

## Mount Farm & the Pleasure Gardens

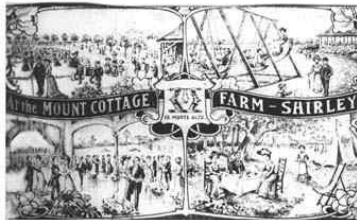
In 1904 the land around the Mount (where modern day Cheswick Green now stands) was acquired by Mr. Phillip Baker, a well-known Birmingham lawyer, who developed it as a "Pleasure Ground".



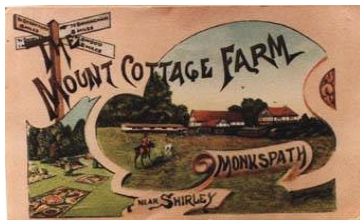
Mr. Baker spent a great deal of money laying out the grounds and building refreshment rooms and a ballroom. The area offered the residents of nearby industrial Birmingham a chance to escape to the country in the days before holidays to the coast.

Shrubs were planted, garden walks and tea gardens were created, and a maze constructed in which was placed the old stocks from Moor Street Police Station. For a time the venture was successful but even in those days vandalism was a

problem and a great deal of damage and destruction finally defeated all efforts to make the project prosper. The 1914 war saw the end of The Mount as a pleasure resort.



After the Great War the land was divided into half acre plots to be sold. A document of that time records that, "On some of the lots are well-established apple trees for which the purchaser will pay 5 shillings each". Ex-Servicemen, munitions workers and pensioners were among the purchasers who were encouraged to cultivate the land and help the nation by producing foodstuffs.



Practical advice on establishing a small holding was given and the document states, "A cottage or bungalow may be erected, or whilst building operations are difficult, a tent or caravan make it possible in the summer to enjoy the simple life". Many of the people built weekend bungalows, others built more substantial homes for permanent residence.

During the Second World War many people, bombed out of their established homes, went to live there in what had been their weekend bungalow, and because of the housing shortage these eventually became their permanent homes. In the post war years, many wished to rebuild but were unable to get planning permission. Several attempts were made to form a residents association to keep the site tidy, and the un-adopted roads in repair.