



Happy Birthday!



Ratby Playgroup!!
see page 17.

Wot!

About Ratby



Snow Special
- page 9

February 1991
Published by Ratby Scout Group
Issue 26

WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON ?

See article on page 19



PLACE OF WORSHIP

....WHAT'S HAPPENING

Many Ratby people will have been outraged by a Leicester Mercury Report on Saturday January 19th headed "THREE YEAR PROTEST IS SMOOTHED OVER". The District Planning Officer was quoted as saying that, "there appears to be no opposition to the Trust's application".

Ratby Parish Council which has consistently objected to this proposal responded immediately. Several Ratby people wrote to or phoned the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council in time for the meeting of the planning committee on Tuesday January 22nd.

We now know the application was approved at that meeting, subject to landscape conditions and the ratification of the North Eastern Parishes Plan at a full Council Meeting on February 19th. The plan recommends that the boundary for building development be extended so that the site for the proposed meeting hall (or a community facility) will no longer be in the "green buffer".

Many Ratby people have not changed their views on this matter.

continued on page 8



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The views expressed are the views of the individual contributors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the publishers.

Letters



15 Firtree Walk,
Groby,
Leicestershire.
LE6 0FN

Dear Sir,

Regarding the article by "Old Bill", in the Ratby Wot, last issue. Capt. George William Ashby, Old Hayes Farm, Ratby K.I.A. 25/9/15, I have on behalf of "Old Bill", and the Ratby and District Royal British Legion made a search through the Ratby Parish baptism's, and discovered that Capt Ashby was baptised at Ratby church, and should have his name placed on the War Memorial together with Cpl. Colin Kinton-Smith.

I have also written to the British and Commonwealth war graves commission, to double check. A copy of their answer, with a photo copy of George William Ashby's baptism, will be passed on to the R.B.L. secretary, and forwarded to the Ratby Parish Council.

Brian Leader

Dear Editor,

May I through your pages say a special thank you to Ratby playgroup for all their hardwork in organising the 21st Birthday Party. I left home saying I'd be back in half an hour and stayed until Midnight! It was lovely to meet everyone from the earliest days of the playgroup and compare experiences.

We all enjoyed the games. It was interesting to see how quickly the parcel (with forfeits) was passed around in the pass the parcel game. Very different from the game when played with children, who are reluctant to pass the parcel on when once they've got hold of it.

As for the 'snatch the parcel' game - who would have guessed that playgroup workers could be such cheats!

Thanks as well to Barbara Cox for the delicious cake. I heard she had to make two because the first one was ruined in a 'wardrobe collapsing incident'.

RATBY & DISTRICT BRITISH LEGION

Members of Ratby and District British Legion occasionally hear of the death of an Ex-service man or woman, sometimes after an illness and we are told that no one from the Legion had visited them.

This is most unfortunate, as this Branch, which covers a very large area geographically, is organised to visit sick or distressed Ex-service people. In the event of death, the Branch will provide a representative or the Standard Bearer if requested, to attend the funeral. To make this possible we do need to be informed by relatives or friends, who are asked to get in touch with one of the Branch Welfare Officers listed below:

Groby J.R. Brown Leic 876708
Kirby Muxloe
A.H. Brigstock Leic 395359
Markfield & Stanton-under Bardon
T.H. Pickett Mark 244306
Ratby J.H. Calder Leic 873015
Thornton & Bagworth
C.A. Bell Desford 823371

For contact only:
Bagworth

Miss J. Mason Bagworth 203205

B.T. KEYMER

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Tel: Leicester 876926

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Ratby Village Society

What is now known as the Ratby Village Society started out in February 1974 as the Ratby Improvement Society. At that time the village was beset by problems, mainly of litter (some things never change) and shall we say a general shabbiness. At the inaugural meeting it was decided if the villagers wanted anything done about these problems then they had to set about it themselves and that is exactly what happened. One of the first things tackled was a gigantic litter pick. Who remembers the "Ratby Roozles"? I quote from the Society's Constitution:-

"The aims of the society are to conserve the best aspects of the village and the surrounding countryside and to keep a watching brief on development and to stimulate the public interest in the environment". At first no one paid much attention to the Society but the members worked away quietly and in the intervening years have been responsible for the planting of trees, bushes and bulbs within the village and where members felt proposed developments were not in the best interests of the village have made their voices heard. In a way it is quite gratifying to know that so many more people are now "seeing the light" and in fact all over the country groups of people like ourselves are looking with fresh eyes at what we have and what must be preserved for the future. It is not always easy to balance the needs of industry and housing with countryside ideals but for the sake of the generations to follow we feel we must do so.

As the reader will judge basically the aims of the Society are serious ones but we do have lighter moments and every month we meet in the Welfare Hall to enjoy a talk given by a speaker (usually with a bias towards the environment or travel)

Knitters Museum at Wigston, the Shackerstone Railway, guided walks with Mrs. Lyn Mellor, visits to Nature Reserves, Cropston Reservoir and many more.

For information the Society's Annual General Meeting will be held on 12th February and perhaps readers would be interested in the following programmes:-

March 19th: A talk and slide show by Mr. Fred Harding on Bristol


April 9th: A talk on the work of the conservation group - council for the Preservation of Rural England

and

May 14th: Tales of a Leicester Lad by Mr. Derek Seaton.

We look forward to making new friends during the coming year.

Eileen M. MacKenzie
Acting Secretary



**Friday
February 15th**

8 - 12 pm In the School Hall

♥ Ticket Only ♥

£1.50 from School or Committee

Ratby Primary School Association

PEOPLE AND PLACES

An interview with Mr Gardner of
Stamford Street



Mr Gardner and his brother in Scout Uniform. They walked to Kirby Muxloe for Scout meetings.

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Regular readers of 'Wot' will know that Mr Gardner has lent us several photographs of by-gone days in Ratby. An enthusiastic photographer, Mr Gardner was given his first camera, a Box Brownie at the age of 16. He spent many happy years taking photographs around Ratby, in Martinshaw Wood and at Groby Pool.

Born in Groby, he lived at Victoria Cottages until his marriage to Miss Alice Elsie Reeve of Ratby in 1926, when he moved to Stamford Street.

But Mr Gardner's connection with Ratby began much earlier. At 13 he left school and started work at Tylers on Stamford Street as a 'runner-owner'.

He says there were no jobs in Groby in those days, "only Groby Granite and the work was too heavy for a boy".

Eight or nine youngsters walked from Groby to Ratby every day for work, and home again for lunch.

Mr Gardner worked at Tylers, later Wolsey, for 65 years, eventually becoming Manager.

It was at Tylers that he met his wife. He used to help her out when she got into difficulties on her machine.

It was here too that his interest in photography began; "There used to be a man, come from Leicester, Old Ben, who rode a three-wheeled bike. He talked a lot about photography and got me interested".

Mr Gardner regularly entered photography competitions in the 'Wolsey magazine' and has had a photograph entitled "Feeding the Ducks", taken at Groby Pool printed in a National magazine of January 1927, "The New Photographer".

Films in those days had only six exposures. Mr Gardner took his films to Howitts Chemist Shop on Church Lane from where they were sent off to Kodak for developing and printing.

Mr Gardner has had a distinguished life

Church Belfry Church which commemorates the first peal of major on the bells, on Saturday 23rd January 1932. In three hours and thirteen minutes a peal of Bob Major with 5040 changes was rung.

The bell ringers were:-

G Priestnall	Treble
C Allsop	2
E Gardner	3
W Ball	4
H Spencer	5
A Priestnall	6
H Bowley	7
P Ingram	Tenor

Have these memories rung any bells for you? We would like to hear your stories too!

Look out for more of Mr Gardner's photographs in future issues.



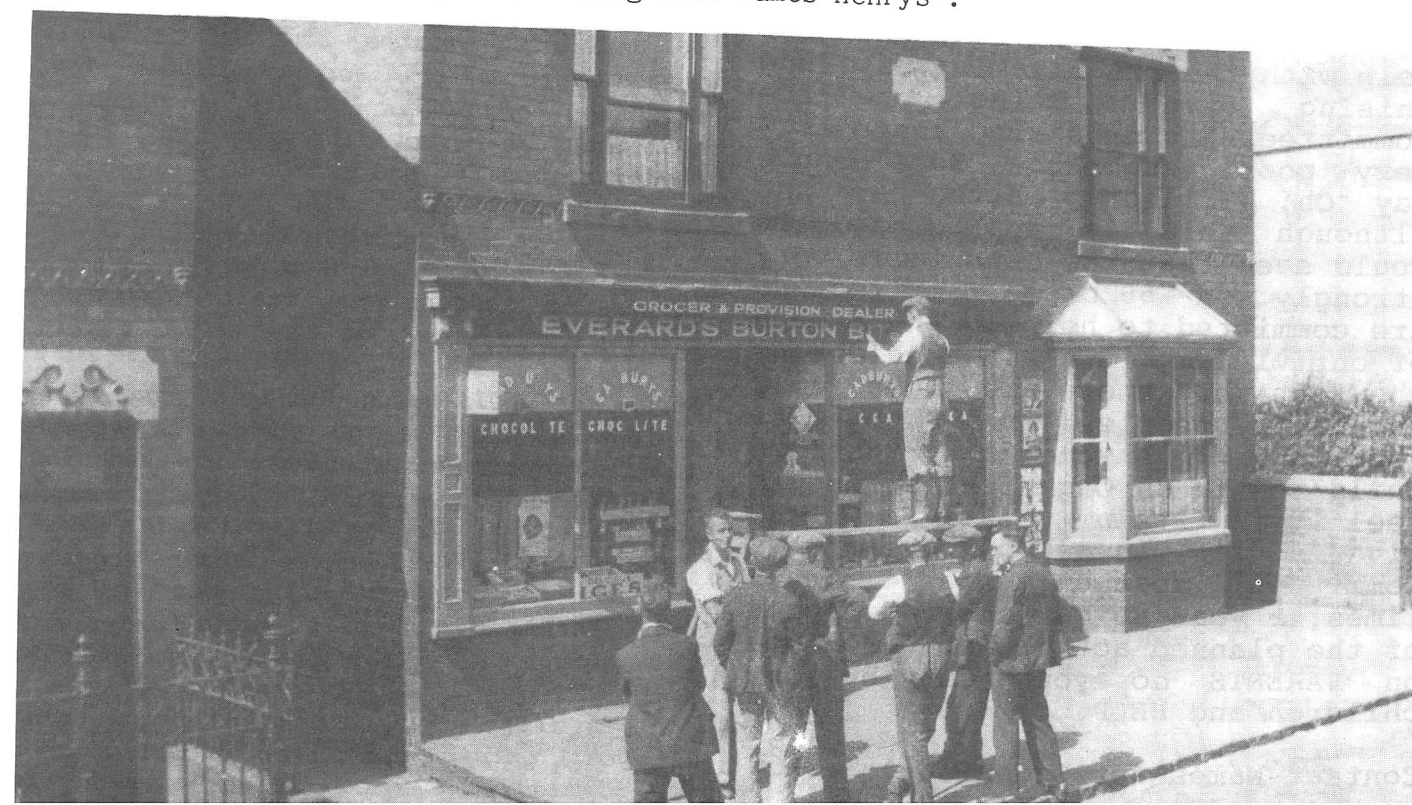
Victoria Cottages, Groby

Taken before railings were needed in 1914 war. Even in 1910, Mr Gardner recalls, "youths were a nuisance. The railings were regularly damaged by youths who passed through the village on Saturday nights after attending a dance somewhere. They also took off the gates of houses and left them some distance away."

Apparently the posts at the ends of the railings were hollow and blue tits nested in them.

Stamford Street Stores

Used to be run by James Henry Richardson and folks would always say "Going down James Henrys".



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VILLAGE WIDE CHILD MINDING SERVICE

Whilst parents of children between the ages of 6 & 16 years perhaps do not realise it, the above is what is offered by all the Organisations in the village.

Be it 5.30 - 7.00, Beavers & Rainbows 6.30 - 8 p.m. Cubs, Brownies, 7 - 9 p.m. Scouts and Guides or other times for Judo, Cricket or Football and other activities that are on offer.

All these Organisations are run on a purely voluntary basis and the Leaders concerned give of their time freely.

It is disconcerting that whenever help with the organisation of fund raising i.e. being on the committee, is requested there is a very poor response. Some people say "Oh, I'll help on the day" and although this is appreciated it would seem that the onus falls very strongly on 50 or so families who are committed to helping the youth of our village. This, considering the fact that there are some four thousand people in Ratby is appalling. Anyone who has a child/ren in an Organisation should feel it is within their power to give a few hours per year on a Committee, most only meet 4 or 5 times a year to get a broad layout of the planned activities. So come on PARENTS do your duty by your children and HELP.

Contact Names for Organisations:

Scouts: Colin Payne
Guides: Marylin Smith
Beavers: Janet Hawkesworth
Rainbows: Judith Brooks

up the garden path

February is not a busy month in the garden. One of the most rewarding things to do is to spend some time looking at the way the garden is planned. With little foliage the structure should show up clearly. A well planned garden should still be pleasing to look at. The best winter gardens have a strong structure and this can be marked and pointed out by suitably placed evergreens.

"Evergreen" covers a very wide range from conifers of all kinds to holly and privet. They don't even have to be green, there are gold, silver, grey and patterned kinds. Dwarf conifers are very popular as "accent" plants but many people are thinking again about small, clipped shrubs instead, topiary in fact.

For a really small shape dwarf box can be clipped easily into a ball or cone, larger shapes can be made from yew, holly, Lonicera nitida or full sized box and of course they can be simple, solid shapes or fanciful birds and animals, the famous garden at Knightshayes in Devon has a fox and hounds running along the top of a hedge.

Clipped bay trees are often grown in pots or tubs other evergreens can be treated in the same way. Golden variegated holly is hardier than the bay and is easily shaped into a ball or a pyramid. The advantage of accent plants in tubs is that they can be moved to a dominant position just for one season.

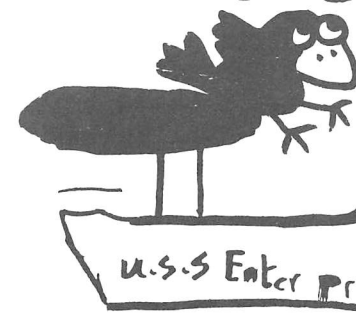
After all this "thinking" there are some jobs to be done. Houseplants need more water and feeding can start again when the days get longer.

Seeds of half-hardy annuals that need a long growing season should be started in the greenhouse, these include Begonias, Geraniums and Annual Carnations. Early vegetables can also be started under glass. Try sowing two or three seeds together in plastic modules. Plant out as soon as possible for really early crops of such things as lettuce, carrots and onions.

Finally if you have almond or peach trees in your garden you have probably seen the damaged, twisted leaves caused by Peach Leaf Curl Disease in the Summer.

This can be partially controlled by spraying with Dithane 945 before the buds begin to move in February.

CrowPie Childrens Page...



Adam Robson
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drawings
coming
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to do your
drawings in
black pen!

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What did the big
candle say to the
little
candle?

Count
the
hearts.

OW! from
Winnie the
Pooh

ELIZABETH
TYLER
AGE 6

you're
getting on
my wick!

ELIZABETH
TYLER AGE
6.

Follow your
heart to
the middle

Alison
Tyler
Age 8

Fantastic
Max

Alison
Tyler
age
8

PLACE OF WORSHIP

What's Happening From front page

Following refusal of their first application, the Trust appealed and the matter went to an Inquiry. The Inspector said then:-

"There is a presumption against all development in the Countryside except that which is considered necessary and appropriate. Whilst I appreciate your clients need for a new place of worship there is no evidence that persuades me that it is necessary for it to be sited in this locality and which would justify the parting from accepted policies".

It seems that planning procedures are designed to confuse and mystify the general public. To keep abreast with issues of this nature requires constant vigilance.

STOP PRESS!

1ST RATBY SCOUT GROUP FAMILY CAMP

Dear Parents of the boys in the group,

As mentioned on the night of the group show in November, it is intended to hold a Family Camp in the Summer of 1991.

I am now pleased to announce that a venue and date has been booked, so mark your calendar for this enjoyable weekend! It will take place on 2nd/3rd/4th August at the Willesley Scout Camp Site, Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

This is a camp for the whole family and there will be lots of fun and games such as Beetle Drive, Bingo, Rounders, Volleyball, Cricket, Crazy Olympics, Treasure Hunt, a Disco, a Barbeque (bring your own cans/bottles), Game for a Laugh and a Camp fire sing-song!!!

As you can see, there will be plenty going on. Caravans are allowed as well as tents, but if you don't have either of them - borrow one for the weekend so you don't miss out on, the fun!

It is a nice open site with flush toilets, washing facilities and showers. The cost for the weekend will be £10.00 for the whole family. We do not supply the food.

As we would like to have some idea of the number of people who would like to attend, please give me a ring on Leicester 879781 between 9.00 and 10.00 at night (it's the only time you can catch me in!). We will have a meeting nearer the time to let you have more details and give you the opportunity to ask any questions.

Ray Lander
A.S.L.

Scouts

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EDITORIAL



1991 looks like being a year when villagers who care about their environment need to be vigilant once again. Perhaps planning matters may pale into significance alongside the horror of a Gulf War and events in Russia but developers may seek to have their proposals considered whilst our minds are pre-occupied with these international issues.

Changes to the boundaries of our green "buffer" are proposed. Should we be asking why? Should we be wondering why an application for a Hall of Worship was discussed again by the Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council planning committee before villagers had news of the recommendations of the Structure Plan Inquiry and before these recommendations have been ratified by the Full Council at their coming meeting on February 19th.

Ratby people should write and tell the Council what they think!

Write to:

Mr P Murphy
District Planning Officer
Hinckley & Bosworth Borough
Council, Council Offices
Argents Mead
Hinckley
Leicestershire LE10 1BZ

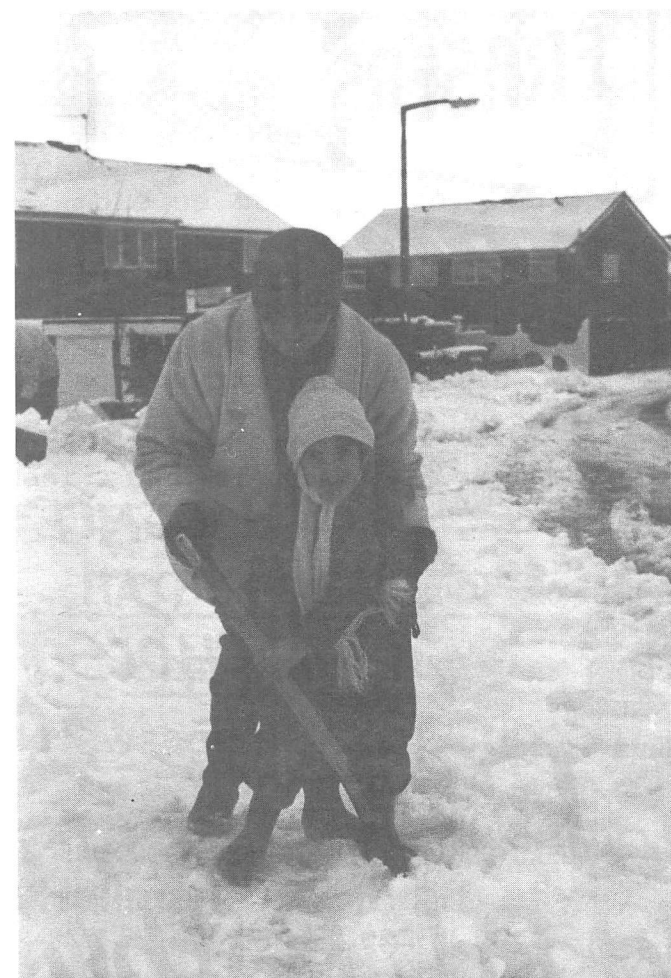
Mr Vic Berry has now lodged an appeal following the rejection of his application to develop land at Newtown Unthank for his railway refurbishment business. The Environment Secretary, Mr Michael Heseltine has now to decide whether this should go to a public inquiry.

We wonder what new threats to our environment may be posed in the coming year.

If Ratby people want their views to be considered, then they must make them known!

We do know that you Ratby people care. Read our special snow supplement to see for yourselves - look how many of you turned out to plant trees in National Tree Week! And Ratby Playgroup celebrates its 21st birthday in February - testimony to the 'caring' nature of generations of Ratby people old and new.

8 page power cut pull out



SNOW PROBLEM!

Blizzards during the night of Friday December 7th caused havoc in the village. Many were woken around 7 a.m. on the Saturday by dramatic flashes as the pylons and cables in the valley were damaged and knocked out.

Village shops open

Despite the Arctic conditions and four days without electricity, life carried on in Ratby. Most shops stayed open, serving more customers than usual by candlelight.

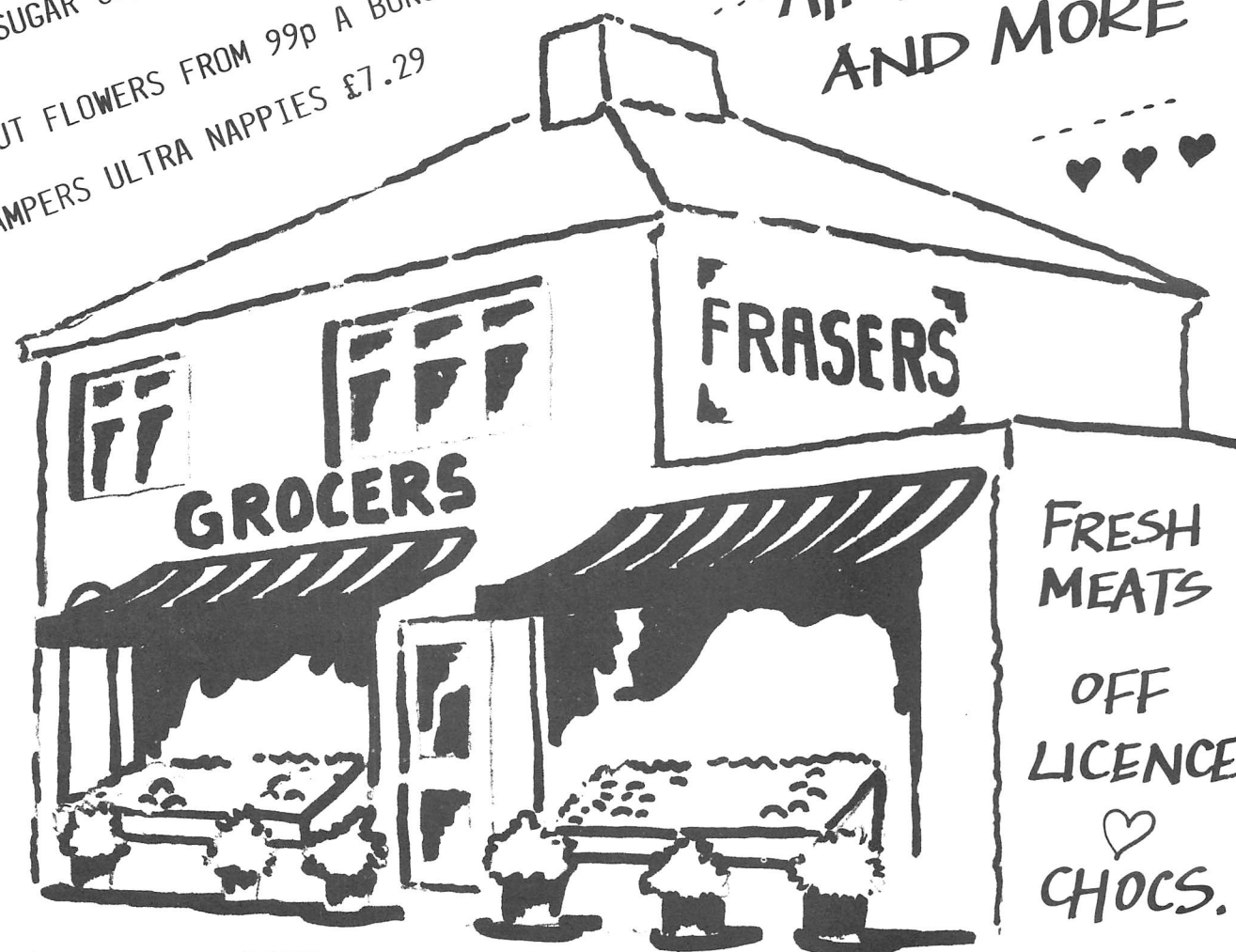
All over the village people were out helping clear pavements and drives and digging out cars stuck in snow drifts. We heard that meals were served in local pubs by candlelight even though half of the staff had been unable to get in.

Ratby's children had a wonderful time with two extra days holiday.

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Fish + Chips = Friends

Ratby Fish Bar stayed open until their power was cut off at 4.15 on the Saturday. Many of the customers were motorists who had been stranded on the motorway.

Amongst the travellers were a couple from America and an Australian family. Lyn & John were kept busy all day serving food and free cups of tea.

Romance in the Snow

One young couple who had walked from their cars to the Fish Bar exchanged addresses whilst waiting to be served.

A Rugby family who had been heading for Nottingham to do their Christmas shopping were stranded without any milk for their 5 week old baby.

Ratby M1 Aid

Villagers from Markfield Road, Cottage Close and other parts of the village were taking out flasks of hot drinks and food to the drivers stuck on the motorway.

Several of the motorists were elderly people who were unable to scramble up the motorway bank. Lorry drivers removed their tarpaulin covers to create makeshift toilet tents for the ladies!

A party of 52 people on their way to a wedding in Bradford were the last people to be served with Fish & Chips when the power finally went. One of them was actually the bridegroom.

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On one evening 35 were booked in for dinner at 'The Plough'. 27 turned up. Unfortunately a 'la carte' meals were impossible as the grills could not be used in the power cut.

Everyone enjoyed the Christmas Fayre and agreed that the candlelight enhanced the atmosphere.

The coal fires attracted a good crowd throughout the power cut and dominoes were played by candlelight.



RI'S NEWS

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DRINKS.

F CONFECTIONERY

ND MAGAZINES
D DAILY

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OR YOURSELVES

ONDAY to SATURDAY

in SUNDAY

SUNDAY EVENING

CURRENT

FOR THE BUNS

Geary's Bakery had no power to fuel the ovens to bake the bread. The telephones were not working and Charles was worried because he could not contact customers in far reaching places such as Derby, Nottingham and Kettering to let them know what was happening. So he spent quite some time chasing up the Electricity Board in Hinckley and Desford.

They assured him that the Bakery was on their priority list.

This could be the reason why Ratby had its power restored before Thornton and parts of Leicester Forest East who have the same sub station.

Thanks Charles!!



Roots managed to deliver to their customers by wheelbarrow and rescue the odd stranded motorist

Ratby Fish Bar

Traditional English Fish & Chips

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Thurs. - 6 - 11.45

Friday - 11.30 - 1.30 a.m.
5.00 - 12 p.m.

Sat. - 12 - 1.30 a.m.
6 - 12 p.m.



FROZEN MEAT

This was surely the first time that Freeman's van was unable to deliver to customers. The van left Ratby at 7.30 a.m. and got stuck near Newbold Verdon returning to Ratby with meat still on board at 4.30 p.m.

Meanwhile customers left the village shop empty-handed around 12 noon because stocks of meat had run out.

When the power was cut and electric scales stopped working the old fashioned pan scales came into their own.

Exposure

Intrepid 'Wot' photographer Steve Boud braved the elements to bring you shots of villagers coping with the problems of the snow.

The question on everybody's lips is - did he jump or was he pushed?

Well done Steve!!

H. FREEMAN & SON

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Cor!
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hard work -
could you do
mine later?



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& TILL 2.00 p

7.00 TILL 9.00 PM



SOUP, STEW and FRIENDSHIP TOO!

Mick at "The Railway Inn" says thanks to New Parks Fire Service who pumped out 9" and 12" of water from the pub cellar on the Saturday and Sunday. The Railway Inn stayed open for many locals, particularly from the caravan site, who had no heating. Jacqui served up lashings of hot stew and dumplings over the weekend, and on the Saturday morning made 1½ gallons of soup for Casepak workers and drivers.

The blizzards blew a new friendship into the life of Barbara Whigham of Cottage close.

A London lady took refuge in her home after being stuck on the motorway for 9 hours and desperate for a loo!

She had been heading north to visit relatives in Hornsea and whilst chatting they discovered that they had a mutual acquaintance.

The police were turning motorists around, so this travelling lady never reached her destination.

She and Barbara have since exchanged letters and a Christmas card - the first 'thank you' being addressed to 'Barbara and Dog'.



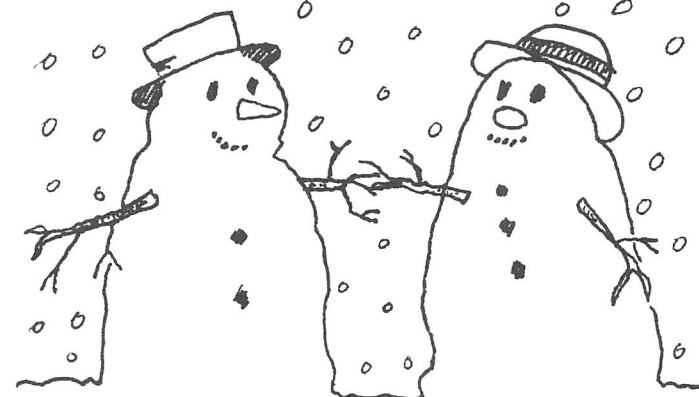
Thanks..

The following letter appeared in the Daily Mail:

"I would like to thank the unknown villagers of Ratby in Leicestershire who, during the blizzards on Saturday delivered flasks of hot drinks to the stranded motorists, including my son.

Their kind gesture was much appreciated by all. I hope they all enjoy a super Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year. They deserve it!

Mrs S P Mold
Northwood
Hampshire "



Wot would also like to add its thanks to all those Ratby people who were out in force helping others and to the shopkeepers and businesses who kept going despite everything!!

One last thought - wasn't it wonderful to wander through a virtually traffic-free village and how peaceful without the constant roar of motorway traffic!



THE RAILWAY INN RATBY

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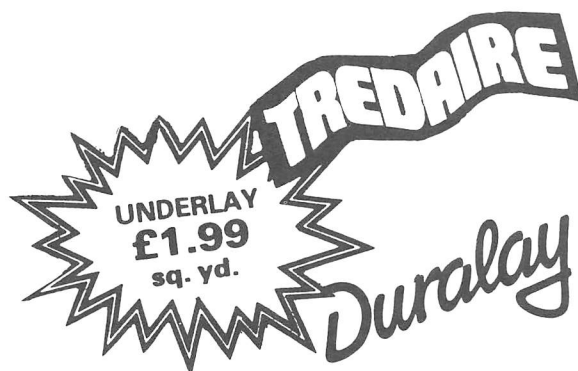
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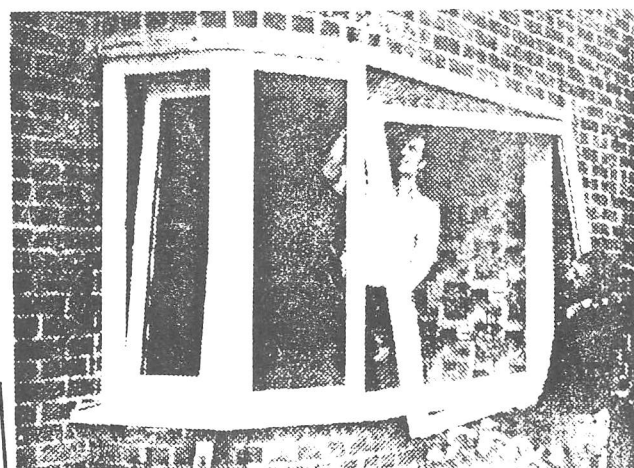
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386339

A black and white line drawing of five children of various ethnicities and genders holding hands in a circle. From left to right: a girl with short dark hair in a polka-dot dress; a boy with short dark hair in a striped shirt; a girl with pigtails in a white shirt and skirt; a boy with short dark hair in a white shirt with a number '3' and pants; and a girl with long dark hair in a white dress with a pocket. They are all smiling and holding hands.

'Happy Birthday' to Playgroup, Happy Birthday to you' So we all sang at Playgroup's 21st birthday party at the Church Rooms, when past and present workers mixed to reminisce over happy days spent at Playgroup over the years.

It was a chance for Playgroup's present leaders, Linda Evans and Lesley Chevin to meet up with the original leaders, Jan Kirkham, Maureen Harwood and Margaret Tate to compare notes of now and then. We realised that little has changed really. Children will always be children whether it was 21 years ago, now, or probably 21 years in the future, but outside influences have changed. We now have Social Services to keep a watchful eye over us, the P.P.A. (Pre-School Playgroup Association) to help us out if we need advice or assistance and a good relationship with the Primary School, none of which were available 21 years ago. We also have a lot more children wanting to come to Playgroup, due to Ratby's growing size, which presents us with a lot of problems.

Highlights of the evening included the presentation to the Church Rooms' Caretaker Lucille Hill, who has cleaned up and looked after us all at Playgroup for the whole of its existence, the play-acting of the Rector, Peter Blackman, feigning a knockout during a mock boxing match with his wife, Jean, as a forfeit during a game of pass the parcel, and the lighting of the candles on the beautiful birthday cake made by ex-committee member, Barbara Cox. There were photos around the room dating back to 1973, but unfortunately most of the photos were more recent as slides were more popular in the first few years of Playgroup. The buffet was supplied, prepared and set out by Playgroup's present Committee and Workers.

Unfortunately, full records weren't kept in the past showing who had worked at Playgroup, so despite a lot of detective work some ladies were missed. We offer our sincere apologies to them and hope that they will contact us to ensure that they are not missed at our next celebration.

So here's to the next 21 years of Ratby
Playgroup.

1 E

2 C

3 E

4 R

5 S

6 T

7 O

8 P

9 R

1. Warm Affection
2. Send this secretly
3. Spirit (helps builders)
4. Supply of things needed for a special purpose
5. Hearing is one of this
6. Pleased
7. Press clothes with me
8. Hurts
9. At the beginning of a letter

By Ian Mellor

Dates to watch out for

Tuesday 5th February 3 - 5 o'clock, Church
Rooms. Blue Peter Romania Appeal Bring
and Buy Sale.

Saturday 16th February 2 o'clock. Welfare
Hall. Rummage Sale

Saturday 23rd March 10.30 Welfare Hall.
Easter Fayre.

If your child is 3 years of age before Monday 8th April and you want them to come to Playgroup please contact Lesley Chevin 386605 or Linda Evans 386347 as soon as possible (unless you have already done so).

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They seek 'em here

Mrs Buckley of Watford is trying to trace her family tree.

She is particularly interested in the following names possibly to be found in Ratby.
Can anyone help?

The names are:-

PIKE CRAMP SALISBURY FROST

If you can help her, please contact her at the following address:-

Mrs Vivien M Buckley,
4 Firbank Drive,
Oxhey
Watford
Herts
WD1 4EL

Dates of special interest are:-

PIKE - 1756
CRAMP - 1775
SALISBURY - 1775
FROST - 1754



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THE BIGGEST PLANT I HAVE EVER SEEN



Scouts and
Beavers were
out in force!

It was shortly after 9 o'clock on a cold damp late November morning. The sky was overcast and a mist hung over the damp grass of the Ferndale Leisure, Recreation area. All was quiet. Looking back I saw a double file of some 60 young school-children led by their Headmaster, Mr Smith and accompanied by several school teachers all making their way along the muddy path towards the Park. The children brightened the morning with their assortment of coloured coats, blues, greens, reds. Boys and girls some bare headed and others with woolley hats and they wore varied footwear, but predominantly "wellies" including some with a face design on the uppers. The purpose of their journey soon became apparent as they were introduced to officials and helpers of the Ecology Trust and Parish Councillors for they were all to take part in Ratby's contribution to "National Tree Planting Week". First they were taught how to correctly plant the trees and then they were placed in small groups with a helper and using the spades provided were very busy digging the holes, planting the trees and filling in with crumbled soil! Soon cheeks and noses were glowing with their efforts and some children were "competing" with friends to see who could plant most trees! Uppermost in all their minds was to plant them properly. All too soon an hour had elapsed and it was time to wave and say

"goodbye" before trudging back to school, with children showing muddy evidence of their activities and all with happy faces glowing with justifiable pride at their achievements.

Their departure heralded the arrival of another 60-70 children to repeat the process and there were other groups of similar numbers in the afternoon and following morning, so that we had a long stretch of little trees standing upright along the fence. Children were all invited to bring mums and dads and all the family to do a Community Planting on Saturday afternoon and many did come, anxious to show mum and dad "how to do the planting". Various village organisations also came and lent a hand, so that as dusk fell we had planted well over 1000 trees! It was a great achievement and for the children an education and a chance to become closely involved in the importance of the environment. As a "helper" I made my way home carrying my spade, and feeling rather tired, but for me the event will always be remembered for the sight of all those children with their happy, smiling faces that glowed with pride and achievement in the Biggest Plant I Ever Saw!

Charles Rogers

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COPPERS CORNER

* Carry your bag close to you and if someone grabs it, let it go. If you hang on you could get hurt. Keep your house keys in your pocket.

* If you think someone is following you, check by crossing the street to see if he follows. If he does run to the nearest place with people, and call the police.

* Self defence classes may help you feel safer. Ask your local Police, or at work if they have classes.

* Don't hitch hike or take lifts from strangers.

* If a car stops and you are threatened, scream and run the other way!

* For further details regarding personal safety, contact your local police station or the crime prevention officer in your area.

REMEMBER!!

Don't take chances - think ahead and minimise the risk!

Personal Safety

Violent crimes are still comparatively rare. They account for only a small part of all recorded crime. Statistically, therefore, the chance that you or a member of your family will be a victim is already low. Nevertheless, many people are frightened that they, or someone close to them, will be the victim of a physical assault, mugging or rape.

You can keep yourself safe by doing the right things at home or out in the street.

At Home

* Make sure your house or flat is secure. Details regarding home security can be obtained from your local crime prevention officer.

* Draw your curtains after dark and if you think there is a prowler outside, dial 999.

* Don't put your first name in the phone book or by your doorbell, then a stranger won't know whether a man or woman lives there.

* If you are selling your home don't show people around on your own.

* Don't give your number when answering the telephone. If a stranger calls never say you are alone.

Out Walking

* Don't take short cuts through dark alleys or across waste ground.

* Walk facing the traffic so no one can pull up behind you.

* Cover up expensive looking jewellery.

* If you are out late get a lift or taxi back. Ask the driver to wait until you are inside.

* If you often walk home in the dark, get



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Ratby Parish Council

Christmas Shop Windows Competition

This years winner is 'Frasers' of Markfield Lane, with R.T.V. in second place. Third prize goes to Freemans. Moores were close in 4th place. Congratulations and many thanks to those retailers who made an effort to brighten up the village once again.

Christmas Tree

Many thanks are also expressed to everyone who helped with this years Christmas Tree. The tree was kindly donated by the Woodland Trust. Mr Mangham transported the tree and it was decorated by the Scouts and Beavers.

Hedgerow and Tree Planting at Ferndale Drive

During National Tree week the Parish Council arranged for Leicester Ecology Trust to help organise the planting of over 1300 native hedgerow trees around the perimeter fencing at the Ferndale Drive Recreation area.

On the Thursday and Friday 29th and 30th November all the children from Ratby School came down to plant trees with a great deal of enthusiasm! The children held the young trees under their coats to keep the roots warm and one girl sang a song to the trees she planted.

The afternoon of Saturday 1st December was a Community Tree Planting day. Many

of the children returned with parents to plant yet more trees. Scouts, Cubs, Beavers and Brownies were out in force, as were experienced tree planters from the Village Society.

The species planted were, Hawthorn, Willow, Field Maple, Birch, Guelder Rose, Dogwood, Blackthorn, Buckthorn and Rowan.

Many thanks to everyone who helped!

We are all looking forward to watching our trees grow. They should hide the ugly chain link fencing and eventually provide a home for birds and wildlife.

Markfield Road/Groby Road Corner

You will have noticed that the improvement work to this bank is now taking place. A retaining stone wall will prevent soil and debris from spilling onto the pavement and new trees and shrubs are to be planted. The work is being undertaken by the County Council and there is no cost to the village. The scheme is part of an Environmental Improvement Programme funded by Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council.

Traffic Calming Issues

The County Council are considering initiating a five-year traffic calming programme on roads in the County. It seems unlikely that any roads in Ratby will be considered a priority, despite the Parish Council's pressure for traffic calming on Danehill and Ferndale Drive. Pressure from local people is the most effective. If the Council were to receive thousands of letters from Ratby residents, then they might act.

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A.M. CURTIS



Poem by Dean Astill

There is
A mark of time set for all men
To start or finish,
Build or destroy.
The paths which we take
Start at the stream
Finish with the river
The choice is ours to flood the field
Or build the dam.

PUZZLE CORNER

ANSWERS

- | | | |
|----------|----------|------------|
| 1. Love | 2. Card | 3. Level |
| 4. Store | 5. Sense | 6. Content |
| 7. Iron | 8. Pain | 9. Dear |

Answer: VALENTINE

Fraser's Out in Front Again

Congratulations to Fraser's for winning the Christmas Shop Window Competition for the second year running.

I know our readers will agree that it is most appreciated when people make the effort to brighten up the village, whether they have business premises or have decorations at home, that can be seen from the street.

Thank you and well done to one and all.

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22

NEWS IN BRIEF

Neighbourhood Watch

A National Promotion Campaign is being planned for the week beginning April 5th. Look out for more information in the next issue of 'Wot'. It's going to be exciting!!

Japanese Evening

Brookvale High School P.T.A. are putting on a Japanese Evening on Wednesday January 30th. We'll be able to share a taste of Japanese culture through a slide show and tea ceremony with the School's guest Tomoko.

Traffic in Ratby

Our local policeman, John Alexander has prepared a report on the traffic conditions and parking problems in the village.

St Valentine died in Ratby

The total number of Valentine messages received in response to our offer to print them free of charge was NIL!

Police Authority/Community

Consultation Group

There will be a meeting of the above group at Groby Community Centre, Forest Rise, Groby on Wednesday 13th February 1991, starting at 7.30 p.m.

JULIE'S HAIRDRESSING

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Greetings from Heacham, Norfolk

Having "settled" in, we now become aware of the similarities of life in a small village wherever it may be. For so many years the increase in traffic passing through Ratby was a great cause for concern not only for the residents, but also for the fabric of buildings, many of those being homes. The residents of Heacham also complain about the volume of traffic on the main streets, during the "off season" to me the load seems quite small in comparison to Ratby's. Wherever shops are sited yellow lines exist, presumably to discourage holiday makers from "gumming up the works" during the holiday season.

I believe that Heacham is lucky in that it has not been troubled by through traffic the major proportion of traffic heading for Hunstanton uses the A149 which skirts the eastern boundary of the village.

Continuing on the traffic theme, I was amused by an item in the local press covering a statement by a shop keeper that since the opening of a new bypass relieving Dersingham, Ingoldisthorpe and Snettisham of vast amounts of traffic and consequent traffic hazards, his business has suffered. Apparently 50% of his trade came from people passing his shop on their way home or holiday makers. You can please some of the people some of the time etc.

Even if we had not been aware of the troubles in the Gulf and all that that threatens, we could not have missed the increased activity culminating from the American Air Force base not too far away from Heacham. For two days the noise of the huge aircraft taking off has been very prominent and brings to mind the dangers men and machines will have to endure of the outcome of talks does not prove successful. We also hear most days the sounds of gunnery practice taking place at a target range set up somewhere in the vicinity of the Wash.

On a more personal note, one thing I am missing since moving from Ratby, are the beautiful birds which used to visit our garden. So far every day at around 1 p.m. we are visited by many seagulls and starlings, but none of the small birds such as bluetits and robins. We do have a pair of friendly blackbirds but they are very careful what time of day the call. The lack of birds is probably due to the lack of trees in our new and sparsely landscaped garden. We hope to rectify that situation in the near future,

in fact we can hardly wait for the better weather to arrive allowing us to commence work on our very large plot. For the first time we will have a glass house, already purchased and waiting to be erected, thanks to the kindness of many friends in Ratby and work colleagues. The sunrises and sunsets are amazing here and completely unexpected, the perfect subject for photography. We still cannot believe that we can now walk on the beach whenever we wish without the necessity of a long journey to reach the coast. I now wait for the sound of hundreds of geese flying overhead at dusk returning to their roosting grounds for the night.

My interest in the past was given a boost when I learned that Heacham had a link with the State of Virginia, U.S.A., through the marriage of Pocahontas, an American Indian princess of the Chickahominy tribe, who fell in love and married a university graduate named John Rolfe with the blessing of her father the Chief, Powhatan. Pocahontas was the first Indian to be baptised, she was given the name Rebecca. They settled in the town of Jamestown but sailed for England in 1616 and undoubtedly visited John Rolfe's mother who lived in Heacham and legend has it that they planted a mulberry tree in the garden of Heacham Hall. Pocahontas died before she could return to Virginia with her husband who had by then been appointed Secretary and Recorder to Virginia Colony. She was only 22 years old. Her grave was never found as St. George's Church, Gravesend where she is reputed to have been buried was destroyed by fire. So ends a romantic story - many Virginians holidaying in England visit Heacham and sign the visitors book in Heacham Church.

Olive Smalley



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23