

Bull in the Hollow – A Historical Identity Crisis?

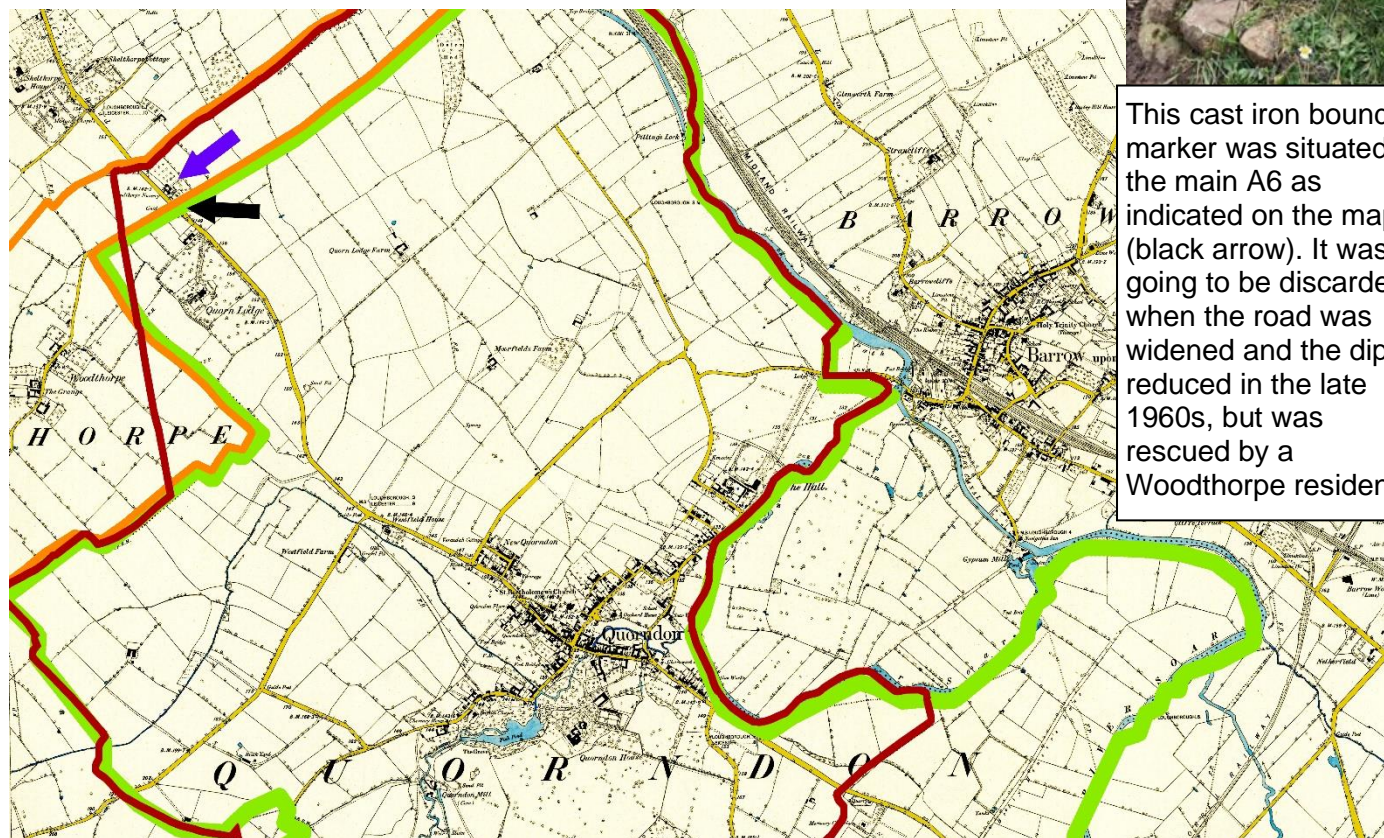
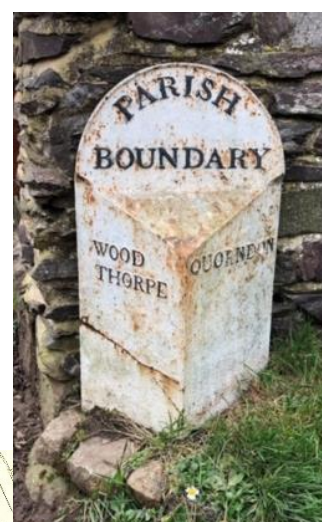
The Bull in the Hollow is a well-known landmark to us all, standing as it does on the main road from Quorn to Loughborough, but what do we really know about it? It has been used for several different purposes, has been known by various names and has belonged to three parishes – quite an identity crisis! When working on another project, local historian Sue Templeman became fascinated by this former inn and, like Alice, found herself tumbling down a rabbit hole of exploration!



Quorn, Loughborough or Woodthorpe?

The Bull in the Hollow has never quite known where it belongs. Situated about a mile from the centre of Loughborough and a mile and a half from Quorn it has come under different administrative areas depending on the time and purpose. For instance, on census returns in the 1800s and up to 1936 it came under the former Parish of Woodthorpe, as a civil parish today it is in Quorn, as an ecclesiastical parish it comes under Loughborough All Saints and because it was once owned by the Herrick family of Beaumanor, some records are classified under Woodhouse.

This meant that research was not straightforward and it wasn't possible to just make a bee-line for the Quorn records.



This cast iron boundary marker was situated on the main A6 as indicated on the map (black arrow). It was going to be discarded when the road was widened and the dip reduced in the late 1960s, but was rescued by a Woodthorpe resident.

Quorn civil parish boundary is in red and Quorn ecclesiastical parish boundary is in green. The orange line is the old Woodthorpe parish boundary. The Bull in the Hollow is marked with a purple arrow and the position of the old Woodthorpe/Quorn boundary post is marked with a black arrow.

The Needless Inn, Bull in the Hollow or Buffalo and Garland?

The Bull in the Hollow was originally called the Needless Inn. The origin of this name isn't known for certain, but other inns in the country are thought to have been so called because they were out of town in isolated spots and therefore could be said to be there without a reason or 'Needless'. With its location on the main turnpike road, although not in a town, the inn which almost certainly started life as a farm, was in an ideal position to pick up passing trade, providing food, drink, stabling and overnight stays.

An early mention of the Needless Inn is found surprisingly in a book of rare plants in 1756 which describes:

"Knotted Trefoil with round heads. In the closes [fields] opposite Needless Inn, near Loughborough."

It is also mentioned in the Quorndon Enclosure Award of 1763 when a footpath is recorded from: *"Trustees of Quorn Town Lands near Dust Moor Bridge to the Turnpike Road at Needless Inn."*

Much of the land and property in this area, including the Needless Inn, was owned by William Herrick of Beaumanor and in 1786 the tenant and licensee is John Garner. He died in 1804 and is buried in Loughborough All Saints Church. According to Alehouse Recognizance Books Samuel Garner took over in 1805 and was there until the late 1820s.

In 1825 the name of the inn is recorded as the Bulls Head. It is possible that this is where the name 'Bull in the Hollow' originates from. If you drive along the road today, there is a significant dip, but it is only when you walk past the building that you realise exactly how much of a dip (or hollow) there used to be. The house is much lower than the pavement in front and a comparison of the old and new photographs illustrate how the levels have changed.

The landlord from the 1830s was Samuel Langham and even after being called the Bull's Head in 1825, in newspapers the inn was still frequently referred to as the Needless Inn.

FIRE.—A quantity of new hay was a few days ago discovered on fire in a field near the railway, occupied by Mr. S. Langham, of the Needless Inn, near Loughborough. Fortunately it was discovered in time to prevent any serious damage being done.

Leicester Mercury 1844, 13th July

PETTY SESSIONS, TUESDAY, AUGUST 6.
Before the Hon. and Rev. H. D. Erskine, and the Revds. W. Acworth, and J. Dudley.
INFORMATION AGAINST A PUBLICAN.
Samuel Langham, of the Bull, in the Hollow, near Loughborough, was charged on the information of Superintendent Hague, with allowing other persons than travellers to be drinking in his house on Sunday morning last, during the time of divine service contrary to the tenor of his license. The case was clearly proved by Hague, and the defendant was convicted in the mitigated penalty of £1 and the costs.

Leicestershire Mercury 1840, 8th August

Samuel Langham was not only an innkeeper and farmer, but he was also an accomplished horticulturalist. In 1837 several 'Walks Around Loughborough' were published in the press and one describes Samuel's premises:

"But here we are at Langham's Garden and another Temple to Bacchus [inn] where flora only has a right to be worshipped. What business has the rosy god there. Flora's votaries have nothing to do with him. The collection of this industrious and ingenious horticulturist is, however, truly deserving of the notice of all lovers of flowers. — Needless Inn has proved the appropriateness of its name."

The author sounds as if he may have been a member of the temperance movement, but greatly admires the flowers and planting!

The extract below from the Leicester Mercury, Saturday 23rd October 1847 indicates two names were in use at the same time.

“Ploughing at Woodthorpe - When the tenant-farmers on the Beaumanor estate were together at the last rent-day, their landlord, W. Herrick, Esq., offered a premium of £5 for the best ploughing, the competition to be open to any of his tenants or their sons..... The ploughing took place on Monday, in a field of stiff land opposite the Needless Inn, or Bull-i'-the-Hollow, Woodthorpe, and about a mile and a quarter from Loughborough.”

The 1851 Census for Woodthorpe records Samuel Langham as a victualler (inn keeper) and also a farmer of 25 acres. His son Joseph, aged 35, is described as a florist, in this case meaning that he grows flowers and is a nurseryman. Through the 1850s the inn was generally called the Needless Inn, but by the 1861 census it is recorded as the Buffalo's Head, Samuel Langham is still described as a farmer and publican and his son Joseph Langham as a nurseryman.

Whites Trade Directory for 1863 lists Samuel Langham as a victualler and the inn is recorded with yet another name - the Buffalo's Head and Garland.

Samuel Langham died in May 1869 aged 78, his son Joseph having taken over a few years before. Joseph built up his reputation as a nurseryman and seedsman.

The 1870s photograph of the inn shows Joseph Langham, his wife Martha and two of his employees. Joseph's greenhouse can be seen to the right of the main building and the frontage is level with the pavement. A press item from the Loughborough Monitor and Herald in the 1920s says this is a picture of the pub called the Bull in the Hollow, but examining the sign, I believe it to be the Buffalo's Head and

Garland (or the Buffalo and Garland), as the image appears to match the buffalo/bull's head with a garland from the Herrick crest (see small image inset).

<p>WOODTHORPE, 1½ mile S. and in the parish of Loughborough, is a township, though commonly called a hamlet. It contains only 67 souls, and about 476 acres of land, belonging to W. P. Herrick, Esq., the lord of the manor, which was enclosed in 1662.</p>	
<p>Campbell Miss Ann Hind Mr John Langham Joseph, nurseryman Langham Samuel, victualler, <i>Buffalo's Head and Garland</i></p>	<p>FARMERS.—Thomas Bramley, Joseph Marsh, Elizabeth Martin, James Pepper, and John Renals</p>
<p>Whites Trade Directory 1863</p>	



1870s The Buffalo's Head and Garland

Joseph Langham died in 1877 aged 62 and the Bull in the Hollow ceased to be an inn, but carried on as a nursery and small farm/market garden. In 1946 it was sold as Woodthorpe Nursery as part of a

large auction when the Beaumanor Estate was sold and broken up. The tenants were William and Elizabeth Dakin, whose grandchildren and great grandchildren still live in Quorn today.



The Bull in the Hollow in 1946



Left: Elizabeth Dakin with her twin granddaughters outside The Bull in the Hollow in 1952.

Right: Irene Dakin, nee Jenkinson, with her twin daughters outside The Bull in the Hollow in 1952.



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