

## *Buddon Wood Farm, Quorn – History*

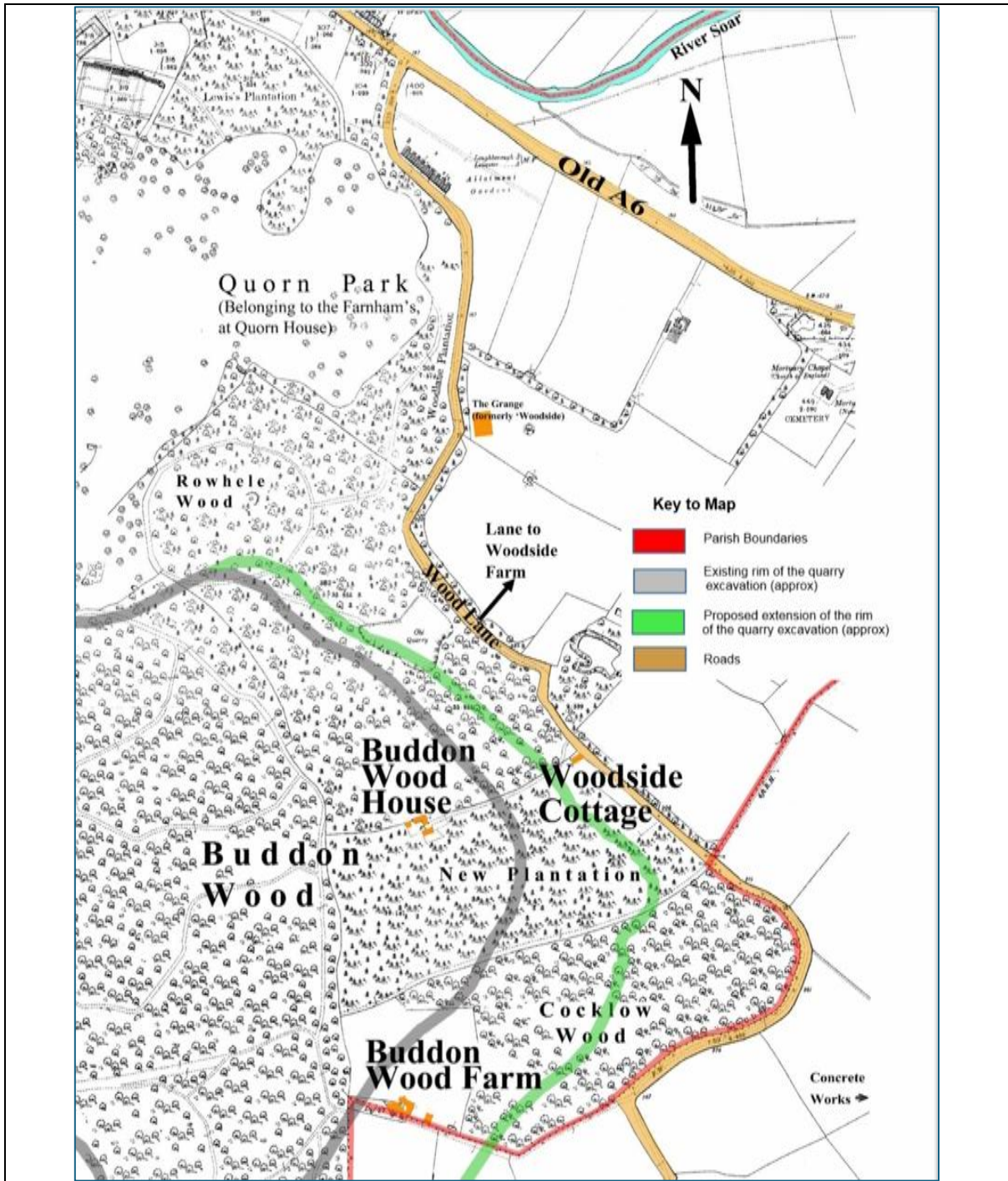
Buddon Wood Farm, (known locally as Gowards' Farm) was situated at the end of a lane off Wood Lane which passes through Mountsorrel, connecting the villages of Quorn and Rothley. The farmhouse probably dates from the eighteenth century and was built from the local pink granite, known as granodiorite.



*A painting of the rear of 'Buddon Wood Farm' from memory by Derrick (Bill) Goward and a photograph of the front of the farm.*



The farmhouse itself had an indoor well in a pantry area and, an outdoor well with a pump. It had an Aga cooker and an Inglenook fireplace where cooking and nurturing of any weak farm animals took place. There was no gas or electricity, so oil lamps and candles were needed. For many years there was no running water, even when it was piped to the farm, it was to one cold-water tap only so, the use of the wells continued. A large pond was a feature in the grounds.



A 1904 map showing the position of Buddon Wood Farm with annotations made in 2016, immediately prior to an imminent expansion of the quarry. Courtesy of Sue Templeman

William Pepper (Senior), of Mountsorrel kept 'The Exhibition Inn', a coal wharf and a pair of canal boats, that carried stone from the quarries to Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, returning with coal. In 1872, he took over 'Home Farm' in Mountsorrel which included land near the quarries, this adjoined a small farm near the woods. This farm was known as 'Buddon Wood Farm' and William was to hold the tenancy for 30 years.

It gets confusing because another William Pepper, known as Billy or Junior, who apparently was not related, took over both farms. He used 'Home Farm' as a stud

farm, for breeding Shire horses and large black pedigree pigs. 'Buddon Wood Farm' was used for 'store cattle' and sheep, also much of the land was turned over to arable. Billy retained both farms until he retired in 1948. "I had forty-three happy years there under the tenancy of the Earl of Lanesborough of Swithland Hall,' said Billy.



*The photograph shows Robert Dodson standing outside the Buddon Wood Farm in the early 1930s. Robert was the son of George and Gertrude Dodson (née Pepper), from Mountsorrel, who were regular visitors to the farm.*

George Goward was living at the farm whilst Billy Pepper held the tenancy probably, as the bailiff/manager. The first official mention of the Mr. Goward at Buddon Wood Farm, Wood Lane, Quorn appears in the 1921 Census, which, records William George 33 years old and Florence Grace Goward 22. George's occupation was recorded as 'horseman', born in Norfolk and Grace's as a 'land worker', born in Leicestershire. Their daughter Marjorie Henrietta was 13 and sons George Valentine 10 and George Thomas 6 were also recorded.

William George was known as **George** and Florence Grace as **Gracie**. They would eventually have six children, and the confusing family naming protocols continued: Marjorie Henrietta (Madge), George Valentine (Valentino), Arthur Thomas (Tommy - the birth certificate records his name as Thomas Arthur), Joan, Margaret and Derrick (Bill). George came from a Norfolk farming family and Gracie was from Thurlaston in Leicestershire, where her father was a butcher. Before taking on Buddon Wood Farm, we know that George had been a gamekeeper at Bradgate Park and lived in a cottage called 'Hallgates'. During the Great War he was loading horses to be sent to the front when he was trampled and suffered a damaged knee and had metal plates fitted.

The Earl, Lord Lanesborough of Swithland Hall and Captain Sir Robert Martin would regularly visit the farm and shoot on the land. Lord Lanesborough of Swithland was the landowner and Captain Martin, a Director of the Mountsorrel Granite Company, lived at Kinchley House. Poaching though, was frowned upon by the landowner and this was highlighted in May 1933, when the papers reported that, "Valentino Goward of Buddon Wood Farm, Rothley, was summoned at Loughborough, for trespassing in search of conies in Swithland. Apparently, he offered a bribe to the gamekeeper. Mr. Malcolm Moss, who prosecuted, for Lord Lanesborough, said Percival Lloyd, the

gamekeeper, saw four men working a field with a terrier dog. When they saw him, they ran away, but the defendant was caught. In his pocket he had a freshly killed young rabbit. Another pocket was full of stones. Defendant offered the gamekeeper and his son 2s. 6d. each on condition that he heard no more of the matter. Valentino said his five months' old terrier ran off while he was out for a walk, after being in the hot factory all day, and as he was going after it, he threw a stone at the rabbit, but not with the intention of killing it. He was fined 5s and ordered to pay 9s. costs."

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1933, the family was hit with devastating news when as was reported in the newspapers; "Quorn motor cyclist killed after terrible injuries in a collision with a lorry at Mountsorrel. Sadly, Thomas Arthur Goward, 17, of Buddon Wood Farm, Quorn, was the victim of a fatal accident on the main Loughborough to Leicester Road at Mountsorrel. Thomas, known as Tommy, was employed at Messrs. Clark's box factory in Mountsorrel and was riding his motorcycle towards Loughborough when he collided with a lorry on a bend near St. Peter's Church."

In the '1939 Register for Quorn' George's occupation is listed as the 'Farm Bailiff' at Buddon Wood Farm. When Billy Pepper left Buddon Wood Farm in 1948, the estate remained with Lord Lanesborough, but the Mountsorrel Granite Company took over the tenancy with George Goward remaining as the farm bailiff. It continued as a cattle and arable farm with all purchases, such as machinery, livestock and stock being sanctioned by the Mountsorrel Granite Company. For a time, Mr Goward had a farm hand, a Mr Stokes 'Stokesy', but very little is known of him other than he lived on the farmstead.

In March 1948, the newspapers carried the advertisement for the sale of the farm equipment and animals. Separate sales also offered 31 Acres of Grasskeeping on rich Soar Valley Meadows and farm furnishings.

**BUDDON WOOD FARM, MOUNTSORREL.  
MONDAY NEXT, MARCH 22, 1948  
SHAKESPEAR. McTURK & GRAHAM**

Have received instructions from Mr. William Pepper, who is retiring from farming,  
TO SELL BY AUCTION  
33 HEAD OF CATTLE  
3 HORSES  
4 STRONG STORE PIGS  
THE AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS and TACKLE  
31 ACRES VALUABLE GRASSKEEPING  
IN TWO LOTS, on Rich Soar Valley Meadows. To be either grazed or mown and the produce, removed, and the eddish grazed up to the same date. The Sale will commence with the Implements at 2.15 p.m. punctually. The Grass keeping will be sold at 5 p.m. Detailed Catalogues may be 'obtained from the Auctioneers' offices, 17 Wellington Street. Leicester (Tel 2275-6): and Granby Street. Loughborough (Tel. 2106).

Fires were a common hazard on Buddon Hill and on the 5<sup>th</sup> April 1948 a bracken fire was reported as: “menacing the farm which, was saved only by a timely change in the wind direction. Blazing bracken descended the hill to within 100 yards of the farm in a twenty-acre bracken fire. The Leicester Fire Brigade with the help of George Goward and his son and daughter spent four hours in beating it out. Mr Goward had first seen the smoke coming over the hill as he was returning from stone-picking in a nearby field at five o’clock in the evening. Red hot cinders blew into the farmyard stacked with straw, luckily it didn’t ignite. By nine o’clock it was under control. Mrs Goward said that the smoke was so bad in the house that she could hardly see and spent the next day sweeping up the blackened bracken. George said that one good thing was that the foxes that had been bothering his fowls had been smoked out.

The farm’s future was doomed when, in April 1955 an advertisement appeared headed ‘Grasskeeping’, for the sale of 54 acres of valuable Grasskeeping in 5 Lots for the Mountsorrel Granite Company Ltd. Meeting at Buddon Wood Farm homestead, adjoining Lots 1 and 2. at 6 p.m.

George and Gracie Goward had taken on the farm in the 1930’s and lived there until 1957 when, the granite company wanted the farm and land back to extend the quarry. After leaving the farm, they moved to North Street in Rothley. George passed away in November 1974 aged 87 and Grace in 1978.



The Buddon Wood Farmhouse and buildings began to disappear in the 1970s, when they were covered over by quarry spoil and a mountain of earth was used to form a barrier between the quarry rim and Wood Lane. All that remained was a gate and short length of the original farm track that connected to Wood Lane. Following the 2016 quarry expansion, the barrier size was further increased when, presumably, the old farmhouse and outbuildings were briefly revealed before finally being swallowed up, a sad end to what was once a busy farm and home.



*Both photos were taken on Wood Lane heading from Quorn to Rothley and indicate where, on the right-hand side of the road, on the apex of the bend, the track entrance that led up to Buddon Wood Farm was. In the top photo, taken in 2016, an old gateway, behind the large rocks could still be seen. In the bottom photo, taken in 2026, the old entrance is behind the parked-up council trucks and has been boarded up. Note, the reduction in the land height in this area can clearly be seen.*



By Dennis Marchant.  
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