

Valentine


Wot!

About Ratby

FEBRUARY 1990 Published by Ratby Scout Group ISSUE 20



A New Decade

A new decade is beginning. WOT will continue to bring you news of village events past and present.

Already the indications are that Ratby will come under increasing threat from developers. WOT will continue to bring you information on issues and proposals that may affect the village.

Over the years we have reported on major plans that had implications for us all - the proposed meeting hall, the golf course - as well as issues such as road safety that concern everyone.

In April 1988 our coverage of the A46 Leicester Western By-pass Inquiry prompted a massive response. Two years later no announcement has yet been made. Indications are that a further Inquiry will be held to determine the location of the M1/Bypass Junction.

WOT will be bringing news of this Inquiry. If we are to retain the strong sense of community and rural nature of Ratby, then we must all be prepared to make our opinions known.

We have seen neighbouring villages engulfed by development, and suffer an increase in crime. We realise that people need homes, and that progress is inevitable, but don't we all need a sense of belonging to a community? Is it selfish to want newcomers to share in that community and feel a part of it?

We cannot predict what changes will have occurred by the year 2000 - we can only hope that Ratby will remain a village, with its friendliness unchanged.



ZANUSSI

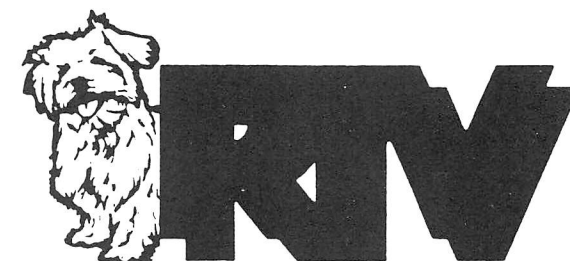
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ELECTRICAL



Dear Mr. Editor,

Well done, Anon, for the perceptive and thorough appreciation of the wonderful folk in Ratby (December 'Wot' magazine). To those few who are short on goodwill may we hope that they will discover how to acquire it, and to apply it, in 1990.

Anon Too

Dear Editor,

Ratby is a very lucky village, independent, full of social activities, groups and associations. Self sufficient in its range of shops, pubs and garages.

Some yearso ago, a campaign was launched by the village post offices "use it or lose it". Maybe we have become complacent, but this motto surely covers all local shops also.

To be able to purchase goods locally, at very competitive prices, without the trouble and expense of travelling into town, surely this is a luxury we don't want to lose.

We have had some empty shops recently, which have now been taken over, supplying us with goods much wanted, according to general opinion, it is up to us, the villagers, to ensure that these shops and businesses stay in our village.

Support your local shops - use them or lose them!!

Editorial Note

Although it has so far been our policy to print all letters received, in future issues only those accompanied by a name and address will be used. This does not mean that names and addresses need to be printed. A nom-de-plume may be used and confidentiality will be assured. The responsibility for the content of the letter remains that of the writer.

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COPPERS CORNER

Neighbourhood Watch

I have been the Ratby PC since June 1989.

Part of my role in the village is to develop the existing Neighbourhood Watch schemes and to encourage the formation of new ones.

Groby has an excellent Neighbourhood Watch scheme with a co-ordinator who can keep in touch with the individual contact people in each separate group, a system that I would like to see running in Ratby.

The Neighbourhood Watch groups are made up of interested residents within their particular areas, roads, streets etc.

They may have informal meetings perhaps every month or so and be made aware of any particular problems within the village.

This information can then be taken back to the individual groups.

Ratby is a very pleasant village with

a relatively low crime rate. With a good system of Neighbourhood Watches I feel we should be able to improve this yet further, improve the security of homes within the village and raise the general sense of wellbeing in the process.

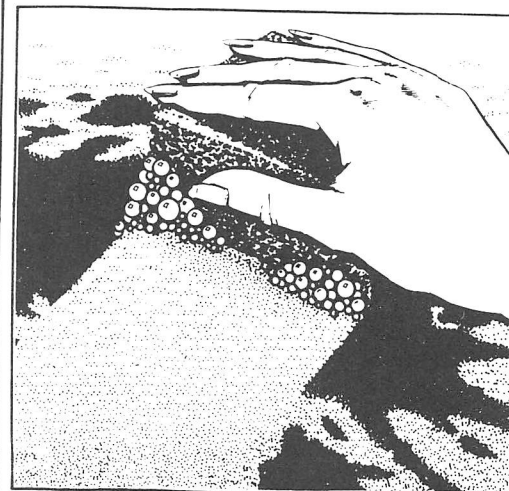
Anyone wishing to start such a scheme or to become part of an existing scheme, then please contact me via Beaumont Police Station on L.530066. I particularly require that special person to take on the role as the overall Ratby Watch Co-ordinator!

Sheep worrying by dogs

Lambing time is nearly with us again, a very busy and trying time for the local farmers. An added problem for the farmers is that of sheep worrying by dogs. As an ex-Police Dog Handler, I am well aware of the tremendous excitement that a dog experiences during a chase and how difficult it can be to control a dog in such circumstances. Please try to keep your dog under control at all times when around sheep, preferably by keeping the dog on a lead, a momentary lack of concentration can result in a nasty accident.

John Alexander PC 1474 Ratby PBO.

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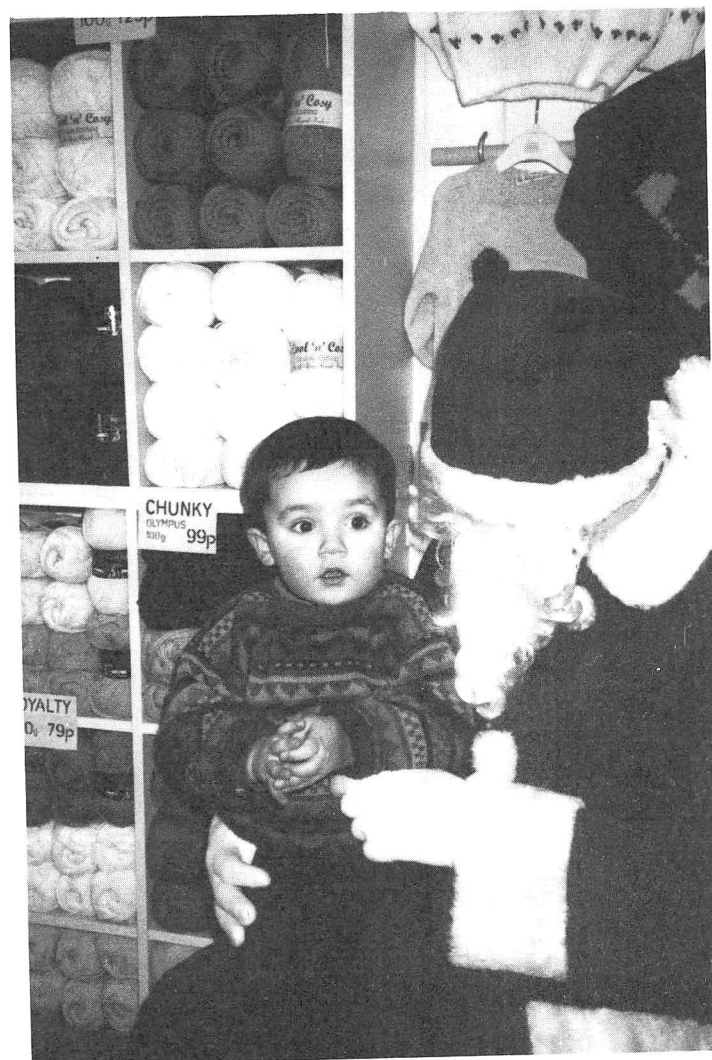
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FATHER CHRISTMAS AT BABYFITS

Father Christmas came specially to visit Babyfits on 16th December, and met lots of Ratby children!! He had brought all of them a present, and there was plenty of time to hear all about what they wanted for Christmas. Two children were amazed when Father Christmas recognised them from a previous encounter!

Let's hope he'll be back next year, as he was the nicest one we've seen around (and of course there were no bus fares or long queues!!)

Please note - Babyfits will be closed on Wednesdays from January 23rd onwards.

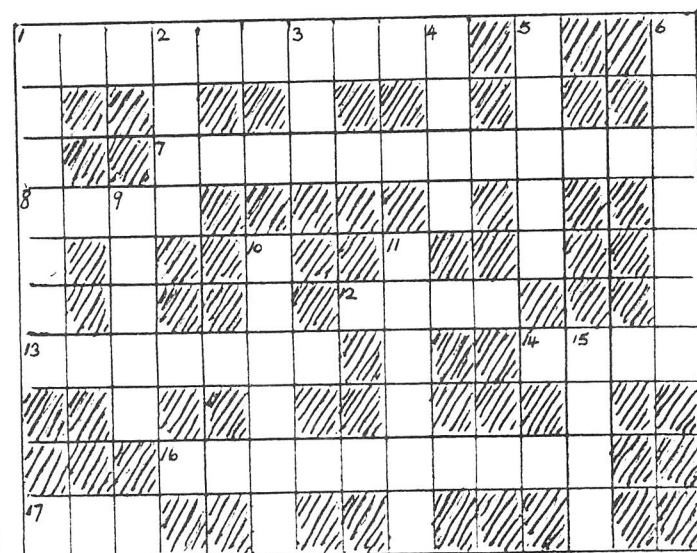
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CLUES

ACROSS

- 1 Wild men, black and white
- 7 75% to be one
- 8 You can get carried away in one of these
- 12 Found on a door
- 13 Ballmaker, not you Mr Sullivan
- 14 Sound made when boot meets ball
- 16 H.Q.
- 17 Ball grounded over line

DOWN

- 1 Bowl for big schoolboys
- 2 Early one if you are naughty
- 3 Put on bruises sometimes
- 4 Sharp one can cause injury
- 5 Heads down here
- 6 Passes can go this way
- 9 Expertness in execution
- 10 A rugby injury
- 11 Two on field but no vice
- 15 Welford Road for Tigers L.W.

Ratby Playgroup



'Christmas comes but once a year'. What a good job too. The final three weeks of the Christmas Term at Playgroup are just a blur now of mad panic, worry, confusion and sleepless nights, with Christmas cards, decorations and calendars to make, the party for 68 very excited 3 and 4 year olds to organise and look forward (?) to and the annual Christmas play to put together. What a joyous time of year it is! Why do we do it?

The play just seems like a dream now (good or bad depends on where you were sitting, preferably far away from the children, and what your own child got up to). What a pleasure it was to hear the children sing some of their favourite songs (the nightmare of the rehearsals when only the voices of four desperate adults could be heard to sing long forgotten), the children dancing around the snowman (although it was a stand-in snowman as the original child decided to 'melt' halfway through the performance), the upside-down sunshine, the dog who wanted to be a cat and the dancing 'five little leaves so bright and gay' who magically turned into eight due to over-enthusiasm.

Then came the Nativity, where there was an excited Innkeeper playing peep-o behind poor old Joseph's head and no Mary to be found anywhere, yet another stand-in had to be found. That flu-bug had a lot to answer for, didn't it realise how much planning goes into these things. Thank goodness for the beautiful star and angels.

What a shame we must wait another eleven months before it all starts again. Is that all the time left? **HELP!**

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Ratby Parish Council

Christmas

The Parish Council was impressed by the high standard of shop premise displays this year. It was finally decided to award the prize to Fraser's of Markfield Road. Congratulations!

In future years a second and third prize will be awarded.

There was general disappointment with the lighting on the Christmas tree, we shall look into the purchase of more lamps for next Christmas. Many thanks to Mr. Mangham and Ratby scouts for their assistance in collecting and setting up the tree.

Village Improvements

The Parish Council welcomes ideas and involvement in improving the village. The Village Society have planted spring bulbs around the village.

The Parish Council have agreed to write to Leicestershire County Council to provide a footpath across the well-trodden grass at the corner of Danehill and Groby Road, and to install steps into the bank to improve access to the school crossing warning lights on Main Street.

A working party of volunteers is to be set up to help undertake bulb and flower planting around the village. Would you like to help improve the village? Who knows we may rival Market Bosworth one day! Please contact the Parish Clerk if you are interested, telephone 392817.

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Parish Clerk

Mrs Linda Laywood has been appointed clerk to the Parish Council. Her address is 35 Groby Road, Ratby. The Council recorded their thanks to the retiring clerk.

Neighbourhood Watch

P.C. Alexander had organised a meeting which was attended by representatives from various roads in the village. The regeneration of earlier schemes is a priority.

Traffic

Once again traffic problems have dominated 'Questions to the Police' during meetings. P.C. Alexander assured the meeting that the situation was being monitored, particularly with regard to the situation at Casepak, which is causing further concern.

County Councillor's Report

County Councillor, Mrs Pat Butler, advised the Council that a traffic survey had been carried out in the village, but that results had not yet been analysed.

Mrs Butler reported that reinstatement of damaged road surfaces would be undertaken as soon as possible.

Pressure from traffic problems exacerbated by Fosse Park seem certain to hasten the construction of the Leicester Western Bypass. There is likely to be yet another Public Inquiry concerning the junction of the Bypass with the Motorway. Plans will be affected by the Dept. of Transport's announcement of possible widening of the motorway to four lanes. Apparently the use of the hard shoulder as the extra carriageway at locations such as bridges is not an option. The final decision on the major sections of the Bypass route could be known by late February.

Play Areas

Fencing at Ferndale Drive is again needing repair. The Council is still seeking a General Maintenance Person. The hourly rate has been increased to between £3.00 and £3.50. If you are active and would enjoy making a valuable contribution to the village a few hours a week, please phone the clerk, on 392817.

Ratby Parish Council

Estimates for landscaping at Ferndale Drive play area have been received from the City Wildlife Project. In accordance with standing orders the work has been put out to tender.

Right Hon. Lord Crawshaw
6 St Martins
Leicester LE1 5DB

Notice Boards

The Council agreed that because of persistent vandalism to certain notice boards they would not repair them in future but have them removed. Those which suffer from natural decay will be maintained. The Council will meet legal requirements to display notices of meetings and other official information.

North Eastern Parishes Local Plan

Councillor Mr. John Smalley reported that a Public Inquiry regarding the plan would be held early in 1990. Look for further announcements!

Lighting

An additional light has been recommended for Cottagers Walk. The Parish Council is now seeking to improve lighting along East Walk.

Door to Door Collections for the Disabled

Leicestershire Association for the Disabled urgently need volunteers for collections during March, in the village. If you can help please contact;

The Parish Council wishes everyone a Happy New Year, and reminds Ratby people that all are welcome at Parish Council meetings. These are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7.15 pm in the Welfare Hall.

Parish Council Meeting Dates:-

Tuesday February 6th
Tuesday March 6th
Tuesday April 3rd

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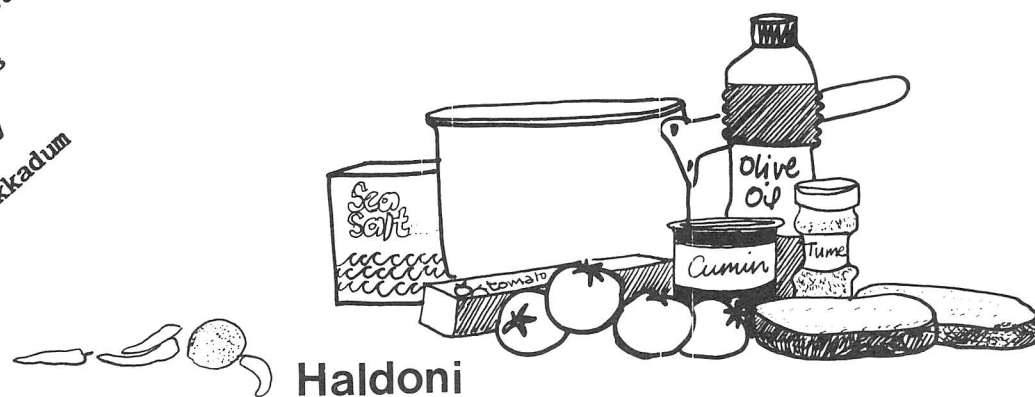
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Haldoni

Ingredients

1 kg fish steak (any type of firm fish)
4 fresh tomatoes
1 teaspoon garlic paste*
2 tablespoons tomato puree*
1 teaspoon Cumin powder*
1/2 teaspoon Turmeric powder
2 teaspoons Coriander powder*
1/2 teaspoons cayenne pepper or to taste*
2 tablespoons olive/groundnut oil
Sea salt to taste
10-12 curry leaves
Juice of 1 lime
Few pieces of cocum (soaked in water for
a few minutes) optional
Few green chillies

Method

Coat the fish with half the amount of the following ingredients, turmeric powder, lime juice, oil and salt. Warm the oil in a medium sized saucepan. Braise the ingredients marked with an * for a few minutes. Add the rest of the items including the fish steaks and enough water to cover the fish. Taste for salt, sour and chillie. Adjust according to your preference. Bring to boil and then simmer gently for about ten minutes or until the curry is thick enough to suit your taste. Service with Fenugreek Khichree. (see next page !)

Fenugreek Khichree

Method

Place a medium size saucepan with a tight fitting lid on the hotplate. Melt the ghee/oil, add the whole spices, then add the onion and sauté until soften. Add most of the coconut milk/water, save a small amount. The coconut milk/water is obtained by grating half of a fresh coconut and pulverizing it in the blender with some warm water and straining through a sieve. When you have squeezed out the milk add the rest of the water and make it up to 1200 ml. If you don't mind having a really authentic khichree you can add 50g of creamed coconut to 1200 ml of warm water instead.



Ingredients

(Approx.) 1200 ml of coconut milk/water made up by using half a coconut or 50g of creamed coconut and water.
600 ml of rice which has been soaking for a few minutes then strained.
1 small onion (finely chopped)
1 tablespoon fenugreek seeds (soaked in warm water and sprouted)
1 tablespoon ghee/oil
1 cinnamon stick
1 cardimon pod
Sea salt to taste

When the water is boiling add the sprouted fenugreek seeds; let it boil for a couple of minutes then add all the rice and salt to taste.

Bring it to boil, give it a stir and place a tight fitting lid on.

Turn the heat right down and leave it to cook for 15 minutes. Give it a good stir and place the lid back on and turn the heat off.

When ready to serve put the aromatic rice in the mould and serve with Haldoni (fish curry).

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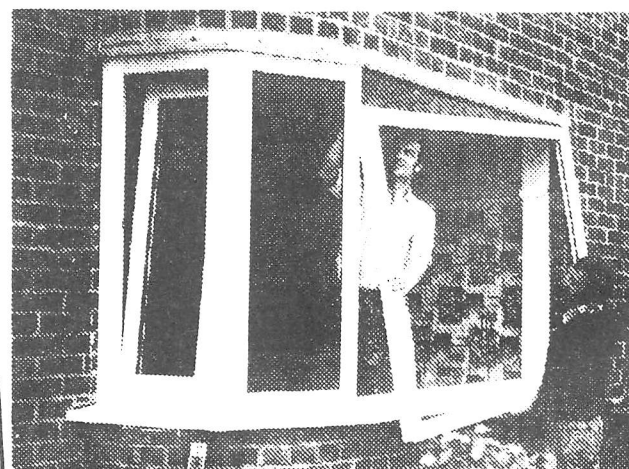
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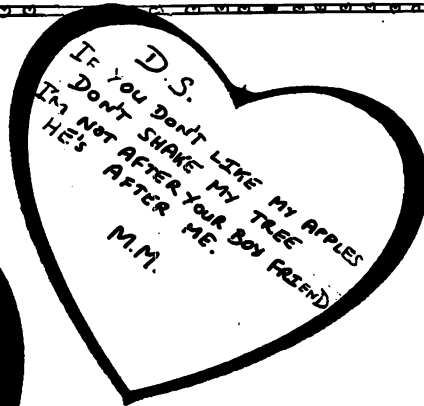
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Valentine



A Victorian Valentine

Oh little lovelies
What shall I send
Summer and flowers
Gloomy old Winter
Buds will not bloom
not shine.
What shall I do for

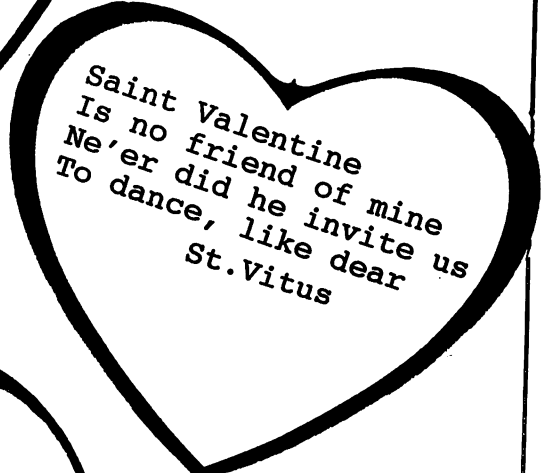
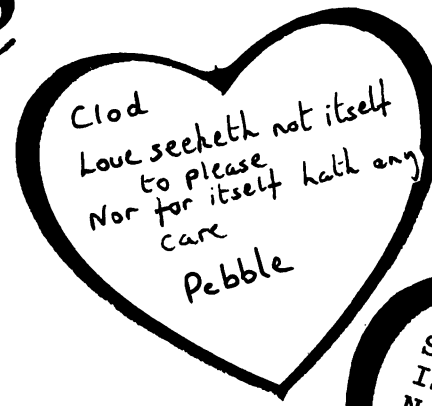
Prithee, St. Valentine
Why do you come at
Plenty of days when
Plenty of days when
bright.
But now, when ever
drear
Why do you come, St.

I've searched the
and through
For a bud to tell
But buds are asleep
dead,
And the snow beats
little head.
So, little lovelies
Here is my heart for

Oh little lady mine,
for your valentine?
are far away,
is king today
low, and sun will
for a valentine?

Oh little lady mine,
tell me here,
this time o'year?
lilies are white,
sunbeams are
anything's dark and
St. Valentine dear?

I've searched the
gardens all through
of my love so true
and blossoms are
down on my poor
Oh little lady mine,
for your valentine.



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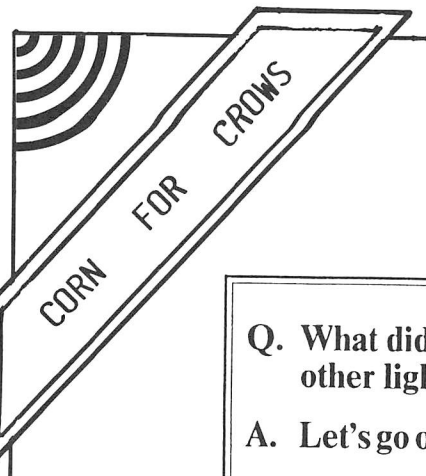
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Q. How do you stop a dog bark-
ing in the back of the car?
A. Put it in the front.

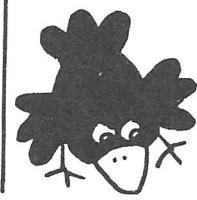


Q. What did the light say to the
other light?
A. Let's go out together tonight.

Q. What can you put in a cup
but never take out?
A. A crack.



Q. What kind of pump can you
eat?
A. A pumpkin.



Q. Who is stronger - a man or a
woman?
A. A woman, because she can
carry a ladder in her stocking.



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SUMMER PLAYScheme

Kath Plunkett helping out in the Art area during the 1989 Playscheme.

Playscheme Helpers Meeting

To discuss Playscheme '89 and to plan Playscheme '90. The Meeting will be on Tuesday, March 13th starting at 7.30 at Groby Community College. Please come or pass on any comments to Sue Boud.



Crowfie Childrens' Page !!



It's getting
Very cold now!
See how many
stripey Scarves you can
see on this
page!!!!

by Sarah
Mukaddam
Age 9½

For
The
Next
Issue
"the
theme
will be
EASTER



By Sofia
Mukaddam

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Ibrahim
Mukaddam age 7





1st. Ratby Scout Group



May I on behalf of the 1st Ratby Scout Group wish you all a Happy New Year as we look forward to another year which promises to be full of exciting activities and challenges.

Welcome to Ray Lander who joins us from the Ellistown Group as Assistant Scout Leader. Ray has a wealth of Scouting experience to call upon.

He will boost what is now becoming a strong leadership team.

Whilst on the subject of leadership I'll explain briefly of what that comprises. The 'total group' (Beavers Cubs Scouts Ventures) is headed by the Group Scout Leader (G.S.L.) the group is run by the Scout Leader (S.L.) with the assistance of Assistant Scout Leaders (A.S.L's) and those who do not wear uniforms known as instructors. All give their time free (yes we don't get paid!).

Our G.S.L. is Colin Payne, with myself as S.L., Peter Smith, Dennis Brookes and Ray Lander are (A.S.L's) and lending a hand as instructors are Paul Clarke and David Gould.

As for programme planning and activities these are carried out through the 'Patrol Leaders Council' under the guidance of Adult Leadership. To explain further, Scouting exists to encourage the physical, mental & spiritual development of young people so that they may take a constructive place in our society.

The method of achieving that aim is by providing an enjoyable and attractive scheme of progressive training (badge linked) based on the Scout Promise and Law. Twenty-four lads from Ratby (not forgetting Max from Groby and Paul from Enderby) are doing just that. And there is room for more!!

This years programme includes visits to Fire, Ambulance + Police Stations, East Midlands Airport, a Local Radio Station, Ice Skating, Ten Pin Bowling, Small Bore Rifle Shooting, talks by Guest Speakers; not forgetting the more 'boring' physical activities of camping, canoeing and hiking expeditions (there is supposed to be a joke in there!).

Well that is this year, what about the next decade. Our own Group Headquarters is a lot nearer becoming a possibility, but more on that in future publications of 'Wot'. On that optimistic note I'll leave you. my next report will be after our annual winter camp at John Lee Woods - BRRRRRRR! Take care and bye for now.

Your in Scouting
Chris Woodward (S.L.)



CAN YOU HELP?

Volunteers urgently needed to help adults with writing, spelling, reading or maths. Training course starts soon.

Volunteers need to have approx. 2½ hrs a week spare and to have a sense of humour! Ring Adult Basic Education, Coalville 39531 ext. 223 for details of how to help or be helped!

TIME OUT

A new group for women wanting 'time out' for themselves, meet weekly on Mondays from 2 - 3 pm at Thornton. There is a free creche and plenty of activities for women. Interested? Turn up or ring Groby College for details - 879921.

Did you know that St. Valentine is the name of several saints of whom most celebrated are two martyrs whose festivals fall on 14th February, both belonging to reign of the Emperor Claudius.

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Briefly explore Belgium and Holland. Visit to Brugge and Brussels and full day excursion into Holland to fascinating Diamond city of Amsterdam.

Price includes: 2 nights acc. at 3 star hotel in Gent on B/B basis, all rooms with private facilities, ferry sailings and coach transportation. Returns Sunday, late evening.

ROYAL WINDSOR & THEATRE WEEKEND - SATURDAY, 12TH MAY - Dep. Time 7.20 a.m. PRICE £73.75 per person

Based in Bucks. at former Victorian Country Hotel. Superb weekend not only offers visit to capital city but also theatre tickets to Andrew Lloyd Webber's sensational new production 'Aspects of Love' AND excursion to our Royal County and Windsor.

Price includes: 1 night's hotel accommodation on B/B basis, theatre ticket for matinee performance of Aspects of Love and visits as mentioned above. Returns Sunday 6.00 p.m. home approximately.

Harrowgate & York Dep. Date, Saturday 12th May. Price £52.50 per person

Price Includes: 1 night's hotel accommodation at the Parkway Hotel on dinner, bed and breakfast basis. All rooms with private facilities. Visit to York & Harrowgate. Coach transportation throughout with an experienced Tour Driver. Supplements: Single room - £7.50 per person. Insurance - price on request. Approximate arrival time home: Sunday 7.00 p.m.

BRIGHTON Dep. Date Saturday 26th May. PRICE £79.95 per person

Price Includes: 2 nights hotel accommodation at the Royal Albion Hotel in Brighton with dinner, bed and breakfast. All rooms with private facilities. Visit to Oxford. Coach transportation and experienced tour driver. Supplements: Single room - £8.50 per night. Insurance - price on request. Approximate arrive time home: Monday 8.30 p.m.

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EVENING MENU SERVED IN THE GRILL ROOM

To BEGIN

- Chef's Soup of the Day** 75p
Served with crusty bread and butter
- Home Made Paté** £1.30
Served with hot toast, butter and salad garnish
- Prawn Cocktail** £1.75
Selected prawns, topped with Marie Rose and served with brown bread and butter
- Stuffed Mushrooms** £1.40
Fresh button mushrooms prepared to our Chef's high quality cuisine.

HOT PLATTERS

- Prime Gammon Steak** £3.25
Thick and juicy and served with a hot pineapple slice or egg
- Golden Scampi** £2.95
Selected scampi, breadcrumbed and deep fried and golden brown. Served with a lemon wedge and tartare sauce
- Sirloin Steak** £5.40
An 8oz prime steak grilled to your liking and garnished. Served with button mushrooms, grilled tomato, and onion rings
- Roast Chicken** £3.50
A half of crisp and tender roast chicken served with a traditional stuffing and savoury gravy
- The Plough's Mixed Grill** £4.95
An array of different meats to satisfy even the heartiest of eaters, served with button mushrooms, and onion rings

- Deep Fried Plaice** £2.95
Fillet of plaice breadcrumbed and deep fried until golden brown. Served with a lemon wedge and tartare sauce.
- Rump Steak** £4.95
An 8oz prime steak grilled to your liking and garnished. Served with button mushrooms, grilled tomato and onion rings.

All platters are accompanied by
by French Fries, and Garden Peas,
or Chef's choice of vegetables,
of if requested a freshly
prepared salad.

To FOLLOW

- Home Made Fruit Pie** 75p
A delicious pie in feather light pastry topped with cream
- Peach Glory** 95p
A sundae of peach halves, ice cream finished with whipped cream and wafer
- Banana Split** £1.10
Ripe Banana with a portion of mixed fruit, ice cream finished with whipped cream and wafer
- Gateaux** £1.10
The chef's choice of gateaux to compliment your meal
- Cheesecake** 95p
A superb choice of cheesecake finished with whipped cream
- Ice Cream** 75p
A double filling of Vanilla and Strawberry ice cream topped with whipped cream & wafer

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ONE OF FEW LEICESTERSHIRE PUBS LISTED IN THE GOOD BEER GUIDE 1990

MOWER SPARE THOSE PLANTS

When the Leicestershire County Councils policy regarding the cut back in grass cutting in the rural areas of the County was made known, many hands were raised in horror and disbelief. The grass verges would no longer look like the lounge carpet all year round and everywhere would look untidy. My first reaction to the news was to echo the sentiments, after all had we not already paid our rates for this service. After considering the long term effect of the one swathe width per cut on road side verges, I began to realise that perhaps the idea was not so bad after all. The new system might save many of our almost extinct wild flowers. Already the nation has lost twenty two species of wild plants and we certainly would be mad if we were not prepared to accept the possible preservation of what is left and perhaps even the encouragement of lost species to return to our region.

I remember when I was a child, seeing so many poppies in the fields that they were just a carpet of red - such a magnificent sight, one which many of todays children will probably never see.

When the improvements to the A47 Peterborough Road between Wardley and Tixover were accomplished, a further benefit for drivers was the sudden appearance of hundreds of poppies on the roadside verges. The reason for this phenomena is that over many farming years poppy seeds were ploughed under the soil's surface, going deeper and deeper with each ploughing. The excavation into the earth's surface to lower and level the highway brought the poppy seeds nearer to the surface allowing them to germinate, once again allowing us to see the beauty of their blooms. It would surely benefit our countryside if we accepted that, providing the grassed areas within village confines are kept tidy and road junctions kept cut to remove long grass in the interest of safety, the reduction in width cutting to grass verges will be beneficial to both humans and wild flowers. We could retain many endangered species of wild flowers giving us and future generations the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of the countryside.

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Lest We Forget

Part two

Fourteen of the men whose names are inscribed on our War Memorial belonged to the Leicestershire Regiment which fielded twelve battalions on active service during the Great War and committed themselves honourably throughout. This is one mans tribute to all those who selflessly gave their lives in this "War to end Wars".

On 1st July 1916 began the Battle of the Somme, the biggest and bloodiest battle the British Army had ever fought. On the very first day there were 60,000 British casualties and this battle continued until 18 Nov 1916 over some of the most atrocious terrain, deep water-filled craters, thick cloying mud in which many men drowned. In total there were in the region of 500,000 casualties on the British side, of which four were Ratby men serving with the Leicesters.

The first of these was 18144 Pte DANIEL HERMAN SIDDONS who, while with the 7th Battalion was killed on 14.7.16 on the Somme aged 24. He was the son of Mary Ann and Roland Siddons of Ratby an old established family in the village. On this day 154 others of the 7th Batt. lost their lives.

Three days later, along with 83 men of the 6th Batt. 14654 Pte GEORGE WILLIAM HILL fell in action also on the Somme. George was born at Kirby Mallory but lived at Ratby.

25186 Pte WILLIAM BIDDLES was killed in action on the 15th Sept 1916. William was a Ratby lad serving with the 1st Batt. In all probability this was in the battle for Flers-Courcelette on the Somme in which 11 British Regiments participated.

Pte HENRY SAUNDERS (25829) served with the 9th Batt. when he was killed in action along with 69 others 10 days after William Biddles probably at Monval. Henry was born and bred in Ratby.

The 1st/5th Batt. were in the line opposite Commequet on the 25th Feb 1917 when they were shelled for 3½ hours by a heavy enemy bombardment. All kinds of shells were fired and the trenches were hit in several places and this was probably where 242522 Pte ALBERT SHIPMAN, born Ratby received the wounds from which he died on 5th march 1917. The son of Benjamin and Mary Shipman he is commemorated on a gravestone in Ratby Churchyard. He was 21 years old.

Fighting against the Turks in Mesopotamia during the battle for Baghdad 16694 Cpl TOM HARRATT was killed on 23-4-17.

Three Ratby men from separate battalions were killed in action on 3rd May 1917 one of which was the brother of Cpl Tom Harratt (above), 26817 Pte JOSEPH HARRATT serving with the 6th Batt., 16183 Acting Sergeant THOMAS WILLIAM PRESTON was with the 8th Batt., 25890 Pte ROBERT SUTTON of the 9th Batt.

On 7th May 1917 Pte FRANCIS GEORGE HALL died of wounds received while serving with the 6th Batt.

In the 11th Batt. on 12th October 1917 only one man lost his life, 21334 Sgt JAMES WILLIAM BALL born in Ratby was unlucky to be that man. The battle for Ypres was raging at this time (31st June - 1st Nov).

Christmas Day 1917 was the day on which 33763 Pte FRANK BIDDLES of the 7th Batt. died of his wounds. The Leicesters were in the Battle of Cambrai 20th Nov to 3rd Dec 1917 so this is a possibility as to where Frank received his wounds. he was born in Ratby and is commemorated on a gravestone in Ratby Churchyard. His age was 30 years.

201586 Pte JAMES BALL died of wounds in a German military hospital at Soignies in Belgium, born at Groby he was a platelayer for Groby Granite. He lived in Berrys Lane Ratby on enlistment which he did at 40 years of age for a bet. He served with the 11th Batt. He was wounded, taken prisoner in the German offensive in 1918, he died on 14th April 1918. He is also commemorated on a gravestone in Ratby Churchyard.

COLIN KINTON SMITH 22322 is the only name not on Ratby War Memorial but he was born in Ratby. He was killed in action on 17 Sept 1918 probably in the battle for the Hindenburg Line, 12 Sept - 9 Oct 1918. He served with the 11th Batt.

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Just about one month before the war was to end 10516 Pte WILLIAM LEE was killed in action serving with the 6th Batt. He died on 8th Oct 1918 probably also in the battle for the Hindenburg Line. He was born in Ratby.

May their names live on.

20 years later another greater war broke out, adding yet more names to Ratby's War Memorial.

Yet again good men and true left our village to give their lives so that we may enjoy freedom and liberty.

To all of these, and to "old sweats" everywhere, this is respectfully dedicated.

Old Bill.

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Ratby Duck Racing Club

As mentioned in the last issue of 'WOT', during November a Duck Racing Club was formed in Ratby and by January the membership was closed due to the overwhelming response from regulars of the "Plough" where the club is based.

The main aim of the club is to provide a service to the local community. In addition to organising events and outings the membership might well be able to help persons with particular worries. Club finances may be limited but solving problems need not be expensive. There is a depth of knowledge, skills and experience within the club which could be of benefit to others.

The address is: The Duck Racing Club.
c/o The Plough Inn.
The Burroughs,
Ratby.

Traditionally duck racing is a secret society and spectators are not encouraged, this stems from the sports origins. Reputedly in the 17th century racing ducks may well have been acquired through dubious means and the least welcome people at race meetings would have been local land owners or gamekeepers.

Today the rules of racing have been more or less standardised by The Duck Racing Association of Britain, the weight of the bird for instance is restricted to 6lb 4oz, (not much use for a Sunday roast). The course over calm water remains the same, 2½ chains (55yds). The method of racing is for the duck to run across the surface of the water as if it is about to take off. Races usually involve four birds at one time. There are two racing seasons one in spring and the other in autumn.

It is unfortunate that the sport is not open to the general public, but due to tradition, that would be against the constitution of the club.