

## The Harper family of Buddon Wood House, Quorn

20 year old John Harper from Mountsorrel married Harriet Edgley of the same age, at Mountsorrel Christ Church on 8th July 1888. Between 1902 and 1905 the couple and their growing family moved into the parish of Quorn, occupying a five roomed cottage in the middle of Buddon Wood, which although somewhat isolated, was convenient for John's work at Mountsorrel Quarry. Buddon Wood House was owned by the Farnham family and was located about 300 metres down a track which ran off Wood Lane. See map and also [Artefact 1945](#). It had no electricity, no gas and no running water. The land where the cottage stood has long since been blasted away as part of the main quarry.

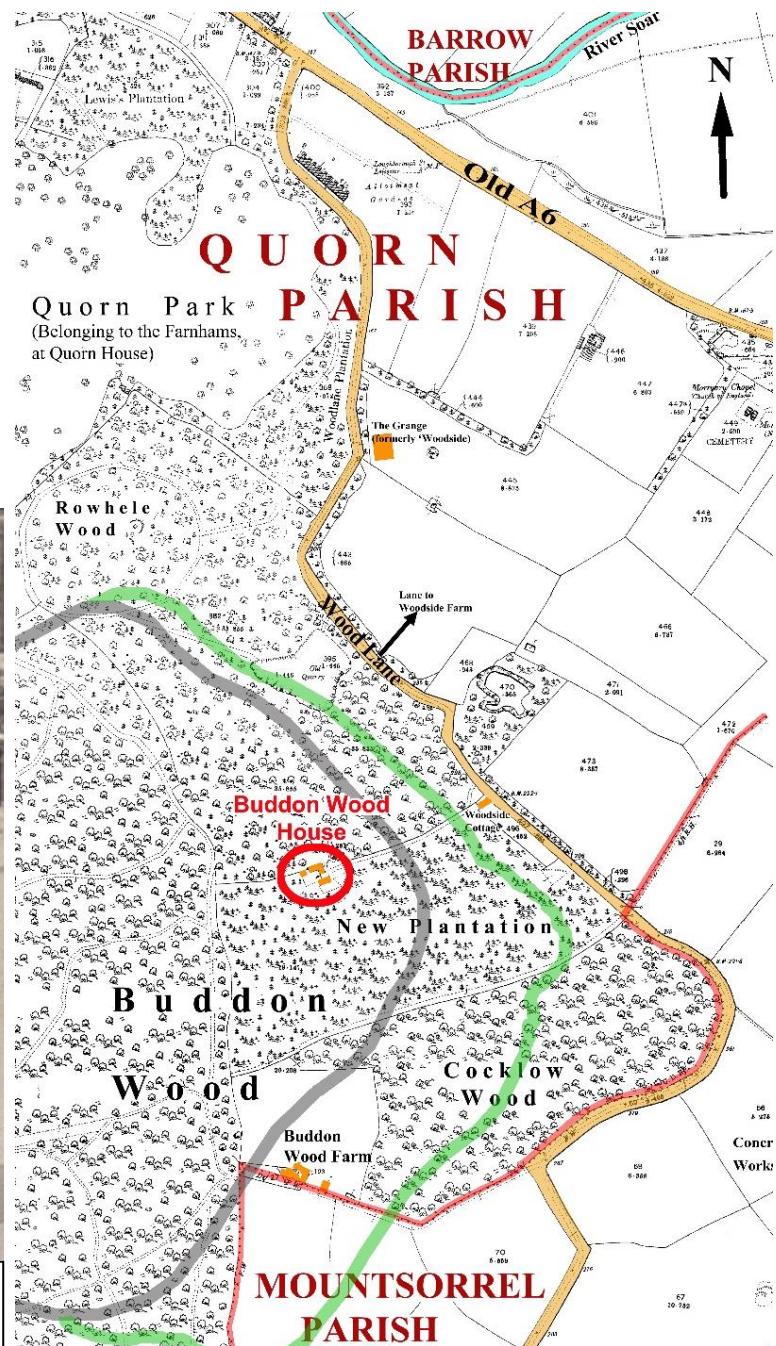
Although Harriet was born in Birmingham, her parents were married in Quorn and her mother Sarah Wilders was part of a well-known Quorn family.

John and Harriet had eleven children and despite John not having a particularly well paid job and with all those mouths to feed, the family thrived. It is remarkable for the time that none of the children died as infants and ten survived to full adulthood. It is also evident from the photograph below, that in latter years John and Harriet even managed to go on holiday!



John and Harriet in the 1930s, on holiday in Skegness.

John died in 1937 and was buried in Mountsorrel Cemetery. Harriett went to live on Leicester Road in Quorn. She died in 1956.



Buddon Wood House is shown in red  
The grey line is the existing line of the quarry extraction area.  
The green line is the latest approved perimeter.

## The Eleven Children



Harriett Harper

1) **Harriett Harper** was the eldest child. She was born on 27th May 1889 in Mountsorrel and married James Arthur Smith in Loughborough on 12th March 1910. They had nine children, moving to Nuneaton in about 1914, but James died in 1929. She later remarried in 1933, becoming Harriett Myatt. Her son Horace died in action in WW2 and Harriett died late in 1956 in Nuneaton.



Ada Harper

2) **Ada Harper** was born on 12th March 1892 in Mountsorrel. When Ada left school she went to work at M Wright and sons elastic webbing factory in Quorn and on 25th February 1922 in St Bartholomew's Church she married Ernest Day from Leicester. The couple had five children and lived most of their married lives in Leicester. Ada died in 1970.



Sarah Harper

3) **Sarah Harper** was born on 2nd August 1893 in Mountsorrel and like her sister Ada, when she was old enough, she went to work at M Wright and Sons elastic webbing factory in Quorn. It was there she met George Cecil Heighton, who lived in the village. The couple married in 1916, had three children and for many years lived on Meeting Street, which was where they were living when Sarah died in 1948 aged only 55.



Lizzie Harper

4) **Lizzie Harper** was born on 31st July 1895 at Mountsorrel and worked at Wright's factory in Quorn. She married Arthur Batty in 1922, who died just four years later in 1926 and went on to marry

Philip Plenty in 1932 who died in 1939. There were no children from either marriage. Lizzie lived at 2 Nut Row, a small row of cottages overlooking Quorn Churchyard, where part of Epworth Court is today. She died on 3rd January 1971 at 62 Wood Lane, Quorn.

5) **John Henry Harper** was born on 21st September 1896 in Mountsorrel and when he left school he went to work in a local shoe factory. On 7<sup>th</sup> June 1919 he married Doris Althea Stevenson from Quorn in St Bartholomew's Church. They had three children before they divorced in 1935. John Harper was awarded custody of the children and lived with them at 11 Castledine Street in the 1930s. He continued to live there for over 40 years and died in 1983.



James Harper

6) **James Harper** was born on 7th July 1898. On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1914, when he was still 15 and working at the Wholesale School Boot Co Ltd factory on Danvers Road (now Marsh Road) in Mountsorrel, he enlisted into the army (5th Battalion, Leicestershire Regiment), declaring himself to be 17. In March of the following year he was sent to France. Towards the end of the war, in September 1918 he was wounded with gunshot wounds to his right knee, left ankle and right ear. This kept him in hospital for three months. After the war he had a short spell in the police force at Appleby Magna and married Alice Williams in 1921. The couple went on to have three girls;

Lillian Maud Harper in 1922 (known as Maud), Hilda M Harper born in 1924 and Mildred Mary Harper born in 1926 (known as Mary).

Sadly in 1928, Alice died of TB. James moved back to Buddon Wood with his daughters but died less than a year later on 17th February 1929. He was buried in Mountsorrel Cemetery, even though Alice had been buried in Coleorton. The girls were brought up by their grandparents, John and Harriet in the house in Buddon Wood.

**Right:** James Harper in his police uniform.

**Far right:** Alice Maud Harper, James' wife.



**Left:** James and Alice Harper's girls, Maud, Hilda and Mary, probably taken outside Buddon Wood House.

**Above:** The girls taken outside a wooden bungalow which was a short distance from Buddon Wood House and occupied by James' sister Louisa, her husband Frank and their family. The two youngest children are probably theirs.



7) **Lily Pretoria Harper** was born in Mountsorrel on 3rd June 1900 and named after the capture of Pretoria in South Africa which took place in that month as part of the Boer War. Like her sisters, Lily went on to work at Wright's factory and on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1922 in Quorn Church she married George Siddans Williams from Winthorpe near Skegness in Lincolnshire. Lily moved with George to the Skegness area and remained there until her death in late 1971.

Lily Harper

8) **Louisa Harper** was born 1st January 1902 in Mountsorrel. Louisa, later went on to marry Frank Hall, in Quorn Parish Church in 1926. Like many young couples, Frank and Louisa faced the difficult task of finding somewhere to live. Planning permission was not an issue in the 1920s, and they had a wooden bungalow constructed a short distance from Buddon Wood House and further into the woods. It was there that their first children were born. They later moved to Woodside Cottage, which was to the east of their first home, along the same track but side on to Wood Lane. They had six children. Louise died late in 1956. See also [Artefact 1945](#).



Charles Harper

9) **Charles Arthur Harper**, born 8th September 1904 was the first of the children to be born in Buddon Wood House. When the first eight Harper children were born they were not baptised, but on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1904, baby Charles and seven of his eight older siblings (ie all except Harriett who was married) were baptised at Quorn Parish Church. Charles married Margery Irene E Smith in 1930. They lived in Mountsorrel and had two daughters. He died in 1983.



Louisa Harper

10) **Gladys Ivy Harper** was born on 19th June 1906 at Buddon Wood House. She worked at a shoe factory and when she was only 20, married Harold George Pagett on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1927 in Quorn Church. They settled in Quorn where they raised their nine children, living first on Meeting Street before moving to Leicester Road. Gladys died in 1972.

11) **Alfred Edward Harper** was the youngest of John and Harriet's children, having been born at Buddon Wood House late in 1907 and baptised together with Gladys on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1908 in Quorn Church. When he left school he went to work as an apprentice in the shoe trade, but sadly he was the only one of the children not to survive to adulthood. He suffered from a heart defect which caused his blood pressure to drop and died at Buddon Wood on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1921 aged only 13 years old. He was buried in Mountsorrel Cemetery.



Gladys Harper