse built by Henry Beaumont lord of Beaumanor Hall. St Paul's was built at Woodhouse Eaves in 1838.

❖ Our next stop will be at **Quorn Baptist Church (1770)**



The original meeting house is of brick with a rubble plinth and has been greatly altered and extended. In 1819 a vestry and schoolrooms were added. In 1897-8 further school rooms were added. The chapel was re-fitted in 1930 and the porch added in 1965.

On our way back to Loughborough Station we shall pass **Loughborough Baptist Church (1828)**. A group of Baptists began to meet in Loughborough in 1753. The first church was built in 1792. The present building was built in 1828 due to the increasing membership of the Sunday school, providing education for the poor it numbered over 800. The porch was added in 1970.

