

Martin Heath Hall

- Named after Edith Mary Heath, Lived at Angorfa, Walsall Rd (now demolished) died 27th Feb 1952 aged 78,
- daughter of George Martin & married to Samuel Heath. Mr Martin had been one of the original members of Lichfield Brewing Co and gave the house adjoining Sandford House on Sandford St for conversion to the Lichfield Victoria Nursing Home. In 1927 Sam Heath gave land to extend Christ Church churchyard.
- **George Martin** was first man to be Sheriff of Lichfield for three years in 1891, 1892 & 1893 President of Victoria Hospital for 20 years and also a benefactor to Christ Church
- Edith left £35,365 but in will requested that her gold ring with monogram TPP and her gold ring with three diamonds, which she always wore should be buried with her as 'no one else would value them for their memories as she did'
- £500 to be invested with income arising used to refurbish and redecorate the 'Sam Heath Ward' at the Lichfield Victoria Hospital.
- Much of the estate left to the vicar & churchwardens of Christ Church for them to create 'The Martin Heath Memorial Fund'. Within this, a special fund to be set up to pay £1 to 12 deserving poor persons aged 60 and over in the parish of Christ Church,
- Martin Heath Hall built in 1964 with money from the 'Martin Heath Memorial fund'.
- Now used as polling station, for parties, under 5s group.
- Village Green at back

Scout Hut

- New hut built in 2009. Prior to this was a wooden hut used by Christ Church Boys club and located on Queen St. In 1947 converted to use as parish hall and used by Youth Club and Guides and scouts?
- Prior to that said to be one of the WW1 training huts from Brocton Camp on Cannock Chase.

Cottage

- Originally lodge for Beacon Place. The Walsall Rd once followed the route of what is now Christ Church Lane, and continued down the tree lined path next to the cottage, until it linked up with Lower Sandford St. The road was

realigned in 1832, and the path was turned into a carriageway from Beacon Place to Christ Church.

- from August 1875, was used as the residence of the schoolmaster or mistress of Christ Church school, who had to be 'competent, of good character & a communicant and member of the CofE'. Trustees could dismiss the master at any time without being compelled to state a reason.
- Also used the sexton of Christ Church and students from Lichfield Theological College. Nowadays it's let privately, and often confuses people looking for the vicarage, which is further much down the lane. Thanks to its position on the bend in the road, has also been crashed into several times!

Christchurch

- Built at the edge of the Beacon Place estate, with funds from Mrs Ellen-Jane Hinckley. Architect Thomas Johnson who lived at Davidson House).
- Mrs Hinckley lived at Beacon Place with her third husband Richard Hinckley. Hinckleys had their own pew. Mother of 'Sleeping Children' from her first marriage and son from second marriage, Hugh Woodhouse Acland, buried in one of 3 chest tombs behind church, alongside Ellen and Richard Hinckley.

Nearby is family vault of the Seckham Family.

- Samuel Lipscomb Seckham was an architect from Oxford and for a period, the owner of Bletchley Park, which of course is best known for codebreaking operations during World War Two. He also contributed towards the enlargement of the church in 1887. Moved to Whittington Old Hall, after which Beacon Place was let.
- Grandson Lieutenant Gerald Adair Seckham killed just before his 22nd birthday in 1915.
- Clock on tower donated in 1913 by Albert Octavius Worthington (one of the owners of the Worthington's Brewery in Burton on Trent), in memory of his wife Sarah. Believe Mr Worthington owned much of Leomansley and lived at Maple Hayes (now a dyslexia school & research centre), which can be seen across the fields at various points on the walk.
- At annual Vestry and Parochial Church Meeting in 1944, then vicar, the Rev. Buncher referred to his impending retirement by saying 'it would be an excellent thing to have a new vicar, as I have been here 12 years, which is long enough for anyone, especially in a parish where no one takes any notice of what the unfortunate vicar says'. Referred to the annual gathering as a farce as no one turned up to the meeting. Then went onto say 'there had been

nothing very wonderful during the last year, except that they had finished with a largely credit balance'!

- At centenary celebrations in 1947, lots of gifts and donations received including two new oaken gates given in memory of William and Mary Bennell, by their daughters. Current gates were created to mark the millennium by Derbyshire master blacksmith David Tucker. David was once kind enough to share information on how he designed and made the gates, as follows:
- *I am a Master Blacksmith and hand forge individually designed ironwork in response to the character and history of the setting. In this case, I was immediately struck by the lovely gothic arches and decided that I would like to reflect these strong forms in my gate. The gothic arch is synonymous with the church and I liked the idea of looking through my gates and seeing the same arches within the building.*
- *Structure is important to me and I always try to create forms where all is not immediately apparent. I want the regular visitor to discover new facets and aspects to the design over time. The gates are made up of repeated downward-facing arcs and upward-facing gothic arches, placed on opposite sides of the gate, to re-enforce the forms and to create a three-dimensional structure. I love 'honest' and traditional methods of fixing and so chose to join the bars together with rivets and collars which just seem to say 'here we are, holding these bars together'.*
- *In the end, I designed three different options for the gate; a more traditional option, a cheaper option and this one, my own favourite and the most contemporary of the three. I was delighted when the committee said that they would prefer an original and contemporary option, rather than pastiche. The gates were hand forged by me at my Derbyshire forge. I developed detailing such as hinges and latches etc. as I went along, so they would complement the over-all design.*

Christ Church Gardens

Built in 1921 by Lichfield City Council following the Housing Acts of 1919 and the 1920s. At a meeting of 'The Housing of the Working Class Committee' in March 1921, the surveyor reported that 'The contractor for the Church Lane Houses informs me he will, if it meets with your approval, provide and fix at his own expense, a stone tablet suitably inscribed, commemorative of the erection of the houses'. The council unanimously agreed to the tablet and agreed the wording would be 'Christ Church Gardens. These houses were erected by the Lichfield City Council under their

Housing Scheme 1921'. Alderman Haynes asked whether Christ Church Gardens was the title by which the Church Lane Houses would be known and it was agreed.

Swinfen-Broun cup for best kept council house gardens (inauguration 1936). By 1952, Mr T Boulton of 16 Christ Church Gardens had won the cup 6 times.

During WW2, held a civic defence exercise in September 1943 in the form of an imaginary raid. Warning sounded at 19.30 hrs in Christ Church gardens and local boys volunteered to be the casualties. They used practice anti-personnel bombs, high explosives, incendiary bombs and phosphorus bombs. Housewives section dealt with minor injuries.

Walsall Road Pumping Station and Baths

In 1824 a group including the town clerk, tried unsuccessfully to establish hot, cold, and vapour baths in the city, to be supported by subscription. The Conduit Lands trustees, urged on by the council, had plans for building baths from 1844 and in 1880 they gave permission for the cooling pond at their waterworks off Walsall Road to be used as a public bathing place. In 1885 Bishop C. J. Abraham, precentor of the cathedral, being anxious that the choristers should learn to swim, put a proposal for a public swimming bath to the Conduit Lands trustees. They agreed to provide a site, and in 1886 Abraham formed a committee. The trustees promised £300, and in 1887 they leased a site adjoining the waterworks to the committee at a nominal rent. Later that year the Victoria Baths, built 'with a view to economy rather than architectural style', were opened as a memorial of Queen Victoria's jubilee. On the expiry of the lease in 1908 the trustees took over the running of the baths, extending them in 1914. In 1928 the water was found to be polluted with sewage from Trunkfield Mill Pond and the baths were closed. After being refurbished they were reopened in 1933 on lease to the council. The baths continued in use until 1977 when they were replaced by a pool at the Friary Grange sports centre in Eastern Avenue. (Source: [A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 14: Lichfield](#))

Lichfield Conduit Lands Pumping station built 1874? Abandoned in 1930 when the well was found to be polluted. Water then supplied to the city from South Staffs Water? (Source: Chris Pattison via Brownhills Bob's Brownhills Blog).

The Dell

The cul-de-sac known as **The Dell** was once allotment gardens and tennis courts (belonging to the Friary Lawn Tennis Club founded 1937).

Leomansley/Melbourne Villas

- 1903
- Stable in garden of end house?

Christ Church School

The Hinckleys also built a school room opposite the church.

As per Christ Church school deed 1910, pupils were to attend Christ Church twice every Sunday. The system of education consisted merely of plain reading and writing, simple accounts with girls taught knitting and plain sewing. Trustees to keep buildings in repair and insure against fire, providing books, furniture and fuel. Children should be not less than 3 and not more than 14. Children under 8 paid 1 penny a week, older children paid 2p per week. If defaulted, child dismissed from the school.

The playground was on the other side of the lane (where the two semi-detached 1920s houses now are). The original schoolrooms were condemned in 1908 by the architect from the Board of Education due to the unsuitability of the site and structural defects. School would cease to be recognised. Staffs County Council proposed building a large council school, and gave the church until end of June 1908 to propose an alternative and any new church must be built by 21 October 1909.

Work began on the new **Christ Church School** in its present position on the opposite side of the road in 1910. Mrs Sarah Worthington of Maple Hayes laid a foundation stone which said 'To the glory of God 1910' in April of that year. Apparently the old school room was converted into houses. Mixed department for 192 children in the ten feet area and an infants room for 60 children in the 9feet area, divided by a folding screen into 4 classrooms.

Walls are Aldridge common bricks, Doulton terra cotta mould window sills and Darley Dale stone heads. Roof Aldridge tile.

April 1906 closed and disinfected following an epidemic of measles.

Carpenters Arms

The Rise - apartment block was built around 2002 and replaced **The Carpenter's Arms**, a pub that had kept the lane supplied with beer since around 1850. The name came from the trade of the original owner, James Page. Unfortunately, I can't see anything to remind people of the previous history of this site, other than possibly part of an old wall.

1841 census no mention of a pub. By 1861 census Maria Page – Beerhouse Keeper at the Carpenters Arms. In 1949, the pub applied for a full license. Supporting the application, one customer said there were a lot of elderly people in the district who

liked a short drink for medicinal purposes. Also, he explained that when a person took his wife, they liked a short drink, and you could not offer ladies a glass of beer!

Another customer reported how for whisky or other shorts, you had to go into Lichfield and if you weren't a regular, it wasn't often you got one (source Lichfield Mercury Archive)

September 1947 – Rev George Maydew held a harvest service here to raise money for the centenary celebrations. Contrast to Rev Buncher!

The Old Vicarage (part of which is now known as **Easter Hill**) built in 1847 for the first vicar of Christ Church, T A Bangham. In 1947 it was divided into two separate houses, and the front section was further divided into flats. The new vicarage was built on the opposite side of the lane in 1957, on the former tennis courts of the Christ Church Lawn Tennis Club. One thing that's always puzzled me about the old vicarage is the bell on the outside. There's also an old post box in the wall, apparently scheduled for closure.

Just past the old vicarage there's a row of cottages that used to be known as **Old Leomansley**. I believe that they pre-date the church, school and vicarage, and were built around 1830. Initially they seem to have been mostly inhabited by workers at Leomansley Mill, and on its closure in 1861, several became derelict. In the 1880s, several of the residents were employed as railway workers. The last house in the row, April Cottage, sits at the edge of Leomansley Wood. This was previously two separate houses and water was provided by a pump near to where the garden shed is. It has been suggested that this was once a gamekeepers cottage, but no documentary evidence has been found to support this.

Up the track (sometimes known as Pool Lane) with **Leomansley Wood** on your left. Old maps show that this path dates back to at least to the early 1800s. (For a longer walk you can veer left along another old track that once led to Maple Hayes and will take you through **Leomansley Wood** and into the later **Sloppy Wood**). Leomansley Wood is described as replanted ancient woodland which means that it is likely that the area has been continuously wooded since (at least) 1600, although the original broadleaf trees have been cut down and replaced at some point. As with all ancient woodland, it is incredibly important habitat for wildlife. In spring there are bluebells and wood anemones. Once owned by the Worthingtons, sold to a private trust and recently acquired by The Crown Estate.

Take a left at **Leomansley Mill Farm**, and eventually you'll reach the driveway for Leomansley Manor. Leomansley Brook runs through the woods into the fishponds on your left. Ice skating in early 20thc & fishing club on pond in 1970s. Drought 1976 meant that levels at the pool dropped dangerously low, and council were preparing

to mount a 'fish rescue operation'. Fortunately a storm overnight averted the problem.

Leomansley Mill was built in 1791, on or near to where the new house is. This was the building that transformed Leomansley from a piece of waste land into a small community. and there are traces of what may have been the old mill pool here too. Evidence of culverts and other brick structures. The mill had a succession of owners (two of whom went bankrupt) before being sold in around 1860. All that seems to have been left was mill cottages that became accommodation for servants from Maple Hayes. From the 1950s to 1994, the old mill cottages were known as Leomansley House, home to local artist Eilidh Armour-Brown (memorial bench in corner of Pipe Green). The house burnt down, and was rebuilt and renamed Leomansley Manor in around 2006.

Fulling Mill built 1791 by John Hartwell

The OS map from 1815 shows a 'Cotton Mill' in that area. Later maps refer to it as Leamonsley Mill. (In fact, the spelling of the name of the mill, and the area has changed several times. Variations include Lemmonsly, Leamonsley, Lemonsley, Lemondsley and in recent years, the name seems to have settled at Leomansley!).

[Trade token](#) showing Leomansley Mill at the time of owner John Henrickson.

Although the token isn't dated, we can work out roughly that it must date to between 1809 and 1815 – the county history tells us that Mary Hartwell, widow of John Hartwell, let Leamonsley Mill together with a warehouse and weaving shop on Lombard St in 1809, and the following notice in the London Gazette tells us that Mr Henrickson, who is named on the token, went bankrupt in 1815.

To be sold by auction, by order of the major part of the Commissioners named and authorised in and by a Commission of Bankrupt against John Henrickson, of the City of Lichfield, Cotton-Spinner, at the Three Crowns Inn, in Lichfield aforesaid, on Monday the 18th day of March instant, between the hours of Three and Six o'Clock in the Afternoon, either together or in lots, as may be agreed upon at the time of sale;

All the machinery, mills, spindles, bobbins, winding frames, warping-mills, looms, shuttles, and other apparatus, suitable for carrying on an extensive trade in the Cotton Spinning and Calico-Weaving business, now standing in Lemmonsley-Mill and Lombard-Street-Factory, in the said City of Lichfield, late the effects of the said Bankrupt. The machinery and implements are all nearly new, and in excellent condition, and may be viewed by applying to Mr. Palmer, of Mr. Rutter, of Lichfield aforesaid, the Assignees of the said Bankrupt; and further particulars may be had at the Office of Mr. Foster, Solicitor, Rugeley, Staffordshire.

Recently, I found a newspaper notice of the sale by auction at The George Hotel on 24th May 1833, giving another detailed description of the mill.

'A valuable watermill called Leamonsley Mill with a large Head of Water and Appurtenance, situated at Leamonsley near the city of Lichfield, formerly erected as a Fulling Mill, but lately re-built four stories high, and now in work and used for spinning hosiery and knitting yarn for the Leicester and other markets. Power to any extent may be added by erecting steam, being on the road from the Brownhill Colliery. Also. a right of four inches of top water from the pool of John Atkinson of Maple Hayes, covering about six acres of ground; with a good dwelling house, garden. land, combing shop and premises occupied therewith, late in lease to Thomas Leach.

It seems that the new owner, did decide to add steam power, as an 1860 newspaper carries an advert for,

*Leamonsley Mill, within one mile of the City of Lichfield. Woollen Machinery, Water Wheel, Steam Engines. Messrs C and H Gillard are instructed to sell by auction on Monday 30th July 1860, on the premises,
The Machinery and Plant of the above Mill, for spinning floss or fleecy wool, comprising spinning frames, roving and doubling machines, a very capital overshot or breast water wheel, constructed of iron. An excellent noncondensing or high pressure steam-engine, 2 feet stroke, of about 8 horse power, with beam, fly wheel, and governor and steam boiler, together with the shafting, as recently in use. Also, a capital brass lift and force pump, with lever on plank, quantity lead pipe.
This whole lot to be sold in several lots, as appear in catalogues, in consequence of the building being required for other purposes*

Follow the public footpath alongside the drive and this will take you to a kissing gate marking the entrance to **Pipe Green**. Also known as the Moggs and originally bequeathed to the poor widows of Beacon St in medieval times by unknown benefactor, the Green has been owned by a trust since 1793. The land has only been used for grazing (a tradition that continues with 12 to 18 cattle making the green their home between May and October each year. Controls the grass and allow the wild flowers to proliferate. Trust used to employ mole catchers.

Site of biological importance - a meadowland habitat supporting an incredible range of plants, birds and other wildlife. If you walk along the boundary wall of Leomansley Manor and head to the far corner you'll find a stone bench dedicated to Peter & Eilidh Armour Brown. From here you'll also be able to look across to Maple Hayes, where you can often see their deer in the park.

Maple Hayes

- In 1728, a farmhouse. Sold to George Addams a wine merchant who built 3 storey Georgian House in 1794. In 1884, estate was purchased by Albert Octavius Worthington. Burton brewer. His son William Worthington inherited. Greville's Belt plantation. Sometimes mistaken for a headstone. WWW's son. In March 1942, Greville shot after failing to stop at a checkpoint. Later that year his estranged wife Lady Diana Worthington's body was found in River Ouse. In 1950, the estate was sold. The house and around twenty three acres were acquired by Staffordshire County Council for educational purposes. Since 1981, the site has been occupied by the Maple Hayes Dyslexia School. The remainder of the estate, some 1,500 acres including farms, cottages and agricultural land, was sold to a trust

Leomansley Brook – In 1933, described as having sandy miniature beaches and a sandy bottom. Every summer hundreds of children play there, paddling and fishing, in some cases bathing and enjoying themselves through the long summer holidays.

Considered ploughing it during WW2. Too boggy? Referred to as Moggs like Beacon Park.

Conduit Pipe runs across green. Carried water from conduit head near Maple Hayes to pump in Cathedral Close for nearly 800 years until 1960s.

Diversion to medieval moated manor on edge of Pipe Green, near Maple Hayes lodge? This site would appear to be the half-timbered moated house probably the seat of Thomas de Abbenhall in 1294., Only artefact is medieval spearhead. However, metal detectorists have found coins, musket balls on Pipe green.

Anglo-celtic place name – lemo = elm.

Follow the track back up to Christ Church Lane. This track has been here for at least 200 years. Based on the steep sides either side, particularly at the Christ Church Lane end, I think it could be a holloway and all along the way you can see where people have tried to make improvements to the sandy track with rubble. Used to be used by farmers and joined up with lane passing Shingle Cottage on Abnalls Lane. At the end of this track, you'll find yourself back at Martin Heath Hall and Christ Church.