

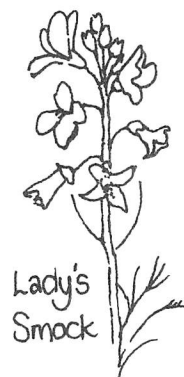


AUGUST  
1987

# Wot!

## About Ratby

Published by Ratby Scout Group



ISSUE 5

### Editorial

In this issue we print a reader's letter concerning vandalism in the village. We also print a police reply to this complaint. Neighbourhood Watch needs a positive response if it is going to succeed. Do people in Ratby want it? Write and tell us what you think. Send your letters to the Editor c/o 10 Groby Road, Ratby. Comments on all articles welcomed.

#### 1ST RATBY CUBS (SWALLOWS AND SWIFTS)

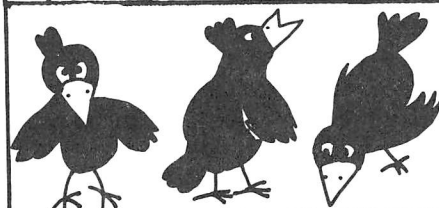
Who took part in the District Sports Day on 13.6.87. Swifts were 6th overall and Swallows were 3rd overall



A couple of Clowns spotted at the School Summer Fete.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

Mrs Pat Moulton, winner of a giant 30lb Easter egg in the Ratby Sports Club raffle donated it to a children's ward at the Leicester Royal Infirmary!



WOT is published by Ratby Scout Group and the views expressed are the views of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the scouting organisations or the publishers.

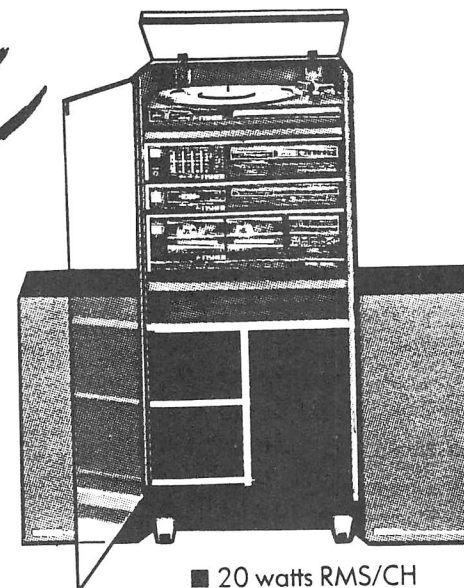


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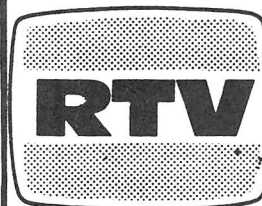
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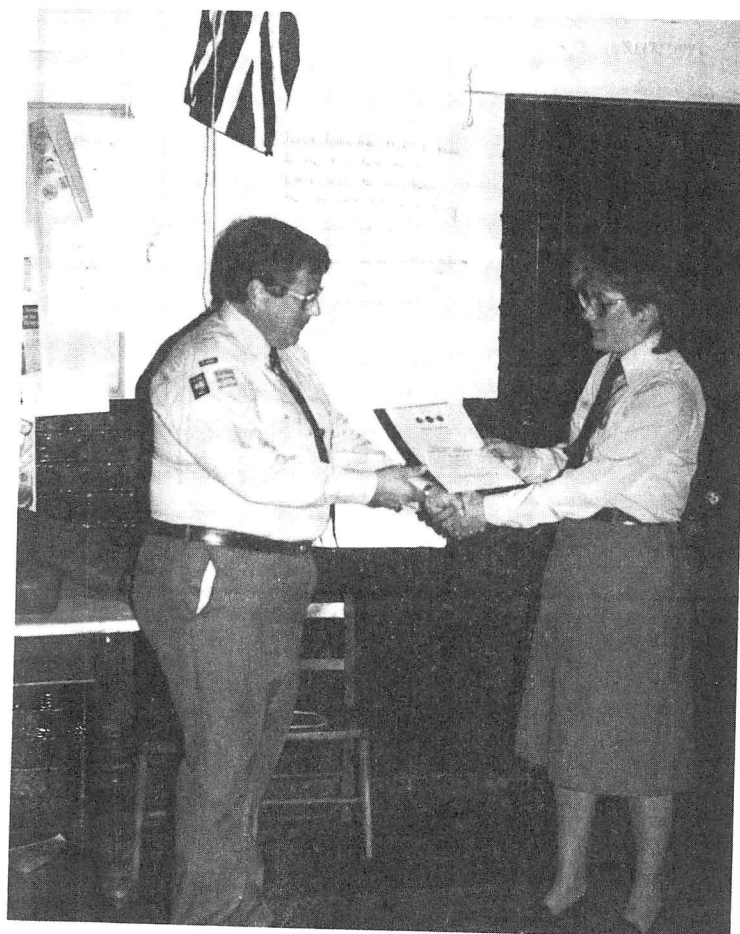
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Colin Payne, Ratby Scout Leader receiving the certificate which is part of the Woodbadge Award from Gill Tyler, District Commissioner.

## What is a Woodbadge

When a leader is appointed in a Scout group, they agree to undertake the training, which is relevant to the Section in which they are working. This training is in three stages i) Initial training which is aimed at helping a Leader find their way around the many books which are published, and meet other people working in the same section, ii) Basic training which involves two weekends of practical training to help build up a Leader's ability and confidence in working with the boys and iii) Advanced training - a further two weekends, plus an additional day - aimed at developing skills taught in Basic training.

After successfully completing these three stages, all of which incorporate project work with the boys in their section, a Leader is awarded the Woodbadge.

The award itself consists of a knotted leather thong with a wooden bead at each end.

While Baden Powell, our founder, was fighting in South Africa in 1888, he captured a Zulu - Chief Dinizulu - and was given a long necklace of wooden beads by him. Baden Powell used these beads to make the wood badges at the end of the first training course for leaders in the early days of Scouting.

All the spare beads were kept and new supplies were added over the years. Some of the original beads are still in circulation - so it may be that Colin Payne, Group Scout Leader of the 1st Ratby group, has one of them on the Wood badge recently presented to him!!

Gill Tyler  
District Commissioner

## 1ST RATBY SWALLOWS

I think with all this horrible wet weather we ought to be like the swallows and migrate to the sun! We want to get the boys out and about and all we get is rain. I think flippers will be the next thing for them!

Seriously folks - I'm sure Sheena and all her leaders will agree with us how lucky we were at the Sports Day in more ways than one. Not only were we lucky with the weather but we came joint third with another pack. Between the Swallows and Swifts, we collected lots of certificates.

As the parents know, there will be a weekend camp 14 - 16th August at Oaks in Charnwood. Let's hope things have improved by then weatherwise. Ian Graham will be the leader in charge with others for moral support!  
Akela

## RATBY: THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAILWAY

The early 19th century brought new prospects for employment for the villagers although Agriculture and the Hosiery trade dominated the village economy for the greater part of the century. By 1870 Coalmining and the Quarries at Groby were to become a major employer for a large number of the male population.

Following the Napoleonic Wars demand for large stocks of coal for the Midland towns came with the development of Steam Powered factories. However the mines at Coleorton and Swannington who had been producing modest stocks of coal for the Leicester-shire market were being outpriced at the coal markets in Leicester.

Large stocks of cheap Canal born coal from the pits in Notts. and Derbyshire dominated the market.

This "foreign" coal caused considerable depression to our local coal industry. Pits on Coleorton moor closed, and at Swannington the situation was no better.

The Leicestershire Pit owners sought desperate measures, particularly after the failure of the Charnwood Forest canal.

The solution was found by William Stenton a joint-owner of the new pit at Long Lane near Whitwick (later to become part of the new town of Coalville).

He had been to North East England to meet the locomotive engineer, George Stephenson.

On Tuesday the 12th of February 1829 an historic meeting was held at the Old Bell Hotel in Leicester's Humberstone Gate. Amongst the interested parties was the Lord of the Manor of Groby and Ratby, the Earl of Stamford.

The purpose of this important gathering was to form a company to build a Railway between Leicester and the pits on Swannington moor.

George Stephenson's son Robert was present at the meeting and was later

Furthermore it was agreed to lay out the line along a route which would facilitate a junction near Glenfield to the Earl of Stamford's Quarry at Groby.

Three years prior to this meeting in May 1826 there had been further finds of coal on Lord Meynard's lands on Bagworth Heath. The overjoyed populace subsequently celebrated in style by ringing the bells of Thornton Parish Church.

By 1831 the navies were out constructing the line which was to run through Ratby. A gate house was to be built by Joseph Freeman (now the Railway Inn) and Daniel Marvin was to construct a Wharf and be engaged as crossing keeper.

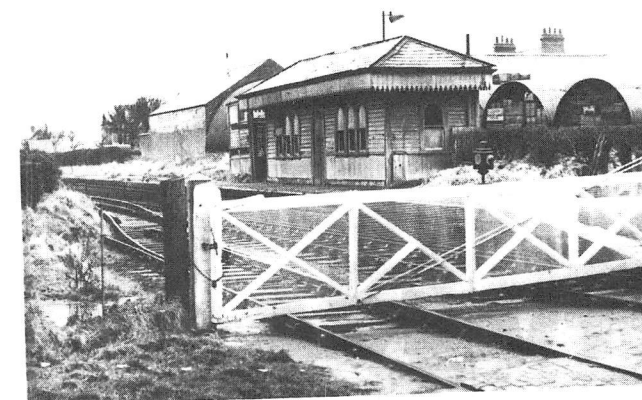
On Tuesday the 17th of July the first Train named "Comet" left Austin Friars station in Leicester on route for Bagworth. On the footplate was Robert Stephenson.

Although the line was principally used for coal and minerals, the company also introduced Passenger trains.

Till the building of the Station in 1876 the Railway Inn served as a ticket office.

Other buildings associated with the old Leicester/Swannington Railway Company are some fine Slate built cottages. These were built in 1833 for Railway workers and still stand today on the right hand side of Lower Station Road.

Michael T. Ball



# 1ST RATBY SWIFTS

When we arrived at Johns Lee Wood on June 27th for the Swifts Day Camp, the weather was fine but very wet underfoot. Wellies were the order of the day.

Once having found our camp site for the day, the pack set off for a walk round the surrounding area with Akela bringing up the rear. The walk was brought abruptly to a halt when we could go no further because the mud was too deep to walk in and Akela had got her wellies stuck in the middle of the mud, much to the amusement of the cubs.

We returned to the site for much needed refreshment.

The activities started with a lively game of Volley Ball, with the cubs split into teams and competing with each other for points. And this was how the day continued, with the cubs cooking their own lunches on camp fires under supervision from the leaders and Raksha cooking a mean fried egg for us all.

The activities continued with Compass Reading, Football, Cricket and finally ending up with Bagheera leading the singing round the camp fire at the end of the day. We all went home tired but happy at the end of a good day.

Akela

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### QUIZ RESULTS

1. The Church Clock was installed in May 1914.
2. The Welfare Hall was built in 1955.
3. Diggory Nicholas was the head of Ratby School on the eve of World War I.
4. The Leicester/Swannington Railway Terminus was Austin Friars, near West Bridge.
5. The last local miller was Thomas Cufflin.

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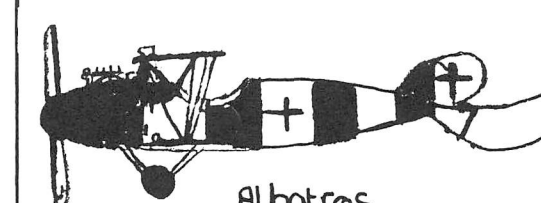
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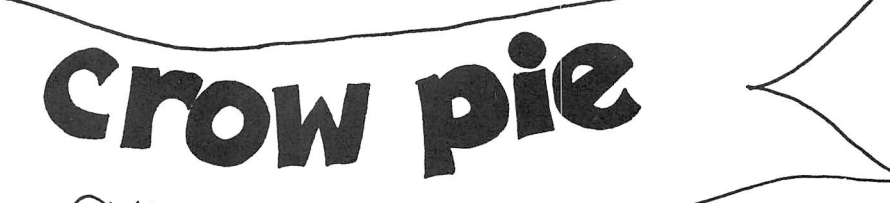
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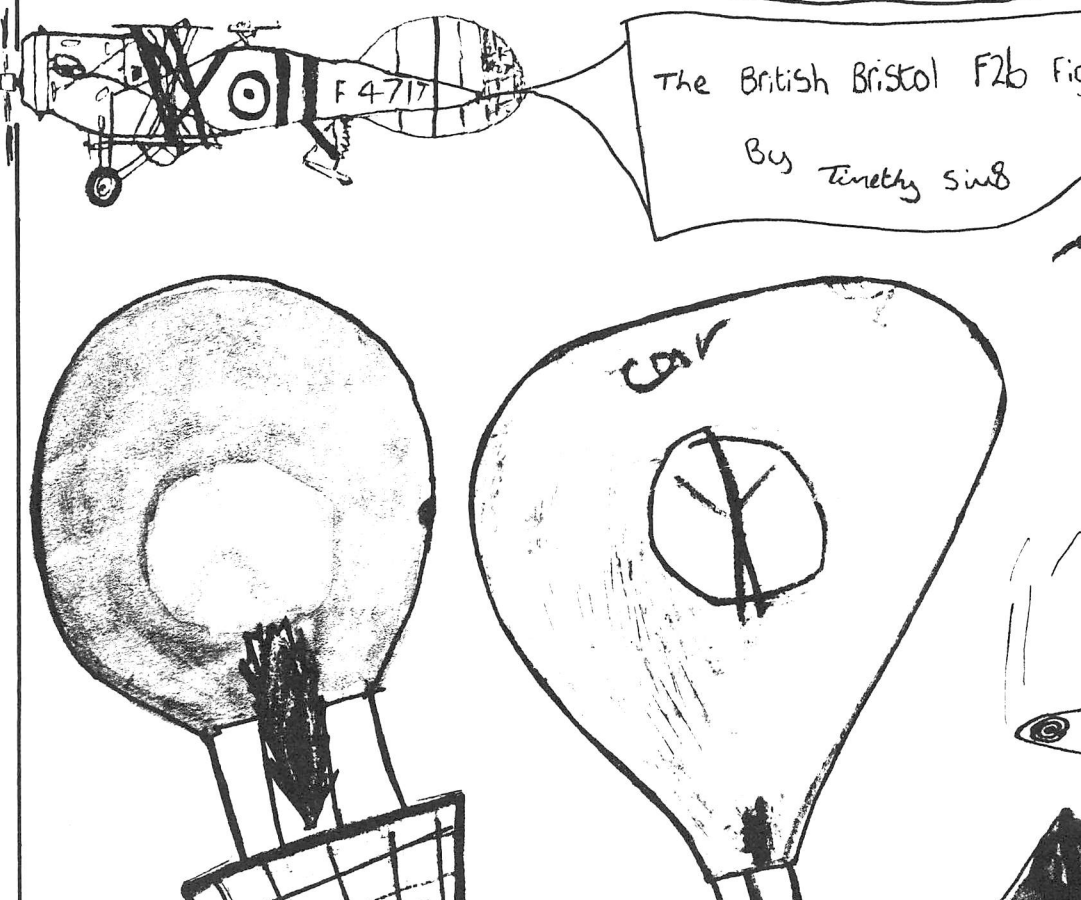
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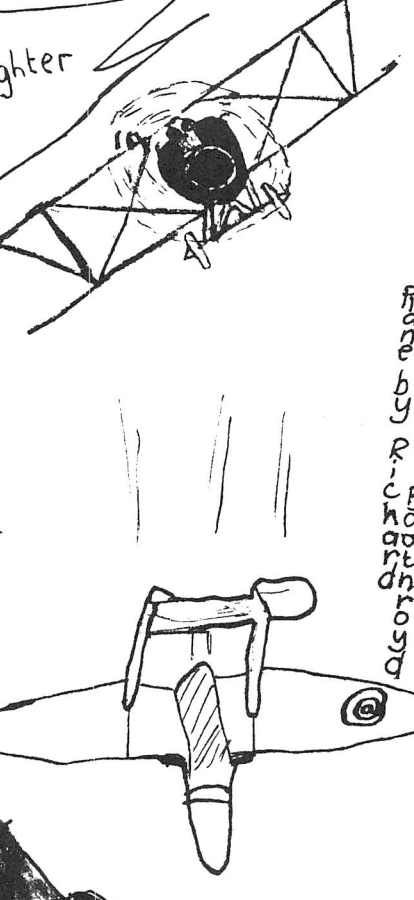
Albatros



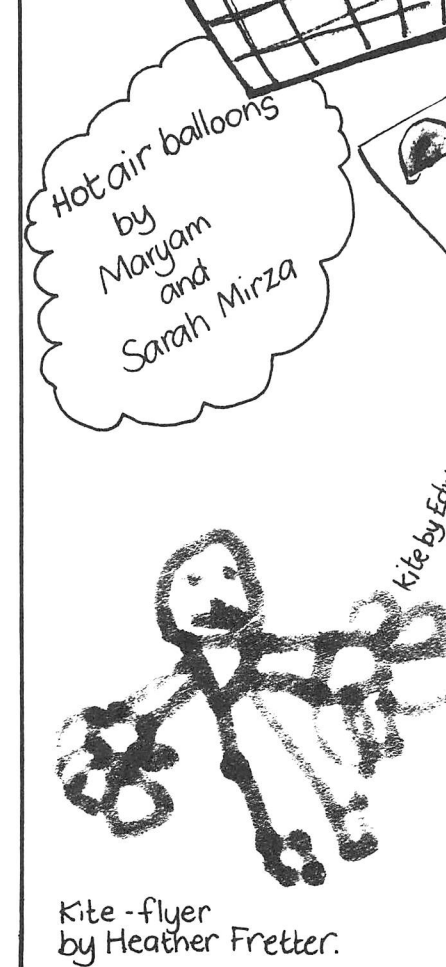
The British Bristol F2b Fighter  
By Timothy Smith




Hot air balloons  
by Maryam and Sarah Mirza



Kite by Edward Boothroyd



Kite-flyer  
by Heather Fretter.



What is happening to this page?

Send us your drawings or jokes... you can leave them in the library.

At last No Snow!  
Ed.

by Amy



## CAUSE FOR CONCERN

As a result of the dramatic increase in population growth, there has never been a greater threat to our Countryside. Demands for more food, new developments and roadways are a continually growing menace to our wildlife and it's natural habitat. Drainage of wet lands and loss of pasture land robs much of our wildlife of it's natural environment.

Hedgerow removal has resulted in there being 190,000 miles LESS hedgerow in England and Wales than there were just after the last war.

Loss of deciduous woodland in Leicestershire means that only one other English county has LESS wooded area than ourselves.

How fortunate we are then here in Ratby with an extensive network of hedgerows, a large wooded area and a patchwork of pasture land. Within this diversity of natural habitat exists a rich variety of wildlife. A short walk in Martinshaw Wood in Spring reveals such delights as Wood Anemones, Wood Sorrel and carpets of Bluebells. The Wood also plays host to two of our early Summer visitors - the Chiffchaff and Willow Warbler.

In early Summer along our hedgerows the unmistakable sound of the Yellowhammer and Chaffinch can be heard and the Linnet can be seen on it's energetic flight. In the hedges Cow Parsley and Red Campian are common as is the aptly named Jack-by-the-Hedge. In and around the meadows can be seen Yellow Rattle, Ladies Smock, Meadow Buttercup and Great Burnet (fast becoming a rarity).



Along some areas of the old Stephensons railway line, Meadow Sweet, Ragged Robin, Herb Robert and Rosebay Willow Herb are just some of the varieties of flowers to be found. Here, in the past when passing trains were a regular feature, seed dispersion would be assisted by the draught created by passing trains. The hedgerows along the Line contain large areas of Hawthorn, which attract such winter visitors as Fieldfare and Redwing which feed on berries.

The Alder trees by the stream attract flocks of Siskin which restlessly feed amongst the branches.

If we are to continue to enjoy our surrounding countryside, we owe it to ourselves, our children and future generations to protect what is probably the Nation's greatest treasure, our natural heritage.

Clive Coulson

Dark Secrets of Harvest Home by Lynn Mellor.



The first day of August is Lammass Day - the word being derived from the Anglo-Saxon "Hlafmaesse" or Loaf Mass, which was the festival for first fruits when bread made from the new season's corn was consecrated during the service of the mass. This was a simple service to express thanks for the ripening of the corn and not the full blown Harvest Festival service which is a more modern addition to the calendar. In recent years some churches have revived this ancient Lammass Service and Lammass bread has once more been offered in church. Lammass coincided with the more ancient festival called the Lughnasad which was a Celtic fertility festival to celebrate the symbolic marriage of the earth-mother and was traditionally a time when earthly marriages were arranged. An autumnal St. Valentines perhaps?!

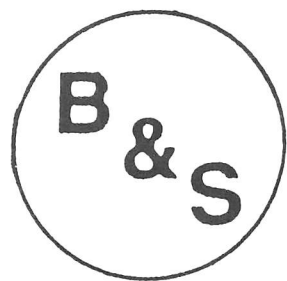
The months of August and September were harvesting time for barley, rye and wheat so vital to the survival of the community and as harvesting used to be labour intensive, most of the community contributed in some way to the activity. Farmers elected a Harvest Lord from amongst their workers and it fell to his lot to decide hours to be worked and rate of reaping for the teams of men and the supervision of the women who raked and stacked the sheaves. The Harvest Lord was also responsible for food and drink being available when needed and calling the rest periods which usually amounted to fifteen minutes in the morning and two breaks of a

similar length during the afternoon's work. I like the idea of the hour usually allotted during the afternoon when dinner was consumed followed by a nap! Actually an essential break, when the working day extended from dawn till dusk - making hay whilst the sun shone!

The final sheaf gathered was a cause for celebration for no matter what other crops were left to be gathered (apples, nuts etc.) grain was a staple and essential for bread and beer. Many harvest traditions can be traced back to primitive times when men believed that the life force which sustained humans also sustained the life giving corn. The Corn Spirit was believed to flee before the reapers, taking refuge in the last standing corn, therefore the responsibility for cutting this was grave. To share the responsibility all reapers would circle the last stand of corn and throw their sickles so that no one man actually cut the final corn, and thus harmed the Corn Spirit. The final loaded wagon was decorated as were the teams of horses pulling the load and a "doll" made from the corn would be placed on top of the load and escorted home to the barn. This "doll" would take pride of place at the Harvest supper and then was carefully preserved until the next year to ensure the continuance of the Corn Spirit. In some areas the "doll" would be crumbled over the furrows prior to sowing, thus returning the Spirit back to the earth to continue its life-giving work and in other areas it was preserved until replaced by a new "doll" at the following harvest.

Harvest Festivals, as we now know them, are a modern tradition which seems to have been instituted by a Cornish Vicar in 1843 to give thanks for all the harvest bounty and was thus timed for the end of September rather than the earlier Lammass celebration. The Harvest service was generally followed by a supper and in even more recent times it has become traditional to either auction the gifts which had adorned the church or to distribute them to the more needy in the parish.

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## LEICESTERSHIRE TRIATHLON ASSOCIATION

Triathlon is probably Britain's fastest growing sport and involves doing three sports, one straight after the other. The standard order of events is Swimming, Cycling and Running and the sport is believed to have started in Hawaii in 1978. The first organised event in Britain was in '82 and in just five years there are now thousands taking part.

The main season is from April to September and most weekends this year see 2 or 3 events spread over the country. Look out for reports on the Hinckley event held July 12th, and go and support the Leicester event on August 15th, based at Stoney Cove and Huncote, which attracts some of Britain's top Triathletes.

The sport is famous for the "Ironman" distance (2.5 mile swim, 112 mile bike ride, 26.2 run), but most events are a lot

shorter. Hinckley is an 1/8th Ironman distance, Leicester a 1/4 Ironman. These events have a minimum age of 18 but Leicestershire hopes to be putting on its junior event in October, again for 11 to 17 year olds although details have not yet been finalised.

The Leicestershire Club meets at New Parks Fitness Centre every Thursday at 7.30pm for a run, followed by a swimming session from 9 until 9.45. We also meet at 10.30 every Saturday morning for a bike ride, usually to a lake in Wanlip, for an organised, supervised outdoor swim. Cold water swimming is one of the tougher elements of triathlon although many events take place in a pool now (due to the British climate!).

Anyone interested in the sport or wanting to train with the Club should contact Dave Bellingham, 86 Dannett Street, Leicester, telephone 531768. The club is open to anyone over 15, of all abilities; advice, fun and a friendly atmosphere are part of our set up. Why not join us? Ratby already has one notable triathlete in Debra Lees who teaches at Brookvale and completed the Leicester event last year.

## THE RATBY BAND

The Band were very successful on their visit to Lewisham winning second prize for the best trombone section at the contest on May 30th.

The Bavarian evening was a great success and a memorable evening for the many present with excellent music from Von Winklen Band and a Waitress service for all refreshments was provided by members of the band.

Despite the very unseasonal weather the Barn Dance at Old Hays was another successful and well attended event.

The Band have also been out playing at local carnivals in the last month so there has been little respite for the members.

For those who have yet to sample one of our excellent events the next is to be the Ratby Music Festival. This is to be held on the 7th, 8th and 9th of August at Groby Community College.

There will be a wealth of musical entertainment on offer each evening starting at 7.30 pm. The emphasis of the whole weekend is on a happy musical festival for audience and participants. Refreshments will be available each night including a barbeque and there will be an opportunity to dance each night. Admission is only £1 for each night.

The event is being held to raise funds for College equipment but mainly for the Bandroom building project. The land for the Bandroom has already been purchased in the village and it is hoped that building will commence this year.

The Band are of course grateful to all those who will be coming along to take part in the events for their support to the Ratby Band in their fund raising efforts.

The winner of the 200 club draw in June was number 124. There are still a few places left for anyone wanting to join and details are available from any Band member.

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 The William Davis Band  
 Dancing

**Saturday, 8th August 7.30 pm - 11.30 pm**

Unity Band  
 The Lesley Cave Academy of Dancing  
 Barber Shop Singers  
 Steel Image  
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**Sunday, 9th August 7.30 pm - 11.00 pm**

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# RATBY SPORTS CLUB GALA

On the 15th. August 1987 Ratby will come alive to the tropical sounds of an authentic Caribbean Steel band, the traditional music of a local Scout band and brightened by the sight of a colourful Majorettes display team. These are a few of the many attractions that will appear at the Ratby Sports Club Gala.

The festivities begin with the biggest and best parade of floats Ratby has seen and continues with a fun-packed afternoon of displays and attractions at Ratby Sports Club. It is a tradition in Ratby to celebrate "Crow Pie" every two years, however this year in order to coincide with a visit from our many Dutch friends Ratby Sports Club have organised their own gala which will be the most enjoyable family event held in Ratby for many years. The afternoon will consist of stalls, games and displays by the St. John's Ambulance, a local Karate club, a Marching band and lots more. We have even organised a tug-of-war competition.

The Gala will be opened by our very own Gala Queen, Miss Jeanette Preston and Gala Princesses Miss Sue Harrison and Miss Kerry Smart.



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The afternoon promises to be a most enjoyable event so watch out for details around the Village. So come along and cheer the parade or your favourite tug-of-war team or better still why not organise a float or tug-of-war team and enter the competition? Hurry as entrance to both events is restricted and we have already received many entries; for further details please contact Mr.D Preston c/o Ratby Sports Club.

Full details will be contained in the official programme which will be available soon but in the meantime please feel free to contact Mr. Steve James, Gala Committee Chairman on Leicester 393301 or Mr. Jim O'Connor Gala Committee Secretary on Leicester 393962.

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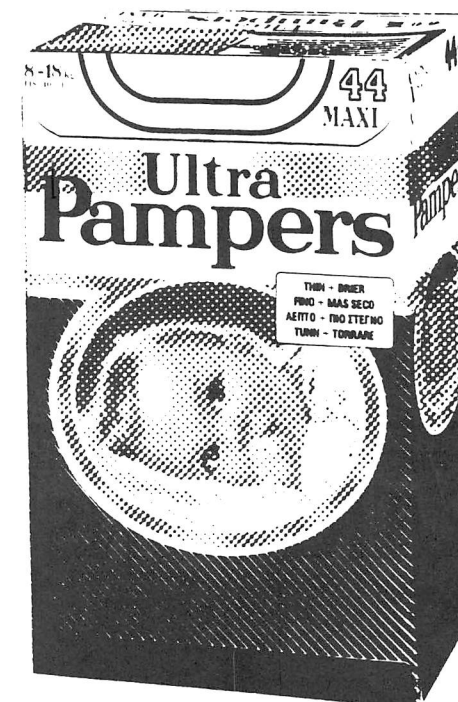
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## POT V KETTLE

Letters have been written, complaints made and strong views exchanged about vandalism and lack of consideration shown for others by the youth in our village. I must agree that this is a real problem. Unfortunately it is by no means the only one. We have in our village many people who are what Inspector Clive Edwards of the RSPCA terms 'irresponsible pet owners'. People who deliberately take their dogs out daily with the intention of encouraging them to foul footpaths, garden paths and gardens. Other peoples of course! Some of these people have also been very threatening to property owners who have dared to complain.

These people set a wonderful example to our vandals. They certainly do not make Ratby a more pleasant place to live in, or enhance the image of dog-ownership.

There are bye-laws. Glenfield Parish Council are actively trying to do something about the problem in that area.

Fouling of pavements can also cause illness and blindness should children become infected, and for those who think it will never happen in this area, I believe it has, recently.

What would you say to the parent who told you that you personally had condemned their child to a life of blindness?

What needs to happen to make us do something?

Inspector Edwards asked that we also make the following points which are causing problems:-

Would dog owners avoid leaving dogs in cars in the hot weather. Some have died this year. Make sure they have access to water. Please make proper provision for all pets when you go on holiday. Discarded fishing tackle causes horrific injuries to birds and animals as do discarded lead weights which are illegal in this area.

A Nation of Animal Lovers?

Those who are may like to consider this:-

Sponsored Dog Walk  
Sunday 27th September

For details contact: Mrs S. Jackson  
R.S.P.C.A.  
190 Scudamore Road  
Tel. L.877766

P.S. There was a young man named Clyde  
Who slipped on a whoopsie and died  
Later his mother  
Slipped on another  
And now they're interred side  
by side.

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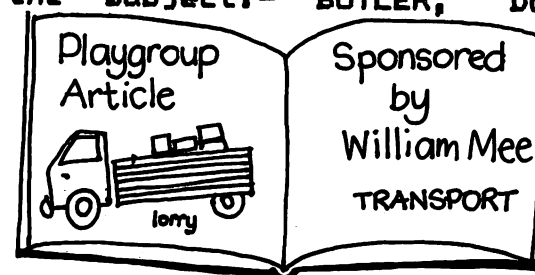
## CATCH THEM YOUNG! Children and Books

Children, especially pre school children are not free agents. They cannot buy a book for themselves, read for themselves or visit libraries alone. Children need the support and encouragement of adults, particularly parents, if they are to discover the enjoyment and pleasure which they can get from books - and don't imagine those under two cannot enjoy books. 'Reading' isn't just understanding words, it begins with learning to look at familiar shapes and situations, with the help of an adult. The simplest of picture books can have a long lasting effect which is why it is important to 'catch them young' with a good variety of stories.

If you haven't already done so then do come and look at the selection of board, picture and easy reading books available from the library. It doesn't cost anything to join or borrow books, as long as you remember to return or renew titles within three weeks!

A number of authors, who have proved over the years to be some of the best for children, have recently published new titles. Jill Murphy's 'Five Minutes Peace' is fast becoming as popular as her original story 'Peace at last' and Shirley Hughes's 'Lucy and Tom's 1, 2, 3.' will undoubtedly become a firm favourite, hot from the press and soon to be available in the library. An extensive collection of nursery rhymes, essential to early language development, can be found in 'Mother Goose' selected by Tomie De Paola and it would be difficult to better 'The Helen Oxenbury Nursery Story Book' offering a collection of ten favourite children's stories with a simple text perfect for reading aloud by or with a child.

It is impossible here to mention all but a very few authors, but if you would like to find out more about children's books, the following titles provide useful introductions to the subject:- BUTLER, Dorothy,





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*Get writing!!*

'Babies Need Books'. This is a readable guide to the world of books for the pre school child which links books to children at different ages and stages of development. 'The Read Aloud Handbook' by Jim Trelease provides a good discussion of reading aloud and includes a 'treasury' of books suitable for reading aloud for all ages.

All of the books mentioned above are available from Ratby Library, why not come down and take a look?

With thanks to the Ratby Playgroup for use of this page.

Sue Cooling  
Librarian

None of this is to suggest that the police will not take action when necessary, and no-one should feel that they cannot contact us either in emergency or over any particular problem they have. Constable O'Keefe, your own officer, can usually point you in the right direction if he cannot help you himself, and enforcing the law is only a part of our work.

Returning to "Neighbourhood Watch" Schemes, there is clearly substantial interest in the Village for the idea and about 65 people attended a preliminary meeting in February. One scheme is already operating and there is no shortage of volunteers to become actively involved. Eventually, it is hoped that there will be more of these schemes, but there is no ideal size or even model for that matter, and it is up to individual groups to decide how they want to organise themselves.

The emphasis is on self help and the police are seeking nothing more from the schemes than that. The benefits generally may be lower crime figures and fewer anti-social incidents which we would all like to see. The benefits for Ratby will be to help maintain a healthy community spirit where people are interested in each other.

Well done WDT! for opening up the discussion.

Inspector P.G. Folker,  
Press Officer

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## PROS AND CONS

The following letter was received in June and in view of the interest shown in the neighbourhood watch scheme we report it here.

As a householder of Ratby we have heard a lot lately about neighbourhood watch. For myself I did not take part, as in my opinion, you normally look out for peoples property etc. when you go about your day to day business.

Recently we have had a spate of vandalism in our street, gardens were damaged, beers cans thrown about etc. One Saturday night about 10.30pm I heard cans hitting my house I gave chase and with a neighbour managed to catch the youths. We told them in no uncertain terms that they should not annoy people for the fun of it, we were very convincing. On our return our wives had informed the police as you are asked to.

Within 10 minutes the police arrived they asked us where the youths were. We gave them the location but said that they would have moved on by now. I asked them if they wanted their names the answer was no thanks, unless they had caused any damage. What is the point of watching out for your neighbours if the police will not follow up your complaints?

Name and address supplied but withheld.

A copy of the letter was sent to the police asking them to reply. They sent the following letter.

Dear Editor,

On behalf of the Chief Constable, may I thank you for being given the opportunity to respond to the letter from your correspondent, who unfortunately does not appear to be much of a fan of the "Neighbourhood Watch Scheme" that we are quite keen to promote.

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There are clearly some misconceptions about such Schemes so I welcome the opportunity to explain what we are trying to achieve. Your writer quite naturally considers, as we all perhaps do, that people look out for each other's property during the normal course of their day. That is fine, and for the most part works well, but not always. Part of the Scheme is to raise people's awareness of the importance of looking after each other in the community and providing advice on how that can be done together with pointers which indicate when perhaps all is not well. It is not just about property of course, it is more about the well being of each and everyone within the community. There have, in fact, been some surprising fringe benefits from schemes in other districts where whole new areas of social activity have emerged between people in different schemes.

The incident referred to demonstrates perhaps a good example of how "neighbourhood watch" schemes could work, not so much for what happened on the night but what could have happened before it. The youths were not anonymous strangers but people from within your own community and some of them were known to residents who officers spoke to at the scene. In a spirit of co-operation, rather than the confrontation which resulted on that night, the events may never even have taken place and that is precisely the object of such schemes.

There was not believed to be any particular damage reported to us on that night. It appeared to the officers who attended that perhaps high spirits had got a little out of control and that nothing more was needed than a watchful eye in the village for a while, which is what happened.

The lack of consideration shown by the youths and the subsequent disruption, were obviously an annoying nuisance especially to those who had children asleep in bed. The actions of your correspondent in tackling the problem prior to the arrival of officers was commendable although care must be taken in such circumstances not to react in such a way that oversteps the mark. All in all, it seemed that things had run their course and Police involvement was no longer necessary.

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