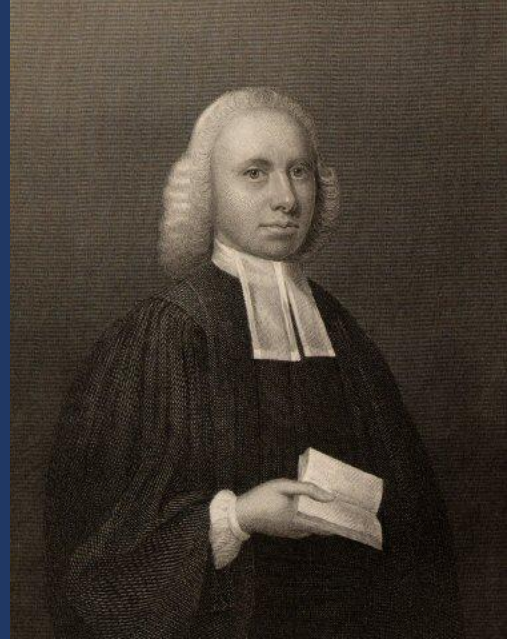


Breedon Lives: Rev. Walter Sellon (1715- 1792)



Rev Walter Sellon was appointed as curate of Breedon in 1759 through the patronage of the Countess of Huntingdon, Lady Selina Hastings, nee Shirley, whose religious beliefs eventually led to her split from the Anglican Church.

Although an Anglican minister, he had taught at John Wesley's school, and Methodist principles ran throughout his ministry. He was also a very popular preacher, hopefully with more success than John Wesley who wrote of Melbourne, 'There were many hearers: but I see little fruit'.

Rev Sellon was friends with Rev John Fletcher, vicar of Madeley whose preaching was so popular that people would be forced to stand outside and look through the windows. More people meant more mess, so the church clerk, Joseph Taylor, took it upon himself to charge people a penny for entry to the church! When the Rev Fletcher heard this, he demanded the clerk repay the money, "And, as to this iniquitous clerk, his money perish with him!"

Rev Sellon left Breedon in 1770 and moved to Ledsham, Yorkshire. A Methodist Chapel was later erected in Breedon in the late 18th-century.

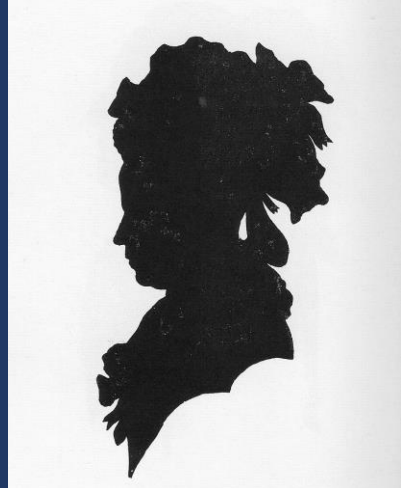


Breedon Lives: Sir Matthew Ingle Joyce

Sir Matthew was the son of John Hall Joyce of Breedon and Mary Ingle of Ashby. Having graduated from Gonville and Caius, Cambridge, he became a lawyer and was appointed a High Court judge in 1900.

Despite living for most of his life away from Breedon, he obviously felt his roots keenly. He wrote a pamphlet entitled *Who was St. Hardulph?* and in 1903, he gave an acre of ground to extend the churchyard to the north. Here, his plot is marked out with a large iron fence surrounding the vault in which he and his wife are buried.

Breedon Lives: Elizabeth Commins (c.1675-1745)

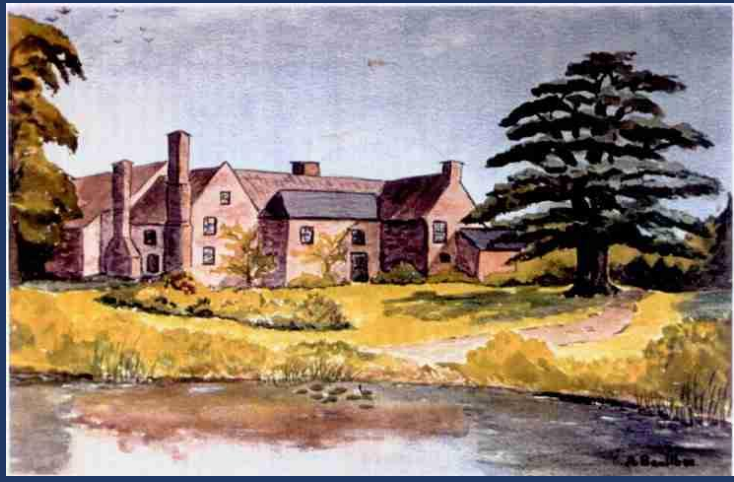


Elizabeth Commins was not born in Breedon, neither did she ever live here. However, her legacy was felt in Breedon for centuries after her death.

Originally from Hungerford, Elizabeth married Francis Commins, who had been born in Breedon but who had been apprenticed to a London mason after the death of his father. Francis was very successful- he helped build Hanover Square, London and at his death was building a house in Berkeley Square.

His rags to riches story was one both he and Elizabeth wanted to share with others from Breedon through the founding of a school. Francis left £300 in his will to Breedon, with Elizabeth leaving a further £700. This was to educate Breedon boys and girls, but the latter were only allowed to have 'two years education in Reading, Working and Writing'. In return, the church wardens were to apprentice one of the poor boys every 4 years. Until 1834, the school was situated in the upper room of the church porch.

Breedon Lives: Thomas Boulton (1663-1751)



Stordon Grange, the home of the Boultons.

In the central aisle of the church (now hidden under a carpet) is a fascinating epitaph to Thomas Boulton, who lived at Stordon Grange – a now demolished building near Osgathorpe. His epitaph relates that he was ‘A member of the Church of England, Contra distinguished from Popish Superstition & Presbyterian Fanaticism, A Zealous Patriot, A Good Parent, A sincere Friend’. This probably reflects the times in which he lived; six years before his death, an invading Catholic and Scottish Presbyterian army led by Bonnie Prince Charlie had got as far as nearby Swarkestone Bridge before turning north.

Thomas’ son, also called Thomas, married Lucy, almost certainly the illegitimate daughter of the Robert Shirley, 1st Earl Ferrers. A clergyman, he was appointed as rector of Brailsford (another of the Shirley holdings). In 1751, he lost his father on 11th March and his wife just eight days later. His father’s epitaph is almost certainly his creation, as both his wife and his mother have the same epitaph, ‘in piety and virtue inferior to none’.

Breedon Lives: George Hart (1889-1918)



Born in Breedon, George largely grew up at what is now the Holly Bush Inn. He became a baker and, in 1914, had moved to Skegness where he was a pastry chef in Lord Scarborough's tea house.

On 12th September 1914 he enlisted in the Lincolnshire Regiment, but was dishonourably discharged shortly after when he was found guilty of stealing a cake and money from the tea house. In 1915, having served his four month sentence, George enlisted in the Army Service Corps, where his skills as a baker were put to good use.

He served in Greece and India, but his service was blighted by ill health. He died on 20th June in Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore), India from smallpox. This was incredibly unlucky, as he had been vaccinated against the disease. He is buried in Bangalore, but is remembered on the gravestone of his mother and grandmother, as well as the village war memorial.

Breedon Lives: The Bird Tragedy



One stone in the churchyard records the deaths of three individuals from the same family who all died on January 1st 1840, and were buried together. Further research transpires not one, but two tragedies that caused the death of William Bird (39) and his two children: James (15) and Harriet (15 months).

William and his wife Mary lived in Lount; they seem to have had seven children. On January 1st, their youngest daughter succumbed to measles, an all too common killer of the Victorian young. On the same day, William and James were working in the nearby coal pits when the scaffolding gave way, burying them in earth; they died before they could be rescued.

It is impossible to know which death occurred first, but their impact must have been horrific. Mary is noted as being 'infirm' in the 1851 census, possibly struggling to get over the events of a single day eleven years previously, and she was buried on 21st July 1853, aged just 49.

Breedon Lives: Samuel Greatbatch (1855-1927)



Samuel and his eldest son, Ernest, in their uniforms

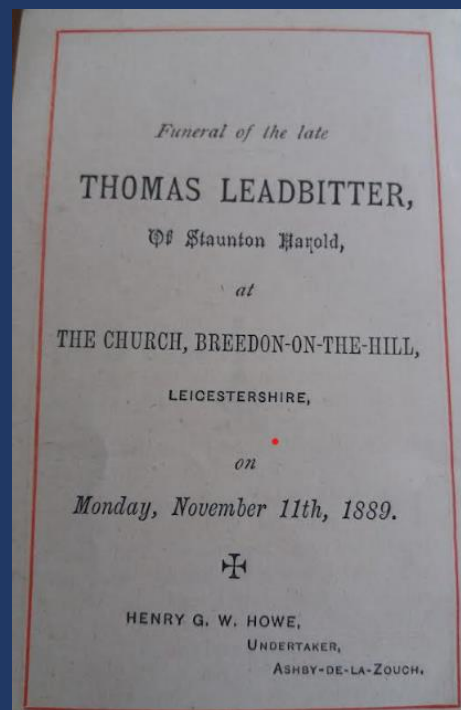
We are grateful to Linda Ford for giving us the history of her great-grandparents, of which this is a summary

Samuel Greatbatch moved to Staunton Harold in 1889 to become the head gamekeeper for the 10th Earl Ferrers, having previously worked at another of the Earl's estates at Chartley, Staffs. He and his wife Alma lived with their family at the Laundry Cottage, since drowned under Staunton Harold Reservoir; Alma helped with the estate's laundry. They lived here until the Earl's death in 1912, when Samuel was pensioned off but remained within the area working at various estates.

Samuel had a reputation for being a bit of a tyrant when it came to managing his land, so poachers had to beware. This was certain the case for Thomas Winters of Melbourne, who was taken to court by Samuel in 1910 for sending his dog to catch a hare. Despite the case being 'as flimsy a case as ever the Bench had been called to adjudicate upon', the bench found in Samuel's favour and fined Thomas 5s 6d.

Breedon Lives: Thomas Leadbitter (1818-1889)

Photo courtesy of Linda Ford



Thomas' gravestone records the fact that he was 'for fifty three years the faithful servant and valued friend of the Ferrers family.' Thomas was originally the Earl's butler at Chartley (like Samuel Greatbatch) before moving to Staunton Harold. Here he was the hose steward for the Earl's estates and one of his most important servants. Given his age, and length of service, the funeral was an extremely elaborate one, paid for and attended by the 10th Earl and Countess Ferrers. As well as the hearse, five coaches made their way up the steep hill to the church along with schoolchildren from Staunton Harold and many others from the wider area. The 10th Earl also paid for the tombstone.

In the 1861 census, Thomas is listed as 'Mr Leadbitter', along with the other 'upstairs' servants like the lady's maid. He is also listed as being married, although we have been unable to track down his wife. However, the family appears to have been one dedicated to service; 'relatives from Ashbourne' attended his service, and this may have referred to Mary Leadbitter, a retired domestic servant who had been born at Shirley, the family's home seat.

Breedon Lives: Frank Taylor (1858-1938)

Photo taken from *Hand-me-downs
and Hearsays*



Frank Taylor was born in Weston Colville and became Breedon's schoolmaster on 1st January 1878. In 1879 he married Annie Jane Tatchell, the daughter of William Tatchell, butler at Calke Abbey (Frank himself was the son of a butler who worked at Melbourne Hall). The couple lived at Holly Cottage and became key figures in Breedon; their son, Percy was the village postmaster, baker and grocer.

Frank eventually retired from the school on December 31st 1922, having served 45 years. During this time he was known for being a good teacher, and he also wrote *the History of Breedon*, served as clerk of the Parish Council and was such a big fundraiser for the Derbyshire Royal Infirmary that he was named a life guardian. He was also one of the driving forces behind the village war memorial, which commemorates his son, Claude George, who was killed in France in 1916.

Breedon Lives: Margaret Clifford

Picture courtesy of Ashby Museum



Perhaps the most well-known gravestone in Breedon's churchyard is that of John Johnson, who was murdered by the 4th Earl Ferrers in 1760. However, Breedon has many other connections to this infamous event, not least in a beautiful gravestone near the western gate. This is dedicated to Margaret, daughter of Richard Clifford, but fails to mention her full history (presumably because it was too scandalous for church property).

Following the Earl's disastrous marriage and separation on the grounds of his cruelty, Margaret was installed with her daughters at Staunton Harold Hall as housekeeper. She remained loyal to the Earl even after his arrest for murder, sending him daily letters during his imprisonment. Her four daughters were permitted to visit him, but not her.

She was left penniless by the Earl's death; as a convicted murderer, his holdings were forfeit to the crown. The Earl's heir restored a sum of money to each of Margaret's daughters, but she received nothing, relying instead on her offspring for support.

Breedon Lives: Rev Samuel Ingle (1838-1907)



The son of a Methodist minister, Samuel was not destined for the priesthood, having originally worked as a surgeon's assistant. However, by 1871 he had received Holy Orders and, after several other parishes, became Breedon's incumbent in 1877 where he had a good reputation with many, including the church wardens. However, his ministry here was to have an unfortunate end, laying bare the attitudes of the day.

Rather than having a rectory, the incumbent lodged with various village households. One such was Samuel Needham's, which was visited weekly by Needham's son George, aged 20. A romantic relationship was struck up between the two, with Rev Ingle writing letters to the younger man. Unfortunately, one of the letters was misdirected and opened by the dead letter office; upon reading the contents, they alerted the authorities who arrested Rev Ingle for indictment of indecent assault and solicitation. He was found guilty of both and sentenced to 18 months hard labour, the judge noting that this was probably the lighter sentence as the reverend would be disgraced for the rest of his life and would almost certainly lose his job.

However, for Samuel, this wasn't the case. On 31st January 1887, the *Jerusalem* docked in Sydney, Australia, with the reverend on board. After a little over a year, he began to minister again, even acting as locum for the Archdeacon of his diocese; newspaper reports state he was very popular with his parishioners. He died on 21st January 1907 after a period of ill health and was buried in Adelaide.

Breedon Lives: Rev. Charles Martin King Parsons (1899- 1953)



We are grateful to Rev. Parson's family for kindly sharing this information with us.

The son of a clergyman, Martin (as he was known), flew Sopwith Camels at the end of WWI before travelling to Saskatchewan, Canada where he was ordained and met his wife, Eleanora (known as Nora). In 1937 he decided to return home and was appointed as vicar at Breedon. The rectory was not ready for them, so whilst it was prepared they stayed at Donington Hall, where their bedroom alone was larger than the old grain silo where the family had lived in Canada!

Martin was a popular vicar, who was known to visit the pub on a Sunday to talk to those who did not attend church. He joined the Home Guard when WWII broke out and in 1943 became a chaplain in the army. When attached to 9th General Hospital, he was amongst the first medical staff to enter Bergen-Belsen Concentration camp, ministering to the survivors, many sick with typhus. One, a talented artist, asked Martin to get her some painting materials; he gave her paints and a bakelite lid. She was delighted, and gave Martin the end result; a lid decorated with medical equipment and the words 'Belsen Camp', 'June '45'. Sadly, the family don't think the lady survived.

Martin came home in 1946 and resumed his ministry at Breedon. He was responsible for encasing some of the Anglo-Saxon sculptures in lead (they had been removed inside in the 1920s) and oversaw many of the improvements to the church following the death of John Gillie Shields, who left a substantial sum to it. Sadly though, he suffered from ill health and died suddenly in 1953, the day before his birthday. His memorial, located outside the East window of the church, was organised by the villagers out of respect for a much loved vicar.