

Wot!

About Ratby

AUGUST 1993

PUBLISHED BY RATBY SCOUT GROUP

ISSUE 41



STUART, LEFT, AND CHEV ALL READY TO SET OFF ON THEIR INCREDIBLE JOURNEY. THE ARMED KNIGHT ROCKS IN THE BACKGROUND AT LANDS END.

SADDLE SCORE FOR CHARITY

Local father of three, Chev (Alan Chevin) (38) of Wesley Close, and former workmate, Stuart McLeod (23) recently completed a cycle trip from Lands End to John O'Groats - a total of 968.7 miles!

Unlike many attempting this trip, Chev and Stuart had no team of supporters in a back-up vehicle. No high-tech equipment or flashy new bikes and gear for these two - just a couple of old bikes and a tent!

Stuart has owned his bike, a Raleigh Winner since he was 13. Two days before they left it was in bits on the garage floor. Chev's 14 year old Carlton gets him to work every day.

Neither Stuart nor Chev are regular long-distance cyclists. So what gave them the idea? They had kept in touch with each other after meeting at Marconi. Stuart had left to read Electronics Manufacture and

Management at Loughborough University, where he has gained a 2:1 degree.

They got talking about ambitions at a colleagues wedding last October. Stuart remarked that he'd always wanted to cycle from Lands End to John O'Groats. Chev's wife, Lesley said "Why don't you do it - Chev's always wanted to do that". The idea was born. Then followed a good deal of planning and poring over maps. There are already approved routes, with stops at bed and breakfast or Youth Hostels. But Chev and Stuart chose to be flexible and take a tent.

There was little time for training. Chev carried on cycling to work every day. Stuart managed to fit in a 20 mile ride.

The adventure began on Sunday 6th June. A friend, Martin, drove them and bikes down to Lands End.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

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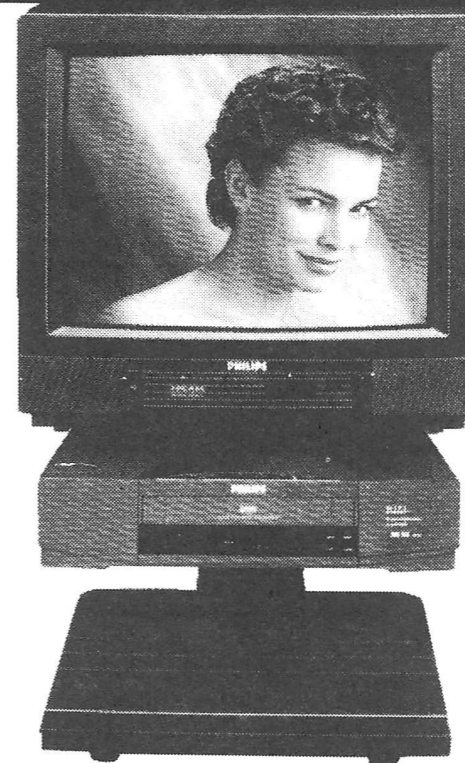
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SUMMER MADNESS

Would all those of you who feel inclined to write a regular column for this publication please heed the following warning.

Amongst those who have already taken on this bi-monthly task has suddenly occurred an outbreak of... marriage!

The Editorial team will not accept any responsibility if this spreads to others who have allowed themselves to be put at risk.

First to break the news was Mark who writes the column on family history 'To Seek the Past'. By the time that you read this the deed will be done. Mark will have made another entry on his 'tree'.

Polite and efficient, as ever, Mark phoned in to apologise for the fact that he would not be able to produce an article for this edition. He assures us that he will be on duty again for the next issue.

We have found an able substitute for this edition and we are sure that you will enjoy their article.

Next to be caught up was Janet, who obviously does not spend all of her time jotting!

This second case of a notifiable situation in such a short space of time alerted us to the fact that we could be facing an epidemic. That many could be at risk. You have been warned!

Janet is asking for time off in September when the next edition is put together because that is when she will be jotting in the Vicar's book.

As Janet has been silly enough to give us so much warning, we are negotiating for overtime to be worked during August. Of course we would not want to put any pressure on Janet, so, perhaps, it would be best if we did not let anyone know that we have asked.

Seriously though Janet, Mark and your respective partners, may we offer you all sincere congratulations and very best wishes for your future lives together on behalf of Wot! and its readers.



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Ratby Youth

Albeit that there are numerous facilities for the younger members of the village, it is sadly apparent that there are no recreational facilities for the older teenagers, in particular the 16-18 year age group. As a result, these youths regularly congregate at various locations in the village.

I receive numerous complaints from residents about the youths and to deal with the complaints, a lot of police time is taken up, which could be used more positively elsewhere. Often the complaints are valid including littering, noise problems, swearing and minor motoring offences. However, on other occasions there are no offences being committed. residents are simply intimidated by youths gathering in numbers.

The main problem areas for youths gathering in numbers in the village are "Moore's" off licence and shop, Station Road; Ferndale Drive car park and the recreation ground at Burroughs Road.

From time to time I move youths on, but the problem is only solved in the short term.

This is because there is nowhere else to go.

I would ask parents in the village, one simple question:- during the evenings do you know where your offspring are?

I would invite parents to visit the locations and witness at first hand, the problems that frequently occur.

The youths have stated that they would not congregate on the streets if they had some premises where they could meet. There they could meet just to socialise, have a cup of coffee and play video game machines, similar to those on "Moore's" premises.

I appeal to organisations in the village with premises to cater for the youth to step forward, namely the Church Rooms, Chapel Rooms, Welfare Hall or any other venue that someone is prepared to offer.

The youth problem is not going to go away, but must be tackled by more interested parties than just the police.

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GREEN TOKENS TAKEN



Ratby Youth Summer

Katy Wright will be continuing to work with young people in the village during the coming year.

Over the summer period she has arranged some trips in response to the wishes of some of the youth. If you are 13-ish or over, you might like to join in. Contact Katy at Groby Community college, 879921 if you are interested. Under 16's will need to bring a signed consent form.

Windsurfing

Monday 16th August, at Bosworth Leisure and Water Park
Meet at 1 p.m. Bulls Head Car Park.
Back at 4.30 p.m. cost £7 (includes instruction and equipment).
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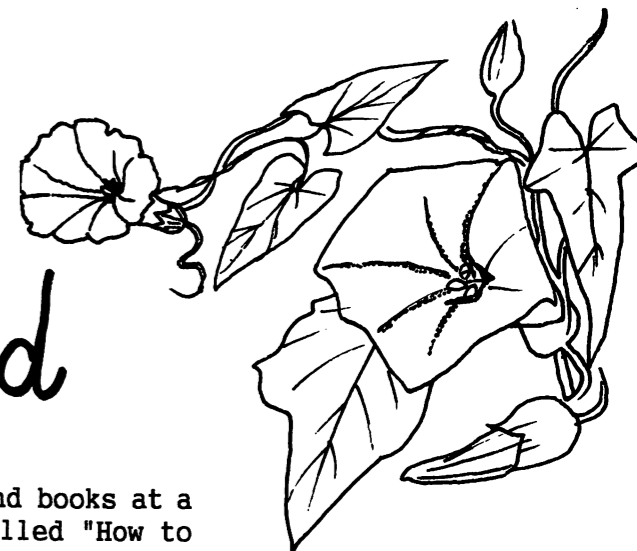
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Chickweed



Whilst browsing among the 2nd hand books at a Summer fete I came across one called "How to enjoy your weeds". I had spent the morning separating weeds from pickling onions, beetroot and carrots, consequently I did wonder how anyone could enjoy weeds - I bought the book!!

Later that evening my partner congratulated me on the "clean" rows of vegetables but I felt guilty about the chickweed wilting on the compost heap.

I had pulled out chickweed by the handful but now I had learnt some interesting facts about this little plant. Its latin name is *Stellaria Media*, some of its local English names are chick whittles, chicknyweed, clucken wort, skirt buttons and star chickweed.

Looking through my field guide I can find 8 different chickweeds but the one I am jotting about is the common chickweed - a weed of cultivation. It is an annual weed, light green in colour with smooth succulent looking leaves. A single line of fine hairs runs up the stem from one joint to the next, then changes sides up to the next node.

This type of chickweed was described by Gerard in Tudor times and later was sold in town streets. Today herbalists still use it for its cooling and soothing properties when making ointments and creams.

Chickweed was an important ingredient in salads, used like mustard and cress is today. It can also be cooked, treat it like spring spinach but before serving sprinkle with either a little orange or lemon juice.

It also makes a very good poultice for carbuncles and abscesses, just put some leaves in a muslin bag and bring to the boil - poultice ready!!

All this goodness and I consigned it to the compost heap. Never mind the high content of copper in the plant must help with next years allotment crops.



Common Mouse-ear Chickweed
(*Cerastium holosteoides*)



Chickweed
(*Stellaria media*)

Farewell to Peter Smith

After seventeen years as Head Teacher at Ratby Primary School, Mr Peter Smith retired in July. He will be greatly missed by both staff and children. A glance through some of the 'books' he has been presented with show that children have valued his warmth and friendliness, and his kindness when they have 'bumped their heads'!

'Wot' asked him for some of his memories of his time at Ratby, and wondered what he would be looking forward to in the future.

What attracted you to this village?

The attraction was that the village had a solid, honest, no frills feel about it. I hope people do not take exception to this description because they are qualities I cherish.

What have been your most rewarding or memorable moments at Ratby School?

Those moments when I can really share something with children. It could be a learning experience, friendly repartee, exchange of personal experiences or even a joke.

What are the funniest or most unforgettable incidents?

I would like to avoid relating incidents at this school because they could embarrass either myself or some past pupil. However, I do remember a child at my last school leaving the dining room with custard oozing out of his shoes. He had been told that you had to eat all of your school dinner and, as he didn't like apple pie and custard, he had filled his shoes with it!

Did you introduce the residential holiday?

Residential visits took place long before I came here.

What do you feel are the benefits of these visits to the school and children?

The benefits of these visits are something I sense rather than something which can be itemised. I will settle for the fact that children value them and remember them long after they have forgotten many things we have tried to teach them.

What will you miss most of all?

Relationships are what I will most miss. A few years ago I would have added the fascination of the process of searching for a better understanding of the learning process. However, there is a new orthodoxy being thrust upon schools; an orthodoxy which is backed by the power of the state and allows no questioning.

What, if anything, are you least likely to miss?

Finding supply teachers; deciding whether or not to close the school during severe weather; but most of all taking decisions which benefit the majority but may be of disadvantage to some individuals.

The school is well regarded amongst parents and those who have visited for its happy, welcoming environment. How do you feel this has been achieved?

By appointing staff who value such an environment and have those personal qualities which encourage it.

You have informed parents of your reasons for early retirement is there anything you would like to add?

The only thing I would wish to add is to urge parents not to be persuaded that academic achievements, as important as they are, are the only worthwhile goals for children. The sort of people we are is at least as important as how much we know.

Finally, what are you looking forward to?

I am looking forward to losing the title 'Head teacher' because it often gets in the way of personal relationships. In terms of personal interests I am sure that, in addition to my many and varied current interests, there are new, untried challenges awaiting. I hope my close contact with children has helped me retain that desire to turn over stones to see what is underneath and to gently rock the trees to see what falls out.

We are sure they everyone in Ratby wishes Peter Smith every happiness for his retirement!

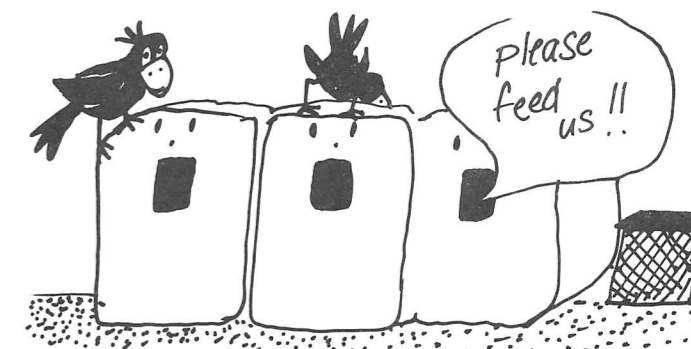
STAFF CHANGES AT THE GROBY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Four members of staff at Groby Community College left at the end of summer term.

After fourteen years here, eight of them as Vice Principal, Trevor Wear has moved on to the post of Head teacher at Settle High School. He is reported as saying in the College Link magazine that he feels ready for a change, but he will miss valued colleagues and the students at Groby.

Tim Hayden (English) and Callum Orr (P.E.) are going back to their roots in Liverpool and Kirkcaldy, Fife, respectively.

Andy Kilgour is leaving to teach at an English school in Prague, in the Czech Republic. One of his achievements was the setting-up of the College Amnesty International Group.



Bottle Banks

Ratby now has our very own bottle banks, taking green, brown and plain glass bottles and jars. There's a handy bin for your empty bags too.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council have installed the banks in the Sports Club Car Park. So you can take advantage of the facility when you park to do your local shopping.

The Sports Club have kindly agreed to allow the use of their car park - so please park there and keep away from the dangerous corners around shops!

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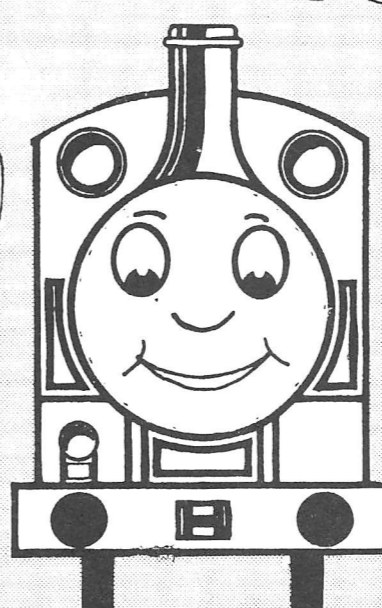
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BUSES ON DANEHILL

Thank you to everyone who bothered to reply to our questionnaire in the last issue. A total of 25 replies were received - 12 in favour of buses on Danehill, 13 against.

Women v Men

Some interesting statistics have emerged. Most of the replies were from women. This confirms national research which shows that women are the greatest users of public transport. 11 women wanted buses on Danehill, 7 said no. 3 men said yes, 4 didn't want buses on the estate. Not everyone revealed whether they were male or female.

Heavy shopping

The main reasons given for wanting buses through the estate were to help with carrying bags of shopping. As you would expect this reason was given by older residents, some of whom said they had no transport. One person said she had originally been opposed to buses on Danehill, but now that she was older she had found the estate buses helpful during the road works, and did not think they were a danger to children.

10 replies in favour of buses on Danehill were from people over 51, 6 of them were over 60. 4 people over 60 were against buses on Danehill. Only one person under 20 replied - against estate road buses.

Is there a message for us all here? It is certain that we will all grow old and infirm, and we may find ourselves without a car one day.

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Safety

Many of those against buses on Danehill said that it would be a danger to children. However, it is a fact that more children are killed by private cars each year than by buses. If, everyone travelled by bus or bicycle, the number of vehicles on the road would be very much less and, of course, they would be travelling more slowly.

More women were concerned about the safety aspect.

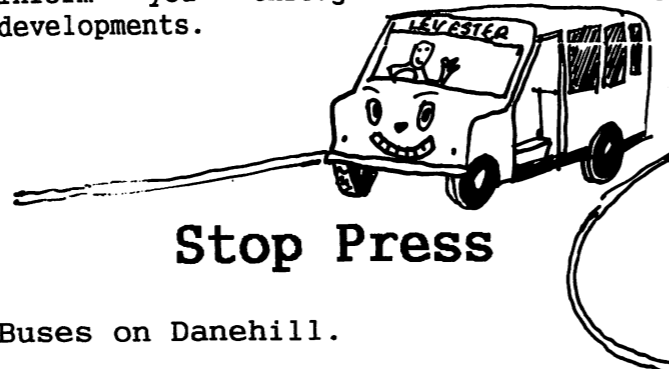
Pollution and spoiling of the environment

One of the popular arguments against buses was pollution and spoiling the environment. Buses are often badly maintained due to lack of funding, so they could be said to be unhealthy and unpleasant to look at. But one bus with 52 passengers causes less long-term environmental damage than 52 individual cars.

Too much traffic on Main Street

Three people in favour of buses on Danehill said it would reduce traffic on Main Street. This is not very likely, as the bus route could be additional to existing routes.

So the results of the questionnaire are inconclusive. There does not seem sufficient demand at present for a route along Danehill. The Parish Council will forward replies to the Bus Company, and inform you through Wot! of any developments.



Buses on Danehill.

Two more replies have been received - one saying No (noise, pollution, safety), the second suggesting a limited day-time minibus service. What do you think of this idea? Perhaps it could be a stop by request service, with no bus stop signs? don't know if bus companies would find this cost effective.

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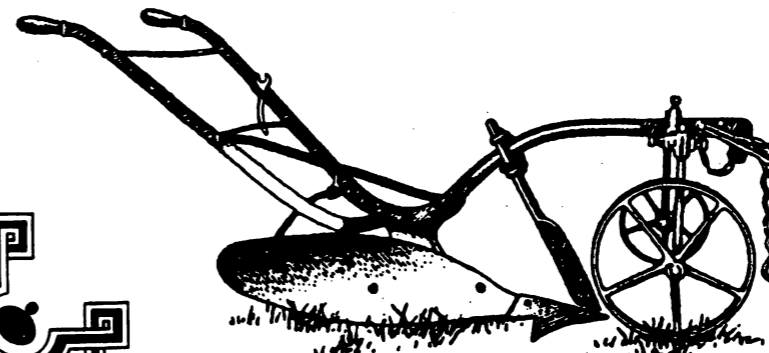
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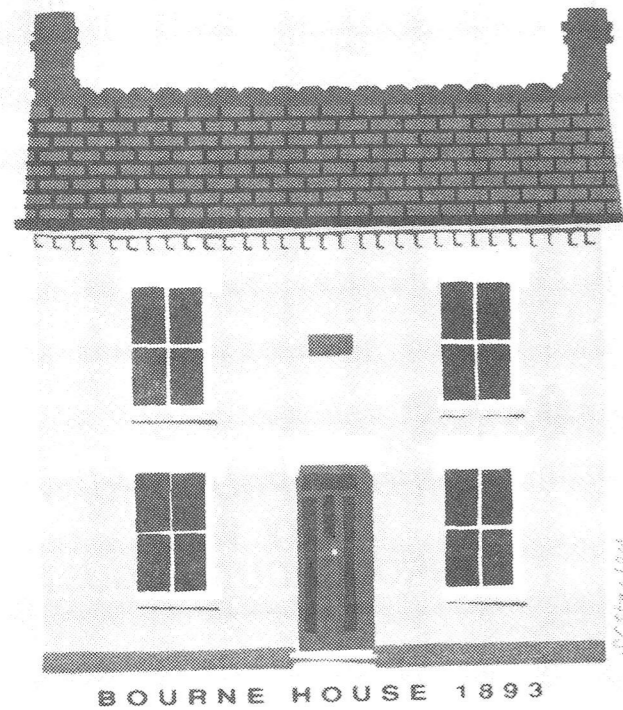
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Letters



Dear Wot!

I thought this little project might be of interest to readers of Wot.

This year our house celebrates its 100th birthday. To mark the occasion I have produced some cards that I will send to friends and family for birthdays and Christmas. I am a graphic designer by profession so the artwork was no problem. To get the cards printed I enrolled for an evening class in Screen Printing. I am enclosing a sample of the results.

My husband and I bought the house 7 years ago and have always loved it. We bought it because it looked like a house ought to look - four windows and a door in the middle!

We are very interested in the history of our house and wonder if someone has a photo showing how it looked in the past?

Yours sincerely

S.C. Stanley
39 Station Road
Ratby
Leicester
LE6 0JQ

Dear Editor

I read with amazement the letters from "oldies" who live on Danehill, complaining that a bus through the estate would aggravate an already noisy situation.

I have lived on Danehill for 18 years and am of the older generation. I find the place very peaceful, sometimes too much so, when not many people are about. "Sleepy" is a word I have heard describing our area.

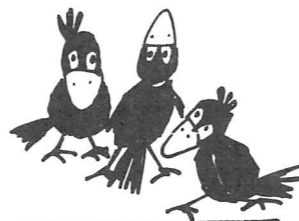
Presumably these older people either have very strong hearts or they have cars, and so do not face the slog up the hills from the shops to home, carrying heavy shopping bags, especially in the icy weather. Apart from those houses at the foot of Danehill and those at the top, the bus would not affect too many, and the arrangement that operated when the buses ran through Danehill seemed to work well, they stopped outside people's garden fences. I, too, asked people about the service and they were grateful for it.

A Foxcub isn't going to inconvenience anyone, or even an hourly coach. Children play on the green off Calverton Close, off the main road. An added advantage is that Danehill will be gritted during the winter when a bus runs through it, and the car drivers won't be slipping and sliding down the hill!

Come on, dissenting oldies - compromise!

Yours faithfully

Name and address supplied



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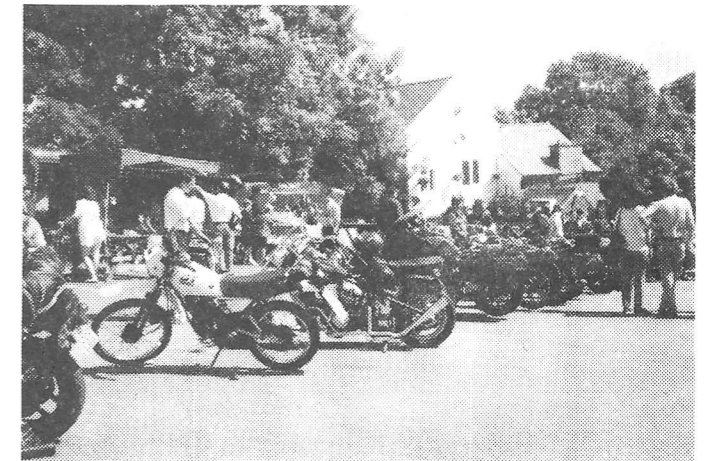
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Plough Bonanza

This event took place on Sunday 2nd June. The aim of the day was to raise money for charity, with our main charity being Western Park School for delicate children. Other clubs and societies from Ratby were welcomed to raise money for themselves. Various stalls were set up around the Plough which included car boot, tombola, skittle alley, craft stalls and custom bike show etc. etc. The most popular was the stocks in which people paid to throw wet sponges at their favourite or unfavourite person, or just at anybody that happened to be sitting there.

The highlight of the day being the TUG OF WAR, the Plough was well represented with three teams and the other teams coming from various divisions of the Motor Cycle Action Groups, we managed to get two teams to the pull offs but the Plough was just pipped into second place and third place. Well done lads and better luck next year!

Our raffle was very well supported and a big thank you to everyone who bought tickets and of course to everyone who donated prizes both to the raffle and tombola stalls.

All in all the day went without a hitch, the weather, well who could have asked for better, the customers - well who could have asked for better??

Once again thank you to everyone who made the day into such a success and yes folks bigger and better next year.

P.S. Don't forget our Bonfire Party on Saturday 5th November.

Ratby Parish Council

Village Signs

New, larger "Ratby" identification signs have been ordered, also "Please drive carefully through our village" for the four approach roads.

Desford Lane/Main Street/Station Road junction

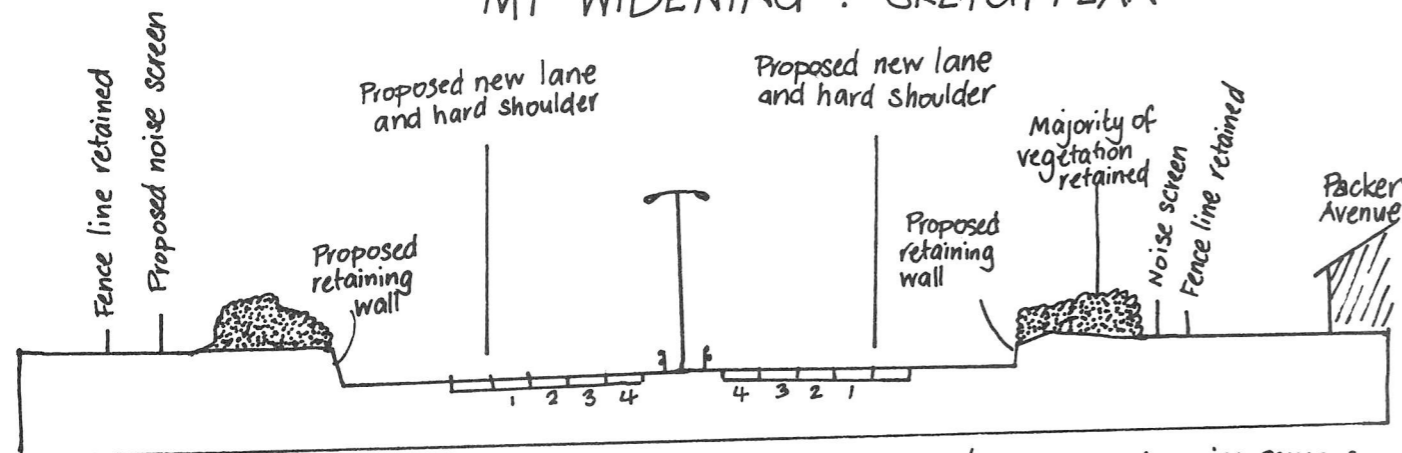
A number of complaints have been received about bad and potentially dangerous parking around this junction. The Highways Department have been contacted about the design of the Co-op parking bay - and its extensive puddle. Leicestershire Co-op have been asked to try and ensure safe parking by delivery vehicles.

However private car parking seems to be the major cause for concern. Many vehicles will belong to non-Ratby residents, but as a tactful reminder the following is an extract from the Highway Code.

Think before you park. **DO NOT** park your vehicle where it would endanger or inconvenience pedestrians or other road users. Amongst several examples given are "On a footpath, pavement or cycle track, at or near a bus stop or within 10 metres (32 feet) of a junction, except in an authorised parking space".

If the situation does not improve, we may receive more requests for double yellow lines through parts of the village. There is a risk of increased traffic speed though, as safely parked cars do act as a traffic calming measure.

M1 WIDENING . SKETCH PLAN



Cross section at Leicester Forest East, showing retaining walls, proposed noise screens.

New signs have been erected directing drivers to the Sports Club car park, though there is little evidence yet of this being used by the public.

M1 Widening

Some readers may have visited the recent exhibition at the Moat House Hotel LFE. The current proposal is to widen the motorway to four lanes in both directions between junction 21 (M69, Fosse Park etc.) and the new junction 21A near Kirby Muxloe, where the A46 Leicester Western Bypass will join the M1. This widening is planned to be open in 1995 and there will be no public enquiry. Ratby Parish Council has written a long and detailed submission objecting to the scheme.

Limited information was also given on future plans to widen the M1, including "Between J21A and J23A (East Midlands Airport) widening is likely to be needed by the end of the decade, particularly on the long uphill gradients approaching J22".

This would affect the section of motorway passing right through the Parish, and of particular concern - through Martinshaw Woods. Remember the chaos on the hill up towards Markfield (J22) in the last heavy snowfall a few years ago?

Mineral Railway

The County Council Environment Committee are currently considering this route to Glenfield for

Ratby Parish Council

designation as a public footpath or bridleway. We have written on a number of occasions supporting this proposal as part of a long distance footpath plan.

War Memorial

Estimates are being obtained for professional cleaning of the marble memorial. Thanks to Mr Crockett of Groby for planting up the borders - some of you may remember him when he ran the hardware store on Main Street.

PABARI'S RATBY NEWS

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Home Guard

Do you have any stories, memories or photographs of the Home Guard in Ratby?

Or, do you know anyone who has?

One of our readers would be very interested to receive any information at all on the subject and, so would we!

Who was in the Home Guard? Can you come up with some names?

If you can help in any way, please phone Martin on Leicester 395179.



SWALLOWS

Visit Of The Bat Lady

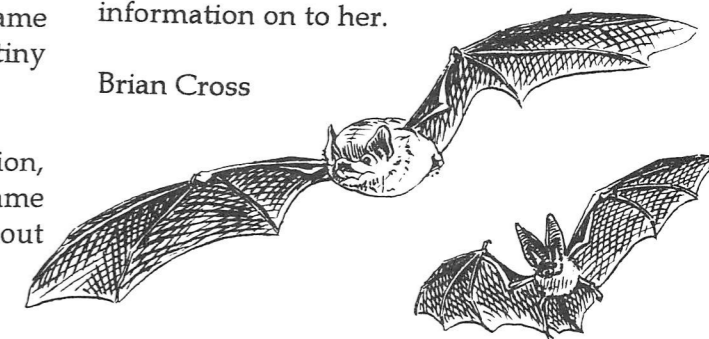
I had the idea for this evening by listening to Radio Leicester's Colin Green programme. This lady was talking of the decline of the native bat in Britain so I wrote to her and asked her if she could come to give a talk to the Cub Pack. I of course refer to Mrs Maggie Frankum. A date was agreed and came the night she arrived with her slides and three tiny bats.

The Cubs were enthralled with her presentation, she involved them with questions and then came the magic moment when she actually got a bat out for us to touch.

She has asked me to pass on her message that if anyone would like to get involved with bats, I have her number.

We would also like to take a bat census in Ratby, so if you have any bats flying near your house, please try to let me know and I will send the information on to her.

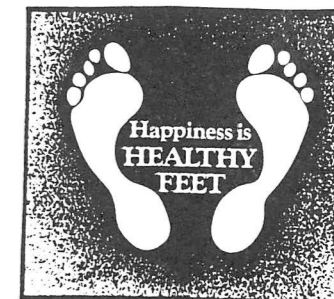
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SUMMER SOCCER TOURNAMENT



The Alliance and Leicester Building Society have donated one of the Bouncy Castles.

Walkers Crisps, I am told, will be providing a competition with a prize. What sort of prize? That information stayed in my informants closely guarded notebook. Last year it was two tickets for a Michael Jackson concert!

Mattel UK Ltd. have donated sports equipment to the value of about £200 which will be given away.

Other companies were also intending to provide support but details were not available at the time we wrote this article.

All in all, it would seem well worth a visit. You may be a lucky winner, you may just enjoy yourself, but you will have supported a worthwhile cause in Childline and you will have supported Beaumont Police to show that the huge amount of effort that they have put in is worthwhile.

Well done you 'Boys (and Girls) in Blue'. If I had one, I would take my helmet off to you!

Babbington Community College, on Strasbourg Drive will be the scene of this years Summer Soccer Tournament run by Beaumont Police. It will run from Tuesday 17th. August to Friday 20th. August inclusive.

The tournament was open to entries, free of charge, to those aged 10 to 18 years of age and all those who participate will receive a souvenir plaque.

Plenty of other activities will be available to competitors and spectators alike. These include two Bouncy Castles, Demonstrations by all three of the Armed Forces, Nottinghamshire Police Motorcycle Display Quads, Archery and Basketball supplied by Leicester City Council for people to try their hand, and well you go along and tell us about the things you did there.

Refreshments will be available each day,..... quick pause whilst you all get the truncheon meat jokes out of your system,..... and there will also be Souvenir T-shirts on sale.

Money raised will be presented by Assistant Chief Constable Erica Norton on Friday afternoon to Childline.

Central TV East Sports Presenter Keith Daniel will present the Police Trophy to the winners of the Under 14 Boys football Tournament.

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HOME AND AWAY

Did you see in Mr. Leicester's Diary (a column in a local newspaper called the 'Leicester Mercury') a couple of months ago an article mentioning the Gamble family who lived in Stafford's Yard, Ratby? Well we followed it up.

It seems that Mr. Keith Hudston of Kirkby Mallory was working as a carpenter, in about 1984, doing renovations in a house on Ellesmere Road on the Braunstone Estate. Behind a skirting board he found an old letter containing a photograph. It was addressed to Mrs. J.A.Gamble, Stafford's Yard, Chapel Lane, Ratby, Nr. Leicester, England. The postmark was Liverpool and the stamp a red Australian King George 2d.

The letter remained in a shoebox at Mr. Hudston's home until he sent it to the 'Mercury'. Although they did not print the photo or letter the article did eventually lead to them being passed on to Mr. Alan Gamble, son of Doris Hilda Gamble (Nee Palmer), to whom the letter was addressed, and Joseph Adrian Gamble. They had lived at the Ratby address, which Mr. Alan Gamble thinks was then owned by the Geary family, and moved to Ellesmere Road before his birth in 1943.

Mr. Hudston's quest was satisfied, but he had given rise to another desire. Mr. Gamble would like to trace either the writer of the letter, his descendants, or anyone who knows of them.

If you fancy yourself as a bit of a Sherlock Holmes then all of the clues so far available are in this article. Updates may be obtained from, or exchanges of thoughts or information directed to, Martin on L.395179. Now on with the story.

The date of the letter was 06.04.33. It was written from 'Belmont Rd. Glenfield, N.S.W.', and signed by 'Cousin Charlie' who was then 'nearly 19 years old'. The rest of the letter, whilst interesting from a social history point of view, offers no other clues. The full content is printed on page 17.

Alan's brothers and sisters were Arthur born about 1926 (and passed away about 1988), Len born about 1927, Doreen born about 1929, and Sylvia born about 1931. His mother (c. 1906-1968) he thinks came from the Jarrom Street area. His father (c. 1911-1981) was the son of John Gamble. Two of his father's sisters still live in the village.

The line to investigate is probably that of his mother. Her mother was Fanny Palmer (nee ?) and her father is thought to be John Arthur Palmer, but Alan is not sure of the name.

Fanny had a sister who emigrated to Australia. Did she have a son Charlie?

Another ambition of Alans is to trace Arthur (now aged about 65) who is the son of Doris Hilda's brother also called Arthur.

That is all I can give you.

THE GAME IS AFOOT!



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HAPPENINGS AT THE RAILWAY INN

British Pub Week was a means by which the industry, with the support of Brewers Society and its members, could publicise the positive contribution that your local pub makes to the local community and to highlight the important role they play within British life.

At last we have something no other country has "The Good Old British Pub".

Here at the Railway the following activities took place during British Pub week.

Tuesday 29th June - Annual knockout Pub Games Finals Night

Ladies Darts Singles:

Champion Caroline (Teek) Newberry
Runner up Molly

Mixed Darts Pairs - Champions -
Paula Fung and Steve Harvey
Runners up - Sandra Bond and Bob Pearce
Cribbage Pairs - Champions - Brian & Barbara Roe
Runners up - Julie Murtha and Chris Gillingham
Dominoes 5 & 3 pairs - Champions - Phil & Steve Plant (of Ratby Brass Band fame)
Runners up - Bert Holmes & Stan Smith
Mens Darts Singles - Champion - Mick Thornton
Runner up - Colin McClean

David Rae, Marketing Manager of Everards Brewery presented Awards to Winners and Runners up.

A further presentation was made to Paula Fung, Captain of the Railway Rovers who won the Everards Ladies League singles knockout competitions. A free Barbecue supper was enjoyed by all and a drink "on the house".



It's all happening here!

Wednesday June 30th - Charity Presentation

A cheque for £800 was presented to "Heartlink" at Groby Road Hospital by Allan Evans, Leicester City Football Club Coach. Our thanks to Allan particularly for the way in which he entertained the youngsters in the garden area. he has promised to come again during the season and bring some players.

This latest presentation has brought the amount presented to Heartlink, since September 1991, by the customers and staff of the Railway Inn to a staggering £3,000.

WELL DONE EVERYONE!!

Thursday July 1st

The Railway Inn minibus was brought into use to ferry 12 regulars down to Everards Castle Acre site where they enjoyed the morning touring the brewery. This was followed by a "sampling session" in the new hospitality unit.

Commiserations to Mick Thornton, the landlord, as he was driver for the day.

Saturday July 3rd

A special Celebration Party was held to mark our triumph in the Everards Best Kept Cellar Competition. Bar nibbles and "A DRINK ON THE HOUSE" rounded off a great evening.

HOME & AWAY LETTER see page 15

6/4/33

Belmont Rd.
Glenfield
N.S.W.

Dear Doris,

I just thought I would like to write you a few lines as I am sitting inside & don't to do with myself because it is raining like anything & has been for nearly 3 days.

Well and how is everybody at home. Mum & Dad, sisters, brothers and myself are well. I have been working for about 5 months now during the fruit season picking peaches & cutting grapes which are fairly dear in England but hear their are big vinyards of about 9 or 10 acres. I will be finished work in a weeks time and may be out of work for another long time.

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When will some of us ever get permanent work for I don't know, things are terrible bad out hear even boys that have got the education have as much hope as those that haven't. How are things in England much work flying around. It's getting harder & harder for me for getting work as I am nearly 19 years old. I am sending you my photo & my dog. Well thats about all I can say now. Hoping to hear from you soon.

From your loving Cousin

CharlieXXX

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SADDLE SCORE FOR CHARITY FROM FRONT PAGE

They took with them the bare essentials, staple food, a change of clothes, and mascots, Troll and Dougal bear! Their only up to date equipment were two computerised mileometers. Chev's stopped working, but Stuart managed to record the daily toll. They had cycled over 1000 miles by the time they had reached Thurso to catch the train home.

After 1 mile Stuart's chain came off. After 1.6 miles Stuart got a puncture, the first of four. It was one of these moments when they wondered if they were going to make it.

There were other moments, deserted camp sites with ramshackle huts for toilets, rain, steep hills, and ponies eating their bike saddles and brake cable.

Warrington was one of the worst moments three times they found themselves back in the suburbs, directed by helpful local people, until a passing cyclist led them to safety.

Scotland brought a new hazard, midges!

The journey was mostly up the west of the country. They camped at Slimbridge, where an early start was made possible by the helpful dawn chorus alarm call. That day they achieved the greatest mileage, 101 miles to Market Drayton in Shropshire.

The route took them through Cornwall, across Dartmoor, (stopping for fish and chips near the prison), Liskeard, Exeter and on via Avon and Shropshire to the sixth camp just south of Preston. North of Carlisle they decided to continue up the west coast, as the cold winds were coming across from the east. From Dunoon there were 70 miles to the next camp north of Oban. The journey continued north east along the Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness to Inverness. (No, they didn't spot any monsters).

They finally reached John O'Groats at 7 p.m. on Saturday June 19th. It was raining and cold, and their main feeling was hunger!

Next morning the sun shone for the obligatory photo-call!

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SADDLE SCORE FOR CHARITY

Despite the fact it was Sunday, helpful Rail staff managed to sort them out and they got back to Leicester at 10.30 p.m.! Only a few miles to ride home now ---- each going their separate ways.

Would they do it again? No - because they've done it and once is enough. But that's not the end of it normal life has been an anti-climax and they've both got ambitions to cycle south through Europe.

For those of you thinking you'd like to try it yourself, Chev and Stuart both said they wouldn't do it any differently next time. They both enjoyed the flexibility. Highly recommended are banana and cheese sandwiches!

As well as the achievement of just getting there, both Chev and Stuart were sponsored. Chev raised £600 for the Rainbow appeal. (including £250 from the Marconi Employees Charity Committee) and Stuart collected almost £300 for the Leicester General Hospital Nurses League of Friends Bladder Scanner appeal (his Mum was chairwoman of the committee). Congratulations to them both!

For those who like facts and figures:

Lowest average speed 9.2 mph (second day)
Highest average speed 13.9 mph (tenth day - to Dunoon)
(Time included short stops)
Maximum speed recorded was 43 mph going down off Dartmoor.

John O'Groats - they made it! 7 p.m.
Chev & Stuart pictured here next morning. (The 874 Lands End mileage refers to main road routes, not bike trails on minor roads). It's not too late to make a donation!



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Cycle breakdowns

	Chev	Stuart
Punctures	1	4
Tyres	0	2
Pedals	2	0
Spokes	2	1
Derailed chain	3	(123!)

is this true?



AN EVENING OF DRAMA

'HAMLET' AT KIRBY MUXLOE CASTLE

The sunshine of the previous day changed to brooding grey skies to lend atmosphere for the setting of this production. And Kirby Muxloe castle could almost have been 'Elsinore'. The effect only marred by the scaffolding on the castle tower.

Once again 'Theatre Set-Up', a professional touring Company brought a Shakespearean production to Kirby Muxloe.

A large audience, well provided for with deck-chairs, blankets and picnic hampers enjoyed the performance.

'Theatre Set-Up' was founded in 1976. From its home base in Enfield the Company tours the country performing against natural backgrounds where possible. There are the same number of cast, and the same simplicity of props and scenery as there would have been in Shakespeare's day.

Look out for their production next year. Don't forget your picnic and



warm clothing..... the performances usually start at 7.30, and it can get cold. Insect repellent is useful - and we'd advise you not to drink too much in the first half. The greatest criticism of an otherwise worthwhile event is the poor toilet provision. The organisers should surely provide more than just the usual two toilets for an audience of this size! Long queues meant that the start of the second half was considerably delayed, making it a very late night for the children in the audience.

so, next year, get there early for a place at the front, and make arrangements with nearby friends in Kirby to use their loo!

This picture of the Railway Inn which was published in the last issue certainly brought about a surprise. A copy was passed on to the son of the then Landlord, George Marvin, and he phoned out of the blue from Droitwich. George Stanley Marvin, (he prefers to be called Stan), was born in the Railway Inn in 1907 and knows that the photo was taken in 1905 or 1906 because the part occupied by Batten & Son was converted into the Marvin's living room before his birth.

Batten & Son took a building behind the pub, but still next to the road, he recalls. Their Manager was Dick Chantrell when I was a kid; he took me rides on his horse & cart sometimes. The cellar entrance is from the yard at the back - there was also a strip of garden, now all car parking. There was a stable & a skittle alley extending from the rear. The pub was often called 'The Wharf' by the locals.

More of Stan Marvin's memories are printed on the next page.



'MANY THINGS CHANGE BUT MEMORIES REMAIN'

GEORGE STANLEY MARVIN, 28.06.1993

'Opposite (the pub) on the other side of the road there was a large board stating 'Ellis & Son - Cattle Food Merchants' and their large shed smelling of fenugreek, and a small office smelling of Asthma powder. The manager was Fred Townsend who burnt the powder and inhaled the fumes for his asthma, a common remedy in those days.

We left Ratby in 1922 - my father had rheumatism and the Doctor (Dr. Garfitt?) recommended Droitwich Spa for treatment, and we finally came to live here.

I went to Ratby school from 1912 to 1918, and was there when Mr. Baker took over as Headmaster from Mr. Butler. Mr. Baker had done military service in Palestine and gave us a talk about it. I also remember a Miss Cufflin, but I seem to remember a Miss Ramsey as Headmistress at that time. I passed to go to the Wyggeston Grammar School in Leicester and before I went Mr.

Baker gave me, and one or two more, lessons in Latin at his home (in the middle of the village) to break the ice as it were. I later became a Pharmacist. Latin was very useful at that time. Other scholars were Walter Preston and Arthur Root who also went to the Wyggeston. There was a teacher called 'Jimmy Hunt' who took Standard 4, I think, and lived in Stamford Street. We played marbles and other games in the street after leaving school at dinner time. There were no cars! I remember the Gearys and Astills of cricketing fame. Also Alan Shipman who played for the County, and later had the Bulls Head. A Miss Duncannon looked after the tiny Post Office just below the Yew Tree Inn. I was in the Choir. Joe Gamble was the Choirmaster. I have here a Bible given as an attendance prize to my father dated August 1893, exactly 100 years ago. He would be 15 years old.'

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BURROUGH WOOD & OLD HAYS

AN HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF A MEDIEVAL AND POST ENCLOSURE LANDSCAPE

The principal roadways and footways within the parish have a long and chequered history with the exception of principal main streets of the village, the majority of the roads have developed since medieval times. However, to the west of the parish the landscape is an ancient one, parish boundaries and principal field boundaries remain entirely unchanged since the enclosure of the open fields of the parish some 200 years ago.

Within this landscape are three principal public rights of way. The first of these is a bridleway, this is most certainly the most ancient of the bridleways within the parish of Ratby and leads from Desford Lane, Ratby, across country to Thornton at Holywell Farm - this road cuts through the edge of Burroughs Wood.

This ancient highway dates from the year 1480 when John Fletcher, a servant of William Lord Hastings cut this roadway so that wood could be brought from the Burrough Spring, Nr. Holywell to Lord Hastings' fortified Manor House at Kirby which was then being built.

The second important roadway in the west of the Parish is Burroughs Road. This highway leaves the village near the school and cuts westward beyond the Plough - a 17th century coaching inn, and proceeds towards open country.

In medieval times this road would have been a mere trackway, used by the villagers to convey oxen and plough unto the two great open fields which lay either side of it. To the north of this road lay the great Burrough Field - this field stretches westwards to the ancient ENCLOSURES of Old Hays, Bondman Hays and Whittington and northwards to the Old Forest Road between the outwoods and the Charnwood at Martin Haw (Martinshaw) woods. This ancient forestry trackway linked the village with the now deserted village of Whittington and the village of Markfield to the north west.

In the 18th century, the village fields were enclosed and at this time the Burrough Road is described in the Enclosure award of 1770 as a private carriageway to Lord Stamford's Estate at Old Hays.

The woodlands to the west of the parish belong ancestrally to the southern range of the ancient forest of Charnwood, the whole of this area is of some importance to the Historian and Naturalist. In a recent appraisal of the landscape to the west of the parish, the Borough Council District plan reports: "Outside the district plan boundary to the west of the Parish is Ratby Burroughs and a number of small woods around Bondman Hays. These woods which were once the relics of more extensive woodland present in the medieval times contains plans typical of ancient woodland site".



Burroughs Wood & Old Hays - An Historical Evaluation of a Medieval land post enclosure landscape

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Burroughs woods are perhaps the oldest and best preserved of this group of medieval woodlands.

Within this historic area are two important Class A scheduled monuments. To the east of Burrough Woods lies the iron age fort of Bury Camp and to the north the medieval moated farmstead of Old Hays. The site of Old Hays and its associated fish ponds form part of the ancient 13th century assart (forest clearance) of Lundershay. The woodland to be seen to the north and east of Old Hays, forms a principal part of the remnants of medieval woodland in the locality. Although considerable forestation has taken place over the centuries, elements of the medieval woodland flora here still survive. The most outstanding feature in this locality is the presence of approximately a quarter of a mile of the medieval bank and ditch of Burroughs Woods within whose bounds lies the site of a medieval deer park.

This important earthwork today forms part of the public right of way R.49. To the south of Burroughs Wood this trackway leaves the woodland fringe and cuts southwards into the Burrough wood via an ancient stile and thence to the R.42 bridleway.

Within this southern section of the wood known in the 18th century as Change Spinney are some fine examples of old coppice probably dating from 18th century forestation by the Earl of Stamford and Warrington. The whole of this area which has given pleasure to the villagers and walkers of Ratby, also County and Rambling Clubs is an important heritage worth preserving and although the principal earthworks are scheduled monuments it would be hoped that in the coming years not substantial changes take place which would be detrimental to the preservation of this outstanding woodland habitat, its medieval deer park, bank and ditch, fish ponds and footways and bridleways.

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The Glenfield Hospital Summer Fete

The above fete will be held on Saturday 21st. August in the Hospital grounds from 2p.m. until 5p.m. Matt Poole of the Leicester Tigers will open the event, which will include displays of Keep Fit, Arabic Dancing and Rebounders. There will be a large variety of stalls such as Tombola, Crafts, Roundabouts, Face Painting, Wellie Wanging, Bouncy Castle, Clothes, First Aid, Bric-a-Brac and a Free Prize Draw for a Car. There is also a Tug-o-War event. Refreshments of all kinds are available.

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children's page

dinosaur pie!

Q How do you know when there is a Diplodocus in your bed?

! snores! dino-snores!

A. You can hear the

Q How do you know when there's a Brontosaurus under your bed?

A.... When your nose touches the ceiling!

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What does your Imaginary Dinosaur look like? Send us your drawing... in black pen please... to the Library hot box

we're out of here!!



Skeletons in the Cupboard

Continuing our FAMILY HISTORY series
'To Seek the Past'



If you start investigating the history of your family you need to be prepared for all sorts of unexpected discoveries..... relatives you didn't know you had for example, or perhaps carefully hidden skeletons in the cupboard. You might even solve some mysteries; or, like one researcher, discover that you have some eccentric characters in your family tree..... a long lost cousin who took up mud-wrestling to earn a bit extra!

One former resident of Ratby discovered the reason for an ancestors unusual christian name - 'Kent'. He had always assumed that this was a family name handed down. Delving into records he eventually discovered that this individual had been born at sea, during a dangerous voyage around Cape Horn. The family had been returning to England from Australia. The name of the ship? 'The Kent' - thus solving the mystery of the names origin. The boy had been baptised on board ship by the Captain.

Sometimes you may discover tragedy. One local man read in a 1930's newspaper of an Aunt who had died in hospital after rescuing her children from a house fire.

Unless your ancestors were wealthy you are certainly going to discover the deaths through poverty of many young children. This is particularly common in villages like Ratby, where framework knitters were amongst the most poor.

In one Leicestershire family both parents died, and one child was born and died in one year :-

Jane, daughter of William and Mary, born 03.03.1798.
William buried 21.09.1798
Mary buried 02.10.1798
Jane buried 20.10.1798

Three previous children in this family had died, only one son surviving. During that year there had only been a total of eight deaths in the whole of this middle-sized village. So what happened in this family?

Several family history researchers have felt their discoveries explained an affinity with a location that they had previously been unable to explain. One villager discovered to her surprise that her ancestors had been framework knitters in a village similar to Ratby.... Could this, she wondered, have explained her strong feeling of being at home? Perhaps we inherit memories of place..... and perhaps this would explain the feeling of 'deja-vu' we occasionally experience..... a strong impression that we have been somewhere before?

Maybe we can also inherit strong feelings or beliefs? One local woman, who has always insisted on using her vote was not surprised to discover a suffragette ancestor!

Ratby Fish Bar

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dinosaur footprints have been found in Dorset!!

Ratby Parish Council

Playground Safety

Many of you will have read the comments by Dale Mortimer about county playgrounds in the July 20th issue of the Leicester Mercury. Ratby Parish Council are very aware of the potential hazards of our recreation areas. Following a report by the National Playing Fields Association a few years ago, we have undertaken a gradual improvement and update of equipment.

All swings have been fitted with new chains and safety seats. Dangerous equipment such as the old slide, and trapeze bars on the monkey frame have been removed.

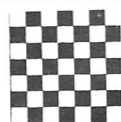
A maintenance worker has been employed whose duties include cleaning of rubbish and glass, and the regular checking and maintenance of equipment. An annual safety check is done by Wicksteed Ltd. and the Council has always responded quickly when action is recommended. We have, for example, fitted a safety bar to the slide at Burroughs Road, and asked for estimates for safety surfacing beneath swings, where tarmac is wearing out. The 'treadmill roller barrel' was removed this summer after the central drum was found to be corroded.

The Council has agreed that any new equipment which is recommended to be installed on safety surfacing should have safe surfacing. This makes costs prohibitive. As the 'Mercury' article stated, financial constraints are a problem. The Parish Council has limited resources, and maintenance and the removal of equipment is expensive. There would be an outcry if we increased the Parish precept to cover the cost of everything we would like to do. Occasional vandalism does not help.

The Parish Council does have copies of the checklist printed in the Mercury, and we try to keep up to date with changing recommendations and standards for equipment.

The article suggests that local residents could get involved with practical work and fund-raising. Ratby Parish Council would welcome this, as there are constraints on the ways we can raise funds. It seems strange that grants are available for tree-planting and landscaping, but none to ensure the safety of children.

The Parish Council would also like to hear about any accidents or injuries incurred at the recreation areas. This will enable us to monitor safety and also perhaps to help campaign for more funding. We always welcome suggestions for play equipment, and especially donations!



PUBLIC MEETING

The Beaumont Police / Community Consultative Committee will hold a public meeting at the Salvation Army Hall on Aikman Avenue, Leicester on Wednesday 8th. September 1993, commencing at 7.30 p.m.

The object of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for people of the Subdivision to air their views over policing issues which concern their Community. It is hoped that members of the community will go along and take an active part in the meeting to make the event a success.

The Consultative Committee is chaired by Councillor Mr. A. K. Devani. Senior Police Officers from Beaumont Police Station will be present to answer questions and discuss matters raised.

It is not within the Committee's terms of reference to discuss individual cases. These should always be referred to the Subdivisional Commander at Beaumont Police Station.

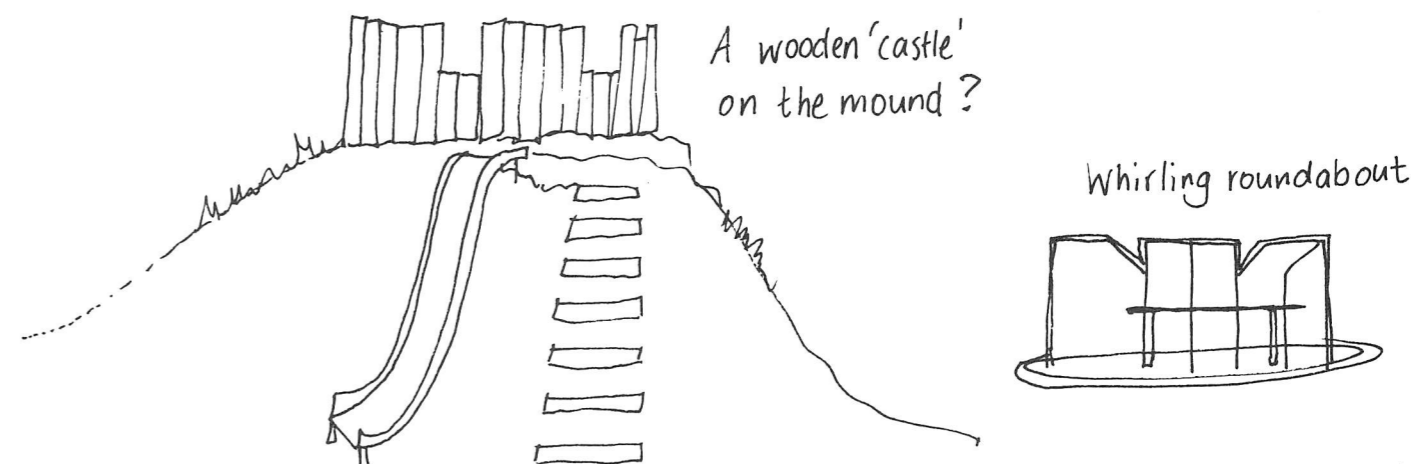
Ratby Parish Council

Children's Play Area

The Parish Council would like some ideas from Ratby children to improve the play area at Ferndale Drive. There is a mound with a slide near to the gate. How can we make it more interesting? What about a wooden castle on the top? We want to see your ideas! We will choose the best ideas and make them happen! Perhaps you have seen something on another play area? Draw or write about your ideas, or even send in photographs

.... put them in the Library 'Wot' box, and we promise to look at them all!

Some children have said they would like a roundabout on the play area. The old one was removed because it was taken away. What do you think? Write down any ideas you have about the play equipment you like best. Don't forget to put your name, age and address on the paper!



V.E. DAY

Would the person who telephoned to offer a further photograph of celebrations in the village please phone 395179 again as your name and telephone number have been lost.

THANKYOU

REVEREND PETER & MRS. JEAN BLACKMAN

Ratby villagers will know of the retirement of our Rector. The Church Magazine for July carries his final letter reflecting on his time here.

We wish he and Jean a happy retirement in their new home in Chichester.

In our next edition we hope to have a detailed article!



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