

William Lewin

William Lewin was born in Cotgrave on 15th December 1862. His parents were James and Mary Lewin who were living with James' mother (also called Mary), somewhere along the Plumtree Road (known as the Tollerton Road at that time). She was a widow, aged sixty, but still referring to herself (in the 1861 Census) as 'Farmer of 18 acres'. James, aged 27, was obviously running the farm, referring to himself as 'Farmer's Son'.

In the first Census (1841) there were two families bearing the surname 'Lewin', whether related or not, we do not know. On the one hand, there were William and Mary Lewin, both aged 35, having seven children, William being a Carpenter. On the other hand, there were John and Mary Lewin, both aged 35!, having three children, John being a Cottager (ie a small farmer). The first-mentioned family also appear in the 1851 Census (now with eight children) but have apparently left Cotgrave sometime before 1861. In the 1861 Census the remaining family had branched into two households, Samuel, the eldest son, having married Emma and set up his own establishment. He was 31 years of age and farming 32 acres. They already had five children. They appear again in the 1871 Census, with eight children but have disappeared by the time of the 1881 Census.

At the 1881 Census, grandmother Mary was 80 years old and still the owner of a 23 acre farm, while James and Mary were both 47 and now the parents of seven children. James had given up farming and was working as a Carrier, while their eldest son John, aged twenty, may have been running the farm. Their second son William (with whom we are ultimately concerned) was eighteen years old and working as a Hosier's Apprentice, though we know not where. In 1891 Mary had reached the grand old age of ninety, while James was working as both a Carrier and as an Income Tax Collector. William (still at home) described himself as a Hosiery Warehouseman, now obviously fully qualified. However, the family does not appear in either the 1901 or 1911 Cotgrave Census Returns so we may assume that Mary had died, while James and Mary had left the village.

It is clear that their son William had also left Cotgrave because he appears in the 1901 Census for Hyson Green in Nottingham, where he was lodging with a widowed lady, Jane Greaves. Then again in 1911 he is recorded as being a lodger with the King family in Carlton. In both instances he describes himself as a Hosiery Warehouseman. It would appear that he never married.

We next meet with him through his penchant for writing letters and short articles for the Nottingham local press. His first recorded letter was apparently dated 1882 but he is probably better known for his articles about Cotgrave which date from the 1930s. He had obviously never lost the love for the village which he acquired during his childhood, these articles demonstrating a deep affection for the place, while also showing a serious historical understanding of its development. This impression is confirmed by the fact that, when he retired, he came back to live in Cotgrave, perhaps his best-known article, which follows this introduction, being headed 'Mr William Lewin, Wesley Cottage, Cotgrave, October 1944.' I understand that Wesley Cottage was a bungalow situated on the 'Tofts' (now known as the 'Park'), just off Bingham Road. He may possibly have moved again towards the end of his long life (he lived to be 91) because he died at a different address: 'The Bungalow, The Park, Cotgrave' but it may well be only the name of his bungalow that had changed. It is of little matter.

He was obviously a very well-educated man who thought deeply about many subjects and he acknowledges a debt to his schoolmaster Mr Thomas Wood Mensing, Headmaster of the local school between the 1860s and 1890s. He was also religious, being brought up in a devout Methodist household. In fact, his family were closely connected to the John Cooper who first introduced Methodism into Cotgrave, John's granddaughter, who married William Randall, being William's grandmother. In both the 1841 and 1851 Census Returns John Cooper, who was then a widower, was living with the Randall family. Both William's parents were born in cottages close to All Saints Church, Mary in 'Cooper Cottage', named after her great grandfather, James in 'Lawrence Garden'. In William's youth the family were near-neighbours of the Hames family who were also well-known members of the Methodist Church in Cotgrave. William Hames often preached at the Wesleyan Church on Bingham Road, while his daughter Lucy played the harmonium there. What is more, according to the 1896 Wright's Trade Directory, the thirty-year-old William Lewin played the Harmonium at the Free Methodist Church just behind All Saints.

William Lewin died in sad circumstances. As recorded in the Nottingham Guardian, he was found by his milkman in his home, suffering from severe burns after a small fire. He died on 27th March 1954 and a photograph of his Gravestone is attached. The inscription runs as follows:

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY OF
WILLIAM LEWIN
DIED MARCH 27TH 1954
AGED 91 YEARS
ALSO
IN MEMORY OF
HIS PARENTS
JAMES AND MARY LEWIN
OF COTGRAVE



A Short Story of Cotgrave

By

William Lewin of Wesley Cottage, Cotgrave

October 1944

The Parish of Cotgrave, which includes Stragglethorpe, was bypassed by the Romans when their famous road was made and there is no evidence that any Roman settlement was ever within its boundaries, unless the site of the Lodge on the Wolds was thus inhabited. The Danes came early to Stragglethorpe and its name is Danish and, to a smaller extent, a settlement was in the Village, whose Candleby Lane is Danish. When the Normans came, they found a populous Saxon settlement in both Village and Hamlet, the former with Oghe and the latter with Ulric, their Saxon lords. Both were superseded by Norman Barons, the former by Rad de Burun, an ancient ancestor of the Byron poet and the latter by Roger Pictavenaia, whose only noteworthy act was to found the Swineshead Monastery of Lincolnshire and endow it with his Stragglethorpe estate. Similarly, the Norman lord of the Village handed over most of his estate to the Lenton Monastery, though he had the discretion to retain sufficient to secure his knighthood and to raise his military following. The population of the two Manors was then very considerable, for the time, for the combined heads of families were about forty-seven, with a probable population of about one hundred and fifty. The later history of the Manors was remarkable in their difference, for, while Stragglethorpe lost its old arable strips and developed into a sheep farm with its tithes commuted and with the Grange Manor as its centre, the village remained a corn-producing area, though with much old enclosed grass land. Another difference was that Stragglethorpe, when sheep farming became less profitable, had an early enclosure, whereas the village waited for its enclosure until the last decade of the eighteenth century, or date 1791. When the main portion of the Village lands were given to the Lenton Monastery, a Rosel was a witness and it is remarkable that, when the Stragglethorpe Manor was purchased by the first of the Pierreponts, a Harold Rosel was their agent. The price was £684-16s-6d, a very good price for the time, when the commuted income of the Rector was thirty-six pounds per year and, for him, it was wealth. That Harold Rosel was a brother-in-law of Archbishop Cranmer who presented him with the Woodall manor of Radcliffe. But the man had such a Cotgrave position that I have often wondered whether he created the original dwelling and estate of Cotgrave Place. Whether or not, it seems certain that he had been agent-in-charge of the Stragglethorpe estate while the Monastics had charge of it.

From the subsidiary Manors of the Village, once probably held by Bailiff or Priest, who would be the first Rector, a term more secular than ecclesiastical, sufficient lands remained to create a second Manor, first held by a wool merchant of Nottingham, a Bugge, from whom the Bingham, the Rempstones and the Wollaton family descend and thus it was that the field adjoining the cemetery, a Rempstone Hall, housed a race of squires until the Scrimshires replaced them. Their lands extended to Clipstone and probably also along the Grippps to the Wolds. Before the Church restorations of the nineteenth century there was a Bugge memorial window but the family had so long gone that it also disappeared with probably great armies of Bugs.

With the destruction of the Monasteries by Henry VIII, he reserved the estate for his reign and it was Queen Mary who passed it over to the Whites of Wallingwell, near Tuxford, no doubt through the influence of the Cecils, to whose family the Lady of the Manor originally belonged. Their residence in their Hall, within the present orchard site of the Manor House continued through several centuries and all through the troubled periods of the Commonwealth and Restoration. Many of their descendants were baptised in the Church, where they had the special favour of a seat on the south side of the Church, when most parishioners had to stand during service and that privilege descended to the occupants of the Manor farm after their family had gone.

For a short period of the Restoration their rental was between eighty and a hundred pounds which was wealth, when all their lands were let for a shilling an acre. The Hall mysteriously disappeared sometime after the Restoration and no picture or record of it remained. It was probably so damaged by the conflicting armies of the Commonwealth that it was better to leave it than to restore it. The wall that surrounded the site has bricks of earliest type, though it is now a mixture of every age of brickwork and, within its base, as was recently disclosed, is a remnant of an earlier stone wall of undoubted Wolds origin. At some time there must have been a moat and I think the Risegate Lane was once its private road to the estate, bounded by itself, Scrimshire Lane and the Town street. There are considerations leading to the supposition that, during the Monastic age, that circular estate, so famous for its orchards, was once the property of the order of Saint John of Jerusalem which, until recent years, held its annual court at the Manvers Arms Inn. One of the tenants of the Whites was a Thornton and it was a Thornton family that long resided in the farm house of the School site which, by inter-marriage, was related to several of the leading families of the Village.

When the Scrimshire family purchased the Rempstone estate and Hall, they also acquired Cotgrave Place and, when, with the Whites, they disappeared and the Village was first for sale, the largest purchasers were the Dukes of Kingston and a member of the Lambs who created the Melbourne Peerage and contributed to the State the first Premier of Queen Victoria. But when the Enclosure took place, the representative of the Lambs was Mrs Lionella Clay who, by marriage, had entered a Southwell family and her property until the Enclosure united estates, was all over the Village centre and as far as the Glebe farm of the present Swingers. The remains of the Rempstone Hall were hers and it became her business to remove all that remained of it when, perhaps, the beautiful staircase of the old Rectory was there transferred. The tradition of the period of my youth was that the present Wyr residence had once been the servants' party of the old Hall but, though it was later called the Rectory, I doubt whether a Rector ever lived there, for the latter years of the eighteenth century was the age of pluralistic Rectors who preferred to live at their other charges, such as St Marys of Nottingham or Holmepierrepoint. Certain it is that house and site of the old Rempstone, Scrimshire Hall was transferred by the Enclosure Act from the Rectory to the Pierrepoints. When Throsby, the Historian, visited the Village, about 1800, he found the enclosure still unfinished, a Village of stony streets, with a hundred dwellings and a population of about five hundred and ninety.

The Duke of Kingston, who had so largely invested in Cotgrave property and held the entire Lordship of Stragglethorpe, had then gone and, in his place, was the second son of the Mr Meadows who had married the only remaining lady of the Ducal family and he it was he who founded the Manvers family. The Rector then was the Rev. Pierrepoint Crompton and the Village

must have been altogether ancient and dilapidated. The Church also must have been in poor condition, for not until the nineteenth century began and resident Rectors arrived did restoration begin. A portion of the churchyard bounded on the Pepper Street side by the brick part of the wall and as far as the walnut tree, reminiscent of family life as well as death about the Church tower had two thatched dwellings upon it, the one overshadowed by the walnut tree in which Rusticus, the Village poet and grandfather of William Hickling, was born and the other, then occupied by Mr John Cooper who first housed the first local Methodist society and whose granddaughter, by marriage with a William Randall, became my own grandmother. The Rusticus cottage, of which I have a sketch and a painting, stretched straight to meet the ancient one now of the Thurmans' property, alongside the closed Free Methodist Church and the Cooper Cottage where my mother was born and was a little at its back and nearer to the side of Pepper Street.

My father was born in a long- removed cottage in the present Lawrence garden, by the side of the Chapel wall so that I have as old a connection with both Church and Methodism as is possible. Between the Church porch and the Chancel door is a flat gravestone with words so melancholy upon it that it's worth recording. It reads:

Life is a snare, a labyrinth of woe,
Which wretched man is doomed to struggle through
Today he's great, tomorrow he's undone
And thus, in hope and fear, he blunders on
Till some disease, or else perhaps old age
Calls the poor mortal, trembling from the stage.

The mills of the Village were two, the oldest on the Gripps, probably to serve the Rempstone and White estates and the other against the marlpit, a later construction, probably to serve the Grange estate when it returned from its Monastic sheep farming. As that long outlived the other and remained until the end of the last Great War, it was in use in the time of my youth, it became the only Village one, doing good local service, until the steam mills of Nottingham superseded it. There was a later steam mill on the Gripps site but that had failed entirely before my time. Another mill on the Wolds served the Wolds farms and Clipstone. Its site is clearly defined by the Enclosure Act. Among the dwellings and farmsteads of the Enclosure time were the Whyer House, or the old Rectory, of Scrimshire Lane; a more original Dixon Place; the Hickling home; and that of the Simpsons, with its orchard. The old Bagguley farm house was, of course, there and then a Bagguley was its resident. In Risegate the Evans cottage was still as a century before but the rest were much as now in respect to the dwellings. On the other side of that estate was the present Ward farmplace but still unrepaired. The Inn was a farmhouse and a carpenter's place. A Thornton farm was on the site of the School's; the next was a Smithy cottage and the corner house where I was born was considerably smaller than now. On Baker's Hollow, or Rectory Road the present Parr farm was there; a Collishaw lived in the present house of the Smiths; the home of the Peets was probably the home of the Curate who then served for poor pay for a wealthy absentee Rector, probably then resident in his other living of Holmepierrepoint. The end place was also there and very much as at present in respect of its house place. In Pepper Street the farm place was soon to see reconstruction and the next, so long associated with the Timms family, who also held the tenancy of the Manvers Arms was probably thatched. The present Lawrence house was absent but a cottage, as already stated, was on its garden site. The Chapel site was the garden of the old cottage, or cottages, for it was then a double dwelling and certainly thatched, with an Elizabethan appearance, or wood, plaster and brick.

Starting from the mill to the Cross, the school, though smaller, existed and, until the Bingham Workhouse was established, the two old cottages there were the Village Workhouse. The Walker house was not yet built and the adjoining one that approaches Mill Lane was a low thatched place that so remained until my time. Of the row on the opposite side, the first two double cottages had still to see improvement; those with frontal gardens had not yet superseded their original poor thatched dwellings; and the other rows, fronting to the entrance to Butt field, or cottages on the Enclosure wastes to be later described had not yet appeared. From thence, on that side were the ancient Sanday cottage of the plot beside the inn; and one in the garden of the present inn, in which the father of the present Voces, of later fame, lived with orchard ground, now the gardens of the two newer cottages at the gate of the Butt field. The Inn was then the Five Bells and a Beer house, entirely thatched; and the adjacent roadside cottages, also thatched, then existed with, probably, the Smithy of the yard. The ancient cottage of Mill Lane was ancient then; the corner house of Mawkinshire Lane may have been a smithy residence or a carpenter's house and between it, along the lane, was a thatched place, long demolished but then the house of Mr Thraves, a coal dealer who first used the canal and had boats upon it.

Neither the farm place of the lane nor the residence of the Parish nurse was there then, except, perhaps, in a very small way but the one inhabited by the Fryers was occupied by a John Sanday, the last of the race to possess it as a freehold. The Sanday successor of my youth was the last of the small farmer class who regularly wore a smock frock and that, said rumour, was washed once a year and the for the Odd Fellow procession of Whit Monday. The other side of the lane had property very much as now, except for a slight repair that time had required. Returning to the Village Street, the large walled garden and the two Beaumont cottages were then the Parr farm place and there I first saw and used the large mangle then so popularly used in the countryside. A later representative of the Parr family was the last Constable of the Court Leet that persisted until the last great war. The frontal cottage of the group next seen was the home of a Samuel Smart who, with his wife, my mother's sister, went out to New Zealand in the year 1858 and I have the diary then recorded, very faded but still legible. He settled in Christchurch. I think it probable that the group were among the cottages built on the Enclosure wastes. The farm place of the Wrights was a then a cottage farm holding and only the back part of the present house then existed. The frontal part of later construction became the lodgement place of the race of curates of the Vernon period. It was to that place that my uncle, Samuel Lewin, went when he was dislodged from the farm house of the school site and there, in its yard and garden, I spent much of my youthful leisure. The post office and the Upont house, once the principal bakery of the Village, were then antique and probably thatched and school boys might be interested in viewing the only present example of the open chimneys, once so common, and the cosy corners, still left in their original form. There the long clay pipes were smoked and the open chimney was the proper place for their smoke. The cottage farm place next seen replaces a former Beer house and the house, as restored in the present form, became the home of the race of schoolmasters and the last of the schoolmistresses who taught in the house place of the Village Street and against the entrance to the Churchyard footpath to Pepper Street when it had only one story and when the garden was in the street. The succeeding small farmstead was then a little more original than now and when I first knew it a stocking frame knitter lived there and his name was Shipman, probably the oldest of present day surnames. The two of which the first is now a butchery were then one farm place; St Michael's was probably a gentleman's residence, as now; that of the Marshall's has seen little outward change; and the same is true of the Crampton's place.

Chapel Yard was a garden strip; the homes of the street front did not exist; the Chapel site was the thatched home of an old Cotgrave race; and its orchard stretched along side the strip of Chapel Yard. The remainder of the street had only the Pinfold, without the houses and from thence was only the Glebe farmstead, now occupied by the Swingers. Returning from the Chapel Yard to Candleby Lane, the first cottage with ancient stone foundations was a small farmstead; the double cottages, if then existing, were thatched; the homestead of the corner of the street and Risegate was an orchard residence; the residence of the bus owner is among the oldest of the Village and in my youth was the home of a Village Carrier. Only another house then existed in the lane and that was a very old thatched one that remained to my time on land since the property of Mr Charles Thurman. Mr Barnes, an old man in my youth, was the only Village falsetto singer I have known and he was the only illiterate man of the Village of my youth. He was a member of this earliest choir of the Free Methodist Church, now closed. What hymns he could memorise he sang. For all others he used a sort of sol fa language of his own. All the Village drains were open and where they met on the Cross was a cart bridge; the roads were rough and stony; if they had no wireless they had many tongues and much gossip; newspapers were weekly and infrequent but life was as interesting as now.

It was the time when its famous cherry orchards were planted and the chief of them was at the Manor House. In my youth the last of them still remained. Tradition averred that a cherry fair was held in the street and it further stated that a regular visitor was the Rector of Holmepierrepont. The Village was governed by the Court Leet and the Church by its annual Church Meeting but, as the same people attended both, their funds were largely treated as one. For the repair of the Church there was a Church Rate and that continued to my time. Whether the old wooden gallery was then in the Church or was one of the creations of the first restorations of the century I do not know but it remained until the restoration of 1878. It probably did the office of the ancient Rood where the children gathered and the place of the local musicians then led the singing. The instrument of my youth was an old type of harmonium. The much quoted King Charles rules of the belfry – no Profanity no Divine Ordinances: touch no State Matters; Urge no healthage (?); Pick no quarrels; Maintain no ill opinions; Encourage no vice; Repeat no old grievances; Reveal no secrets; Make no comparisons; Keep no bad company; Make no long meals; Lay no wagers; Do nothing in anger; have as little to do with King Charles as with the man in the moon but they represented advice of a very early period.

The Church

There was half a Church at the time of the conquest, probably the nave, a remnant, perhaps, of the former Saxon Hall. Its main architecture is decorative, though one window of the south aisle is Early English and so is the Chancel Arch and some of the pillars of the Nave. The walls rest on rubble and have required support.

The tower is of the Fourteenth Century and the large window of the Chancel has always been of the Perpendicular type. The wall of the Churchyard was probably built of Wolds stone soon after the Enclosure. Some of its bells are very old and others very young, the product of several restorations. As Cotgrave had originally two Manors it had also two Rectors and since both were acquired for presentation by the Pierreponts and were held as family livings, its tithe of large and small continued intact. Probably also the Monastics similarly continued the Rectory status. The first Rector of the Lenton Monastics was in 1239 and his successor created a Chantry specially to pray for the souls of departed members of his own family.

The Chantry priest who succeeded him in the Rectory was content to leave them in purgatory. His successor was a foreign Bishop, probably selected by influence of Rome. The first of the Pierrepont Rectors of 1557 was a William Pierrepont and Roger Smyth who succeeded him held both the Rectories. Thomas Huht, who came from Lambley on February 24th 1619, married a daughter of the Scrimshires of the Hall. He quarrelled with the Bell-ringers, struck some of them with his staff, was brought before a Church Court and was absolved.

The Rectors of the second mediety began with William de Malden, presented by the Archbishop of York in 1280. The first of the Swineshead Monks was Robert de Canderby of 1283 and two years later a Robert de Candelesby succeeded him. Both were Danes and probably the street name Candleby lane was suggested by these two. In 1498 Robert Scrimshire was Rector. He was buried in the Church Chancel. The last of the Swineshead Rectors was its abbot John Addyngham who, when his Monastery was despoiled in 1517, took his own Rectory. The Rev. John Clarke of the Commonwealth was dismissed at the Restoration. He retired to Basford and there died at the age of 39 years. He was a good man and a faithful priest and his last text was – See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as a fool but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Ephesians, 15, verses 15,16. Six years later William Sanday and his wife, John English, Sarah Champion and Francis Clarke of Cotgrave were fined for non-attendance at Church. In the same period John Bunyan, author of Pilgrim's Progress, was imprisoned for the same offence. The Persecution ended in 1689 by the Toleration Act that prescribed registration for Nonconformity. Among the nominations to the United Rectory was John Scrimshire of Cotgrave who died in 1669. He was succeeded by the Pierrepont Crompton of the Enclosure period who, on accepting it in 1756, may have resided in his Rectory but when, a few years later, the Rectory of Holmepierrepoint was added to it, I think he went to reside there. His successor, Nathan Haines was the worst of all the pluralist Rectors and he certainly resided at the Vicarage of St Mary's, Nottingham. His second wife was daughter of William Scrimshire of Cotgrave. He died in 1806 and his second wife, who followed him in 1811, was the last of all the members of that old Cotgrave family. His successor, John Bristow, who also held the St Mary's Vicarage and died in 1810, probably lived there. William Saltren then appointed was drowned in the Thoresby lake and never saw his Rectory. His death in 1811 was honoured by a beautiful Flaxman monument in the Church of Holmepierrepoint. John Henry Browne, then appointed, was the first of the new century resident Rectors and he was also the Archdeacon of Ely. He was the builder of the original part of the present Rectory and he held an estate of nearly 600 acres. When corn was at its highest price he was a wealthy man. In my youth many -people had stories of him and undoubtedly, his influence was great. His portrait is in the Church vestry and he served the Village well, carrying out at least two restorations in which the nave was re-seated and the Chancel restored. His son became Rector of Plumtree. He also had much influence in Nottingham as one of the founders of the Bromley House Library and an original trustee of the new Trinity Church.

The Rev. Harcourt Vernon who succeeded him in 1858 and remained to my time, was a rich man who later succeeded to the family estate of Grove Hall and later took his place there as Rector. He was the Rector of the new school building time (1862) and was very generous in his benevolences. He was also picturesque, always wearing his Oxford cap and robes in the street. His man of all work was named Stephan and I never knew any other. His successor, the Rev. Alfred Hensley was Rector of the greatest of all restorations, that of 1878 when it acquired a new interior and it was he who sold his farm lands acquired at the Enclosure to the third Earl Manvers and placed the whole Rectorial income in the hands of ecclesiastical commissioners. During that restoration the Church lost its old gallery, the seats, as now, replaced the former box pews and I was sorry to see the end of the ornamental words of the Chancel arch which read: "Behold I give to you good tidings of great joy" He was an old-fashioned man, homely and sensible. He preached good sermons and so, at home, did his wife.

He enlarged his Rectory by the addition of the library section and of the lawn and the chief alterations of the Church were a new weather-cock for the steeple; a new Chancel window; clerestory windows; a new pulpit; a new font, a gift of his predecessor; stained and varnished seats and a reconstructed porch. The builder was Mr R Young of Lincoln and the architect was Messrs Evans and Jolley of Nottingham. It was re-opened by the Bishop of Lincoln, Dr Wordsworth whose text was St John, Chapter 2, Verse 11. The whole cost was about £1,600, largely subscribed by the Earl Manvers. The Rector made one mistake, for when the Earl Manvers saw sheep in the Churchyard and protested by letter, the road across to Pepper Street was blocked by two styles of three staves and when one morning disclosed that the top one of each was missing there was great consternation and, though a reward was offered for the discovery of the offender, he was not found. He was the father of Mr Charles Thurman whose property was affected by the change as well as the right of road to the Chapel. It resulted in one of the few contested elections for Churchwarden and then the right thing was done by enclosing the Churchyard, without detriment to the footpath. I have a pamphlet by the Rector who therein protested to the Lord Salisbury against the growing influence of Puseyism in the Church. It was well written but too stately and verbose.

He retired from his office in 1897 and was succeeded by the present Archdeacon Hales who came direct from a Plumtree curacy. The first reform of his time was a pipe organ opened on Easter Day 1900, when the organist was Mr Harry Mensing, son of the Schoolmaster and his successor. It required the enclosure of an ancient window of the North Aisle and the removal of an ancient tomb. A new communion table was placed in the Chancel and also a jewelled altar cross - "To the glory of God and in loving memory of John Henry Browne and Elizabeth, his wife". A further restoration of 1906 added a treble bell to the tower, when the rest were recast; the clock had Cambridge chimes, the upper spire renewed and the belfry restored. The re-dedication on All Saints Day 1906 was by the Bishop of Southwell. The new cemetery was a work of his time and during his lifetime an addition has been made. On Sunday June 28th 1920 the War Memorial was unveiled and on that day large crowds were addressed by the Rector, the Rev. W Jones of the Wesleyan Church and the Rev. T P Dale of the United Methodists. A further memorial was admitted in honour of Archdeacon Browne and his wife; and in 1907 there was a further one in memory of Thomas Wood Mensing, a past Schoolmaster and Parish Clerk. With the war memorial and on the same day was unveiled a new east window of the Chancel with figures of Christ on the Cross and others of St John and the mother of Jesus.

During the time of that Rectory the old and closed Wesleyan Chapel was acquired by the Earl Manvers for adaptation as a Parish Hall. The present Rector, now Rural Dean of Bingham succeeded in 1924.

Methodism

It was introduced about the year 1800 by a missionary group from Radcliffe, whose first meetings were in the open air. They were received very badly and the first members were much persecuted. Finding their first fold in the house of John Cooper of the Churchyard strip, they slowly added to their members until about the year 1808 when a new site was acquired in the Chapel Yard for the first Chapel. In 1839 when Methodism was celebrating its centenary a larger one was built on the same site and that one was the one which is now converted to an Institute. For Wesleyan Methodism that accommodation remained until 1902 when the new Chapel was opened for sacred services. The organ was opened on March 25th 1915 when it had its first public recital. It was built by Lloyd of Nottingham. The family most renowned in connection with old Methodism in Cotgrave was that of William Hames, born in the Village and who lived to the age of 83. His mother before him saw more than 90 years and she was the first post mistress of the Village. It was that family that created the once-famous South Notts Brass Band and all his sons but one were in it. George Hames, the eldest son was one of the best cornet players in the county and a judge of many band contests. Its second local preacher was the father of the present Arthur Crampton and he has been a local preacher since 1878. The school premises were opened about the year 1925 and when the whole received electric light in 1933 the whole premises, with the organ, were restored. They were the first to be so lighted

Free Methodism

Prior to the year 1849 Methodism was much agitated by the reforming zeal of those anxious to make its constitution and officialism more liberal than it had become. The Conference was still as Wesley had made it, without representation and largely shorn of its ancient evangelism. It suffered from the reaction of the French Revolution, having become more a society than a Church. In Nottingham one of the chief of the critics was stationed and Cotgrave was in his circuit. He established here weeknight classes in which many farm labourers gained all the scholarship they ever had and William Hames profited more than anyone. The reforming Minister was succeeded by one who overdid this conservation of the official class with the result that several expulsions occurred among whom were Mr Thurman, with others equally distinguished in its membership.

A site for the new building was acquired and it was opened on Sunday March 3rd 1853. Its schoolroom was adopted for Sunday and weekday classes and, before long, its influence was apparent. Its leading members were the family of the Thurmans, my own, the Randalls, Hives with his band of Hope zeal and the beautiful singing of his daughters; with an old man John Cope, one of the expelled and a farm labourer with Bible knowledge and power of speech, remarkable for one so lowly of place. He was born in 1794 and I just remember him. In the old Wesleyan Chapel and in the year of Queen Victoria's succession to the throne the first Temperance Society was established but the Band of Hope movement and good Templarism had most success in the new premises of Free Methodism. The singing had, at the beginning, been led by my father with his accordion but when an American organ was introduced I, after a short interval, became its player and so continued to the end of the century when our family connection with the Village was closed. When Union became imperative, locally, as well as nationally two last special services were arranged, the first conducted by a Rev. T Scowby, then in his 97th year who baptised a son of Henry Thurman, lately of the Pepper Street farm. The last was by George Thurman, being in 1852, the year of the Chapel building, who lived to his 91st year. The first united service in the newer and larger place was on Sunday September 2nd 1934, when my brother, Alderman John Lewin was the preacher; and the second Sunday service was conducted by Mr Arthur Crampton, the oldest member of the old Wesleyan Church. On Monday September 3rd at the public meeting in the Chapel the scheme of Union was declared.

The Enclosure

The Enclosure Act of 1790 referred only to the Village, as Stragglethorpe, on returning from the ancient sheep farming of its Monastic period, had been long enclosed and, for its area, only the boundaries are given, with the declaration that all belonged to the Pierrepont Estate. It cancelled the old-time commutation fee of £36 per year due from that estate and left the Village to supply the value of that and all other tithes in land. Being a Rectory, Cotgrave had given tithe on all produce, great and small and the Rector finally received an award of nearly 600 acres; along the road to Peashill from the Clipstone Road and by the Gripes to the Wolds and on the Wolds itself with a small allotment about the new Rectory site, still possessed. The Commissioners were Mr William Sanday of Stragglethorpe and agent of the Pierrepont estate; and Mr William Fillingham, who chiefly represented the Rector, then probably an absentee.

There were then 2365 acres of open lands and 1237 acres of enclosed, of which the Pierreponts obtained 2278 acres. Mrs Lionella Clay had 286 acres, chiefly about Cotgrave Place but with some on the Wolds, as did all of them. Mr Kendall, probably of Peashill, had 132 acres, William Morris, of the Village, had 74 acres, Thomas Morris 28 acres, including Gozens and the canal fields, now owned by Mr Thurman. Joshua Mann had 22 acres; Mary Mann 13 acres, Thomas Frost, with three homesteads, had 14 acres, including the orchards of Mr Lawrence and the cottage of my father's birth; John Collishaw, who occupied the house of the Smiths at Baker's Hollow, had 26 acres, including that now owned by Mr Chamber ? ; Thomas Scottern of a homestead adjoining Candleby lane had 7 acres; James Hickling of Risegate, probably the original one, now occupied by Mrs Evans, had five acres; William Sanday of probably the Fryer house of Mawkinshire Lane, later sold to Earl Manvers, had 4 acres on the Holme side. Richard Cole, a minor and owner of the Lodge-on-the-Wold had 2 acres; Samuel Parr of Candleby lane and Risegate had 3 acres on the Gripes; John Champion, whose signature is on my copy of the Act, of the Town Street had 3 acres on the Wolds; John Bagguley had a homestead and 3 acres on the Gripes. Six acres went to the Surveyor of Highways and 22 acres to the overseers and Churchwardens for the repair of the Church. And in that award was the Marlpit and the field adjoining. The School and Workhouse were allotted to the Wardens and overseers in lieu of lost rights of Commons. The fencing and the rest was to be completed in seven years and for ten years the Commissioners were to direct the cultivation of the enclosed lands. The grass of the old roads was to be the letting property of the Court Leet and cattle grazing on the new lanes were to be impounded and only set free for an additional fee of half-a-crown. The Lord of the Manor had all mineral rights, other than limestone, with the power to take possession, subject to compensation, of all lands wherever such metals were found. There was nothing at all for the civil community who lost, without recompense, all rights of Common. The scheme proved so costly, as ordered by the Commissioners, that the small awards were lost for the cost of the enclosure and, by the second decade of the new century, the Pierrepont Estate had swallowed up most of the small proprietors, with exception of the Rectory holdings and that of Cotgrave Place, which, in its turn, became the property of a William Janson who died there in 1800, after which and by 1820 it was Manvers property and the residence of Robert Burgess, the Estate Agent. The Act contains a list of new roads thus authorised, with footpaths, then essential but now mostly forgotten. But Bakers Hollow became a wider road; the Gozens was further excavated from the Gozens Common, Woodgate Lane became the road to Peashill; that to Stragglethorpe and the Nottingham Road on the Radcliffe side were widened and made more tolerable.; and Cotgrave Place had a new carriage drive. The w--- (?) had a stronger cart bridge and that, when within the next decade the canal had its rise, was a very necessary creation. But the Village drains remained open and fever, especially among children, had its annual toll.

The Homesteads of the Enclosure Wastes

The roadside wastes provided sites for a series of poor cottages erected by the labour and at the cost of the best of the farm men of that time and it was much assisted by the new enterprise of the Village brickyard. Among them were the two rows extending from the Mainstreet to the Butt field; the two cottages of the Pinfold and corner site that extended to Broadmeer pond; with others totalling seventeen but now difficult to place. By a general enclosure of later date and for the cost of repair all were taken over by the Manvers Estate and the process was as follows: the Court Leet secured a ground rent of about a guinea a year for all – the same was paid to the Lord of the Manor, though it had some amount of legal sanction, it was generally regarded as an appropriation and created general discontent.

Education

At the Enclosures the only school was that of the end of the Village created in 1752 and enlarged about the middle of the nineteenth century, as the poems of Rusticus testify. The schoolmaster then would be a Mr Browne, the father of a race of Brownes of later date. He ended his days in the restored place adjoining the post office and with him as lodger when the new schools were opened in 1863 was Miss Golding of the long-established girls' school which then disappeared. That school was in the cottage then of only one storey which, as now rebuilt, is against the pathway across the Churchyard to Pepper Street. When it was closed as a school it became a home of refuge for elderly widows, the first being a Mrs Hill from the Brickyard who attained the age of ninety-one or two. That custom remained until the period of Mr Hensley when it also relapsed to the Manvers Estate. Probably originally, it was a benefaction of Mr Vernon who, being rich, must have spent his whole Rectory income in such a way. The last schoolmaster of the old boys' school was Mr Geeson who had a cork leg and who lagged behind in all the Church responses. He was also the first librarian of the old school which lasted for half a century; the first paid Parish Clerk; and the best master of penmanship I have known. But he was a pedantic whose every word spoke of schoolmaster.

About 1840 the Walker residence was built for him but he preferred that in the corner of Mawkinshire Lane, with its rich orchard and garden. Peace to his memory, for he was a good man.

The first schoolmaster of the new schools was Mr Thomas Wood Mensing, son-in-law of the schoolmaster Browne. He came from a Church school in Nottingham and his wife, then young, had charge of the girls' section. The site of the new building was a gift of the third Earl Manvers and he also contributed about a thousand pounds to its cost, as well as a portion of the maintenance costs. The fees were about threepence, weekly and, as then the population was at its highest, the schools were always full. Infants still went to the old school which was then presided over by a Mrs Kirching who lived in one of the cottages of the wastes of Butt field and there I went for some of my earliest years before continuing my education at the new school. As parish Clerk, Mr Mensing was a busy man and, understanding the art of land measurement, he acted in such capacity for the annual race of Irishmen who came over with simplest tools to cut the corn for harvest. We chimed the rivers, mountains, cities, sang rounds, read Goldsmith's History of England, learned his Deserted Village, had reading, writing and drawing lessons and life was happy then. Most things were done on slates but our classes were large and elder scholars were often deputed to help the backward juniors. My school days were over before Harry Mensing succeeded his father but he came from elsewhere with a good reputation and, had his life been longer, he would have been more successful.

He retired and when I last saw him he was learning the new language then formulated for international usage, a thing for which I have had no use. Having left the Village, I knew little of his successor, Mr Watson and not much more of Mr Glover, though I had known his wife when she was Miss Winnie Woolat and I was aware of the musical reputation of her husband whose death in 1925 was a great loss to the teaching and musical world. He was succeeded by Mr Atwell from Keyworth where all the Atwells are born. I knew more of Mr Riley whose brief period was a good one and the present schoolmaster for whom this brief story is prepared has yet to prove his capacity.

The Manvers Properties Rebuilt

About the year 1840 the second Earl Manvers, who held the estates until 1860, undertook a thorough renovation of his properties, leaving his mark on the Village to this day. Generally, the wall window spaces without frames are the restoration of an earlier period but two houses against the entrance to the Butt field so marked are of the 1840 period or erection and that was the last of the old window tax. The Walker cottage was then built, the opposite row to those on the waste were either newly built or restored and most of the porch dwellings were restored then. It was a time when practically all the Manvers properties lost their thatch and when the initial part of the farmstead of Mawkinshire Lane was built, replacing the old place of the Thraves who first used the canal for coal delivery. There is scarcely a house of that estate which does not show signs of the restoration of the period and when the properties were recently sold practically all had a century of age or a century of restoration. Since the school house in 1863 no Manvers new house was added to the Village, though prior to the last war plans were made to erect a series on the garden land of the Beaumont property adjoining Mawkinshire Lane. From that of 1840 all Manvers enterprise has been in mending, rather than in building, though some houses, such as that of Mrs Evans, have been almost rebuilt during recent years.

New Suburbs of the Nineteenth Century

The first was Chapel Yard, a garden strip of the Enclosure time. The Chapel, as already stated, was the first of the lane, snatched, almost by miracle, from the Rev. Pierrepoint Crompton whose offer was a little too late. Then Mathew Cooper, son of the John Cooper of the Churchyard site, built the tall house nearby which now Mr Crampton holds. Others had had quite a series of ownerships before being finally added to the Crampton properties and the larger ones erected early in the century by Mr Thurman, the father of Charles, where all his sons and one daughter were born included the Carpenter's shop where, for a short period, reforming Methodists held their meetings.

The cottage row of the Grippe dates from 1850, erected by a Mr Parker who then had control of the brickyard. He was a man of much enterprise and did much other good in the Village. Whether he was the Parker who built the original portion of the Lawrence place in 1814 or a later one of that name I cannot say but he had some part in closing some of the open drains, especially about Risegate where, originally, alongside the high wall was a stream with a horse pond. The group of Thurman properties about the closed Chapel was built about 1850 or later and then and in the new century the old cottages of the plot, as old as any in the Village were almost rebuilt. The cottages of the Lawrence yard are older than his house, having probably been built before the first part of the Lawrence house was erected. The father of Mr Parker Peet was born in one of them.

The Chamberlain cottages are of the mid-nineteenth century but that adjoining the Dixons or Wyers is a mixture of ancient and modern. That to the left of the Grippls, standing alone, was built for the Dixons by the father of the Thurman's but the bungalow was built for the late Mr Haslem, once a member of the Bingham Rural Council and, for a period, a resident of his Bungalow. The house of Hollowgate Lane near to the bridge is the earliest of the new century houses of that side of the Village and, amongst the after-war houses, are those of the Urban Council; that of Mr Smee, my own and its neighbour of the Howitt's. That of Mr Richards near to the site of the old steam mill is an after-war dwelling; and the two with their neighbour, of Candleby Lane, with the last of all occupied by Mr Thurman, for which his brother was architect, completes the list. The road from the Washpit to Peashill was made by order of Mr Wordsworth when agent of the Manvers Estate and he also rebuilt or enlarged in the Village ware that of Mawkinshire Lane; the Wright place and the attempt that failed of recreating St Michaels as a modern farm place.

The canal was authorised by an Act of 1793 and its passage through the Parish was almost entirely through lands of the Manvers Estate. It was originally the work of a private company to send by water what was so difficult to transport by roads of that time. It was eventually taken over by the Great Northern Railway Company, becoming then subsidiary to, and not competitive with, the railway. Its wharfs for the Village were badly arranged; on the Nottingham side of the Cotgrave bridge, making transport as difficult as possible and the other against the Hollowgate Lane bridge was more a Manvers convenience than a Village advantage. It was very costly in locks and bridges and in my time it had become of most use to transport Nottingham manure to the fields along its course. During its construction, whilst Enclosure was in progress, it was of much local service as a wage-earning concern.

Population

1801	1811	1821	1831	1841	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1921	1931	596
	666	779	842	850	833	873	831	818	702	634	617	681	

During the thirty years from 1858 to 1887 the mortality of adults was 473 and infants 87. Ben Simpson, the first occupier of Grippls cottage, who died in 1860, was the first to be buried in the extended grave section of the Pepper Street side. He had previously lived in Candleby Lane and from him it derived its name of Ben's lane. In 1863 a boy was drowned and Mr Barlow of the Pepper Street farm committed suicide. In 1870 one person was scalded to death. In 1873 one person was kicked to death by a horse and another died by scalding. In 1874 there was a death by railway accident.

Things in General

The old stocks were cut down by Mr Mensing in the 1870s to make room for roundabouts at feast time and I saw him do it. The last mending of the Pinfold that I know of was during 1844-5 when both gate and wall were restored. It was in use in my boyhood. About the middle of the century the chief income of the Court Leet was from the lane lettings, from which in 1856, £45-11s-0d was received. In 1866 it was £41-1s-0d but by 1872 it had gone down to £23-8s-0d. In 1875 it rose to £26-10s-0d but from 1884 to 1888 the average was only £5. In 1890, when the lane letting and the Court Leet ceased, the income was 13s-6d. In 1856 the Court Leet spent £7 for rat catching. In 1874 £9-6s-2d was paid for dead sparrows and in the following year the sum was £7-2s-6d after which the birds were allowed to ravage as they chose, so far as the Court was concerned. Gas was brought to the Village by way of Radcliffe Road about the year 1874 and the special rate for bringing it is still charged. The oldest native of the Village I have known was a Mr Loach of one of the cottages against the Mill who saw the age of 93. Mrs Hill, the mother of William Hames, my grandfather, my father and Mr George Thurman each lived beyond 90 years. The register of births and deaths dates from 1559 and to the end of the nineteenth century the Thoroton Society have copied them. To the end of the last century the family of Rusticus carried on a large hosiery industry for the Morley firm of Nottingham that employed father and son as frame knitters.

Here is the poet's description of the Village about the year 1850 when his first poem was published:

Our sweet little village has qualities rare,
No Village with it in the shire can compare,
Its farmyards and cottages are both neat and clean
It sits in a valley surrounded by trees,
It receives in its pureness the great morning breeze,
It is blessed with a plenteous supply of good water,
And health paints the cheek of the peasant's sweet daughter,
A neat little Church with a tall Gothic spire,
Makes the prospect as pleasing as taste can desire,
It has a well-ordered Inn and a sure-going mill,
And a snug little schoolroom at the foot of the hill,
On Sunday you scarce would be able to tell,
Which was rich and which poor when you heard the Church bell.