



WOT!

About Ratby

PUBLISHED BY RATBY SCOUT GROUP

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CHRISTMAS PAST IN RATBY

AS TOLD TO RATBY HISTORY GROUP

Dennis Green enlightened the audience over seasonal activity at the village butcher's during the 1930/40s. He described how the provision of meats, for sale in Ratby and many neighbouring villages, had to be organised. Prior to the wartime rationing most supplies were purchased from outlying farms and markets. A lot of the poultry came from the farm run by a Mr Curtis at Newtown Unthank.

It was also still the practice around this time for some local households to keep a pig or two for their own consumption. These were usually housed in a sty at the bottom of the garden.

The seasonal activity started early in December when the family pigs, as they were called, would be walked on a rope lead down Stamford Street and the likes on their way to the butchers. Often an animal would cause a bit of a rumpus as it decided to go its own way and would then take the person walking it the wrong way, sometimes taking a mud bath en-route as the duo inadvertently diverted through muddy fields.

The brine baths were renewed to deal with all of the favourite salted meats that were very popular at Christmastime. The various cuts would be soaked in these baths for two or three weeks. Hams, that had hung in the shop since they had been cured back in the previous February, had to be soaked to make them ready for sale. All of the special cooked meats had to be either boiled or roasted within the week beforehand. There was so much to be done!

A typical provision of fresh meat for the immediate Christmas trade would require stocking-up on; two beasts, twelve pigs, two sheep and innumerable birds of differing sorts. These would be bought in from local cattle markets and farms, the beasts would probably have been at Ratby for some weeks and kept in a field at the back of the Bulls Head.

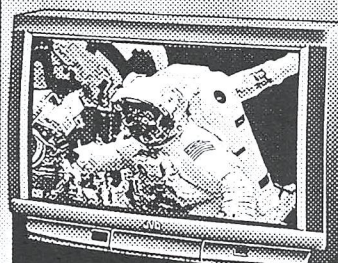
Sides of beef were prepared and hung for up to two weeks. Some would be almost black by the time it was delivered to customers as that's how a lot of folk liked their meat in those days. It was certainly tenderised by that time.

CONTINUED IN THE CENTRE PAGES.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

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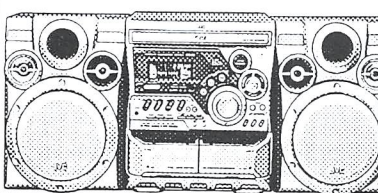
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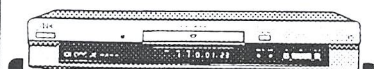
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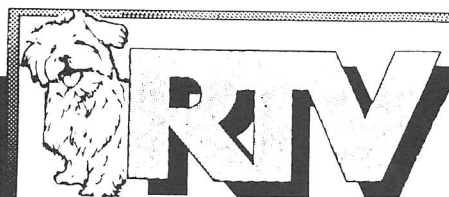
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RATBY VILLAGE SOCIETY

TOUCH AND TELL

This was the theme of the talk by Mr Harry Field at the September meeting, when we were introduced to the organisation 'Hearing Dogs for Deaf People'. Imagine that you cannot hear the alarm clock, a knock on the door, a telephone or smoke alarm. Life for deaf people is difficult, unless they have a hearing dog. The organisation began modestly in 1982 in Oxford. Ten years later, when Princess Anne became their Patron they had trained one hundred dogs. Training a dog to recognise certain sounds and alert their owner with a paw takes fifteen months. With the additional base in Yorkshire they now have 700 dogs. The aim is to train 100 dogs a year.

CHRISTIANITY IN A COLD CLIMATE

For the third time this year we hosted a duo to give a talk. In October the Reverend Canon John Tonkin and his wife Margaret told of their visit to Canada's North West Territories to experience at first hand the work

John is Chairman of the Leicester based Arctic Fellowship, which assists British Clergy who, have a calling to serve in that remote diocese fifteen times the size of this country.

Fifty years ago the native Inuit lived as they had done for centuries, in igloos, spending all their days hunting and fishing just to survive, dog sleds their only means of transport. Missionaries and clergy were obliged to follow suit.

Nowadays the Canadian Government has established townships with airfields, schools and hospitals. But 'Civilisation' has brought with it the penalties of unemployment, alcohol and drug misuse.



Parish Church Reopens!

To all who responded so generously to the gift week appeal, thank you! Just over £7,500 was donated, and the church reopened in October clear of debt. Now work is underway to reinstate some pews in time for Christmas and a 'sponsor a chair' programme has been launched.



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RATBY CO-OPERATIVE BAND REMEMBRANCE

It was great to play for the Armistice Parade and Service in the really warm, renovated Parish Church, full to capacity with Ratby people. Congratulations to Richard Worsfold, our vicar, and his team on fulfilling the promise to have the church open for the service.

Cornet Player Julie Whitacer was presented with a beautiful engraved plaque by Market Bosworth Royal British Legion for playing 'The Last Post' for 25 years. Ratby Band provided cornet players for this ceremony at Markfield, Thurstaston, Measham and Market Bosworth in addition to our own.

NEW YEAR CONCERT

The Band will be giving a New Year Concert in church on Saturday January 19th. Should you wish to have a favourite piece of music played you may sponsor it for a £10 donation, as long as we have it in our library of 14000 pieces. Contact Conductor Kevin Steward, 117 Station Road, 238 7377 by Dec. 24th. All proceeds from the event are shared between the Parish Church and the Band (a registered charity) who are faced with the task of raising £23000 for replacement instruments to keep our massive youth programme going.

FUTURE PLANS

2002 promises to be an interesting and busy year. The Bands are heavily booked already. Crow Pie Carnival is planned for 10th August. The Annual Musik Fest has been moved to 21st and 22nd June. In 1969 we made our first contact with Europe. The Musikverein O.N.D.A. Middelburg, Holland, invited us over in 1971. In 2002 they celebrate their 50 years of music making and they have invited us to take part. How nice!

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RATBY SCHOOL IS ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE

This year Ratby Primary School is undertaking the ECO-Schools Award Programme. We want to raise awareness of environmental issues not only at school, but within the village community.

We have already set up an Eco-Committee of children and staff, but we'd love to have someone from the village who is interested in environmental activities to be a member too.

We are a friendly group, and will be meeting once each half term.

If you are interested please talk to Mrs Hanratty on 239 3610.

Help us to be:

'Children taking care of the future.'

How about writing a regular article on 'green issues' for 'Wot'? Editor.

L

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VILLAGE EVENTS DIARY

We give below an update covering the variety of social and other events which are taking place in the village over the next two months. Please watch out for more details of these events on individual notices as they appear around the village.

NB :- We are only able to publish details which have been made known to us.

DATE & TIME	EVENT	ORGANISERS	VENUE
DECEMBER			
Mon 17 th (to Fri)	Christmas Window Competition	Parish Council	Whole Village
Wed 19 th - 7.30pm	Carols Around The Tree	Parish Council	Village Hall
Sun 23 rd - 6.00pm	Choir Led Carol Service	Parish Church	Parish Church
JANUARY			
Tues 15 th - 8.00pm	Illustrated Talk – A River Walk Along The Nene	Village Society	Village Hall
Fri 25 th - 7.30pm	Old Bottle Finds	History Group	Village Hall

Other regular Village events include :-

Indoor Carpet Bowls on Wednesday afternoons from September to April in the Village Hall.
 Afternoon Tea Dances on alternate Wednesdays in the Church Rooms.
 'Drop In' Coffee Mornings every Thursday morning in the Village Hall.
 Coffee Mornings are held on most Saturdays alternating between the Parish Church and the Methodist Church.

We hope again to be able to publish a full diary of known events for the year ahead in our February edition of 'Wot'. Please let us have your dates before January 15th. Thankyou.

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RATBY LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

The newly formed local history group is going from strength to strength during its first year. In addition to projects that will lead to the recording of village history, we have now held two autumn meetings at which members presented many fascinating aspects of the past.

September Meeting

At the September meeting we were given a showing of many archaeological findings from Neil Glenister's collection, plus maps and photographs by Doug Harwood. We also heard all about 'Motty's Stile', 'Piggy's Lodge' and the 'Stattie' in a talk about old place names given by Arthur Stevenson.

November Meeting

It was at this meeting that we heard of Past Christmases in Ratby. All as described in the separate article elsewhere in this Christmas edition of 'Wot'.

Still To Come

The History Group's next meeting will be on Friday January 25th 2002 at 7.30pm, in the Village Hall when there will be a talk and display on Old Bottle Finds.

If you want know more about the Group, please contact Doug Harwood, Telephone Number 0116- 2394168

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CHRISTMAS EVE

KARAOKE and NORMAL MENU

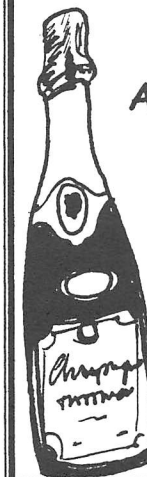
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A HAPPY 15th BIRTHDAY FOR 'WOT'!

The first edition of WOT appeared 15 years ago in December 1986. It has been published and distributed ever since by volunteers on behalf of the 1st Ratby Scout Group.

Alan Sims, the group's chairman, took on the role of editor and the original team included Martin Fretter and Sue Boud who produced the copy; John Fiddler and his son Geof who did some of the early typing; Gail Fretter then took on most of the typing which she did for a very long time. David Gould looked after the administration and financial side of things; Michael Ball took the early photos and wrote some of the articles; John Flower helped with the cutting and pasting for a while; and Colin and Carol Payne organised the deliveries.

In the early stages, editorial meetings used to take place at The Plough Inn, no doubt this was a very good place to start. For many years, every second month would see quite a social event, when a large group of helpers gathered together to collate and fold the printed copy, there was a real hands-on 'production line' in place when this occurred. This procedure eventually became partly automated by the introduction of rubber finger stools to all operators.

A very young Sally Skinner designed the second Christmas issue front page and there have been hundreds of interesting articles written and contributed by local individuals and village organisations ever since.

As at the year 2001, Alan Sims is still the Editor whilst Colin and Carol Payne deal with the deliveries through a team of volunteers. David Gould is still there looking after all of the books. Sue Boud now deals with all of the copy, together with the layout and pasting up of each edition, plus a whole multitude of other tasks in between.

Without its advertisers 'WOT' would not survive as a free village magazine and our thanks go out to them all for their continued support. Please give them your support and so keep the village shops and businesses alive, you will also help to keep 'WOT' going for another 15 years!



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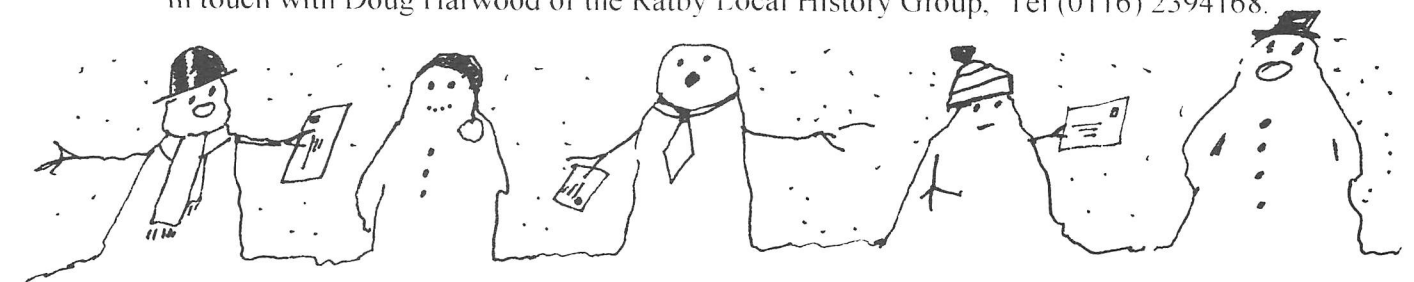
CAN YOU HELP WITH THIS PHOTOGRAPH?



This is a photograph of the old Ratby Post Office circa 1900, when it was situated on Main Street, about 15 to 20 yards below the present post office.

The diminutive figure on the left was Miss Annie Astill, who was the sub-postmistress from circa 1895 to 1922.

If anybody can remember any anecdotes about Annie Astill or her relatives, please get in touch with Doug Harwood of the Ratby Local History Group, Tel (0116) 2394168.



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MORE TALES OF CHRISTMAS PAST

The killing and plucking of the poultry was an event in itself, this had to be timed to suit the weather, there was not the modern refrigeration around in those days.

A regular team of local folk would be engaged to pluck and prepare the poultry. This was usually done at night and the evening would start off at the Bulls Head where they all gathered for a 'warmer'. It was cold in the slaughtering house and the visit to the pub set them up for the night ahead.

A chap known as Lightening Len would lead the singing as they worked through the night. The nickname derived from the tale that he only plucked a feather a minute, but was part of the workforce because he had a good voice.

At the end of the session, there were literally hundreds of orders duly labelled and awaiting delivery. Come Christmas Eve, inevitably there would be at least one label gone astray and hence a puzzle as to whom the order belonged. However in the end it all came together.

During the war it was a different story with almost everything being imported. Most of the meat was frozen and was thawed out in front of the coal fire at the shop, the extra coal needed being provided by the next door neighbour who was a miner. Wartime rationing posed many problems and customers had to make the most of as little as 1/2d worth of meat per person per week, a fair proportion of this had to be in the form of corned beef.

CHRISTMAS ALL AT SEA

David Ramsey described a particular Christmas as experienced by one village family. This was the Wykes family who had set off en-route to a new life in New Zealand on November 22nd 1864. Emigration agents who toured the local deprived villages had probably recruited them. Ratby was a prime example of such a village at that time owing to the demise of the stocking frame, quarrying and farming industries.

Reid and Sarah Wykes, together with their four children, celebrated Christmas that year on board the tall mast sailing ship named 'The Bombay'. Readings from an archived diary which they kept up on the voyage, gave a description of their seasonal experiences for what they were, awful! They spent 118 days at sea, having set sail with 289 other passengers. There were many deaths on board including 12 children, together with a number of births. The ship was severely damaged in a hurricane whilst still six days out of Auckland and finished up being towed into harbour at the end of its voyage.

Mr and Mrs Wykes and their children certainly didn't have such a Happy Christmas that year but for all we know their future ones were better in their new found country.

CHURCH MUSIC

Michael Ball's seasonal topic was 'Local Aspects of the History of Christmas Music'. He took us all through the centuries from pre-reformation times to the Victorian era. The music of earlier times was mostly associated with the churches and their worship. It seems that our own local worship and traditions were centred on Ratby being a countryside village. The celebrations were mainly tied in with the end of the farming year.

Christmas, as we now celebrate it, only dates back to the mid 1800's.

It seems that our Parish Church probably once had a Minstrels Gallery from where 'The Waits' would have played their music. Many groups of Waits eventually acquired quite a reputation around the country for their revelling and over-indulgences, however they played a large part in bringing music to the local community and churches. Eventually, from the mid 1700's, organs took over the instrumental roll in most churches.

As the Industrial Revolution led to larger towns, Town Waits, as they were known, developed and thrived, in many cases these led on to the formation of local bands.

We were treated to examples of beautiful early music played on mediaeval instruments that resembled many of the present day carol tunes. It was quite unique that Michael was able to play this to us through his laptop computer, oh the joy of modern technology! These examples of early music showed that many of the writers of Christmas hymns cribbed their music from dance tunes of earlier times.

Michael also went on to describe local link ups with the creation of Handel's Messiah. Charles Jennings of Shackerstone was a friend of Handel and it was he who wrote the words that are still sung today. The whole thing took only six weeks to write. The first performance in Leicestershire of the Messiah was held at Church Langton.

CAROLLING

Arthur Stevenson kept us all enthralled with his descriptions of carol singing out and about with the Men's Fireside Group and also the Chapel Choir.

On the night before Christmas Eve, the Fireside Group would make a carolling tour on foot around most of the outlying farms. This would involve trekking over fields and obstacles, sometimes they were led by Bradley Moore and his hurricane lamp, Bradley was one of the well known characters of the day who was written about in Wot a couple of years ago. Arthur described how they finished up with Bradley falling into a ditch on one occasion.

At some of the farm stops they would be treated to mince pies and hot cups of tea, these refreshments, plus the warmth offered when they were asked inside the farmhouses all helped to keep them going though the sometimes freezing weather.

On Christmas Eve it was the turn of the Chapel Choir to do a tour of the village with carolling stops under many lamp-posts on the way. They took a harmonium with them as the accompanying instrument which Arthur played.

A regular short cut was sometimes used between Stamford Street and the then new 'sunshine houses' on Markfield Road, this took them across the field via Motty's Stile and a couple of others on the way. The harmonium would be carried and hoisted as necessary en-route. On one occasion it was dropped as it was being taken over one of the stiles, not surprisingly, it didn't function at the next carolling stop.

As the night wore on, folks joining them as the pubs turned out would swell their numbers. Later on, more carollers would join in when the dance finished at the local Majestic Ballroom.

The favourite carol on these occasions was, 'When Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night', this would be sung to all manner of tunes. Our audience all had a go at singing it to the tune of Ilkley Moor Ba Tat, it went down very well!

GETTING READY FOR WINTER Crime Prevention Top Tips



This is another new feature for Ratby WOT aimed at giving readers practical advice about crime prevention.

The dark nights drawing in, cold evenings and Christmas adverts on television can mean only one thing winter is almost with us once more. It's a sad fact that 36% of all burglaries and 32% of all car crime is committed during winter, often under the cover of darkness.

How can you help yourself?

A common factor linking many crimes is that they occur in dark, secluded surroundings where valuable property is left openly on view, with little or no security.

Here are some top tips to help crack down on crime.

- *Cut back hedges and plants that create dark or secluded areas near your house, shed or outbuilding.*
- *Ensure your outside lights are in good working order.*
- *Fit good quality locks to doors and windows.*
- *Make sure that garden fencing and side gate are in a good state of repair. Fit secure locks to side gates.*
- *If you have a garage use it - your car is much less likely to be broken into if locked in a garage.*
- *Consider starting a Neighbourhood Watch scheme in your area.*
- *Consider fitting an alarm system on your house and outbuilding.*
- *Ensure your property is post-coded.*

For more advice - contact your local beat officer. (Tel 0116 222 2222)
Or visit Braunstone Police station - open 7 days 9am - 8pm.

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FAREWELL

September 20th saw the end of an era at Rathby Primary School. Rod Atkin had been the Premises Officer since 1974, and finally felt it was time to take it easy. Over the years he has seen hundreds of children go through the school, and even their children. He has worked with five Headteachers.

Staff, Governors and friends spent a wonderful evening with Rod to wish him all the best, and presented him with furniture for his conservatory, a bottle of whiskey, and a special 'Premises Officer Retirement Box.'

On Friday 28th September the children said goodbye with a special assembly, including two 'Premises Officer' songs! Parents and children were sad to see him go, and to say thank you for his many years service, presented him with a garden bench so that he can while away the hours on sunny summer days.

So 'Goodbye Mr Atkin, we'll miss you a lot.'

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GOOD NEWS AT THE PLOUGH INN

David Harris, licensee of The Plough has been granted the highest Educational Award available in the licensee industry. He has successfully passed a Two Year Diploma in Licensee Retailing, the first to achieve this in the East Midlands. The British Institute of Innkeeping has elevated him to full membership in recognition of this achievement and experience in the trade.

David is the first to acknowledge the support of his wife, Paula and partner, Head Chef Sean Burlinson, without whom his success and the developments at the Plough would not have been possible.

David studied five main subjects for the Diploma, including Catering Development, Customer Service and Wine Retail.

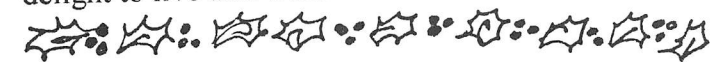
Within two years of entering their first pub in 1993, David and Paula had won 'Pub of the Year.' By 1997 they had achieved 'National Pub Restaurant of the Year' at The Green Man Inn, Silverstone, sharing the £4000 prize with all the staff. Sean joined the team at this point, and since moving to The Plough in 1999 they have never looked back!

Their fame has spread with yet more national trade press coverage, and a rave review in a recent issue of The Leicester Mercury, all of which has enhanced their reputation.

Future plans include the development of Specials and the Fish menu, as well as increased wine choice.

There are plans for more refurbishment, as well as support for the community with involvement in Pubwatch, which aims to clamp down on under-age drinking and anti-social behaviour.

Ratby people can expect to be looked after for many years to come, as the Plough team view this area as a delight to live and work in!



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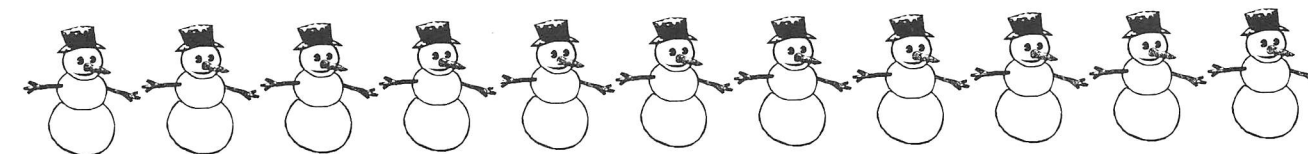
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



There will be CAROL SINGING with the Ratby Co-operative Band on WEDNESDAY 19TH DECEMBER round the Christmas tree by the Village Hall. Thanks to the Woodland Trust and the Scouts for their help.



There will be a FESTIVE WINDOW COMPETITION during the week starting Monday 17th December. Decorate your house or shop window and see if you win a prize! You can nominate yourself or somebody else – just give the address to the Parish Council office (or take a chance on being nominated by our spies!).



GOLDEN JUBILEE 2002

Next year the country will celebrate 50 years reign of Her Majesty the Queen. The British public has always commemorated historic royal occasions with street parties and parades and there is no reason to think that this particular event will be any different! We need to decide if Ratby is going to join in the fun and, if so, how.

The major national celebrations will take place from Saturday 1st June to Tuesday 4th

June. (The Tuesday is instead of the usual Spring Bank Holiday and the Monday is an additional Bank Holiday.) Events in Leicestershire are expected to include the lighting of beacons on the Monday but it is hoped that many other special events will be held in the city and county.

If you have any ideas about how Ratby can join in the celebrations, please contact the Parish Council office.

SNIPPETS

In the last issue of WOT! we reported on the likelihood of two cell phone masts being installed in the village. Our report was inaccurate as there had been a change in the Law and planning permission is now necessary for such installations. We are delighted to say that Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council turned down both applications on the grounds the masts would have been visually intrusive.



The ongoing vandalism to play equipment in the two village recreation grounds led to a letter being sent to all householders to draw attention to this sad state of affairs. We are continuing to address this problem and are grateful for all constructive suggestions as to how we can tackle this problem.

We are pleased to announce the appointment of two new Parish Councillors:

- **Atul Jobanputra** our local postmaster, who has had business interests in the village for over 13 years and is interested in how the village progresses.
- **George Hurd** who is a former Chairman of the Parish Council and would like to get involved again, particularly since he took early retirement.

PLEASE ASK YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

**Do you care about Ratby village?
Would you like to have a say in what happens in the
village, in the future?**

If the answer to these questions is "yes" then you may be interested in a

VILLAGE APPRAISAL

Q. What is a Village Appraisal?

A. Something that allows a community to take a close look at the past and present of the village and provides a framework to help plan for the future. It finds out what people want for the area in which they live or work.

Q. Why do a Village Appraisal?

A. Because it gives everyone, not just those with the confidence to speak at a meeting, the chance to have their say on local issues. It provides information about the village and identifies current and potential problems. It identifies what should be conserved and what needs to be improved and changed. It provides facts, figures and opinion on local issues such as traffic, health facilities and threats to services and is a good way to identify opportunities for new initiatives such as starting a youth club. It also brings the community together and can be a lot of fun!

Q. What can a Village Appraisal achieve?

A. Appraisals come in all shapes and sizes and each one is unique. The results are also unique to the area in which it is carried out but some of the projects in Leicestershire villages that have resulted from a Village Appraisal are:

Rebuilding a sports pavilion ☺ Forming a youth club ☺ New low-cost housing
Improved street lighting ☺ Crime-busting initiatives ☺ New Business Directory

Q. Who carries out a Village Appraisal?

A. There will be a steering committee of about 12 people and lots of volunteers will be needed throughout the process and for the projects we do after the initial survey and report. But the most important thing is that *everybody* gets involved – this is a project done **by** the community **for** the community.



**Want to hear more?
Then come to a meeting on
Wednesday 23rd January
at the
VILLAGE HALL
Starting at 7.30pm**

RATBY COMMUNITY ORCHARD

The Orchard group held their Annual General Meeting on Monday November 12th in the Church Rooms.

Anthony Haywood was elected as Secretary, Neil Pilcher as Treasurer and Steve Boud to continue as chairperson.

The group presented Ann Day with a new book for the Library. 'THE COMMON GROUND BOOK OF ORCHARDS' will be permanently available in Ratby for reference. Pop in sometime and have a look.

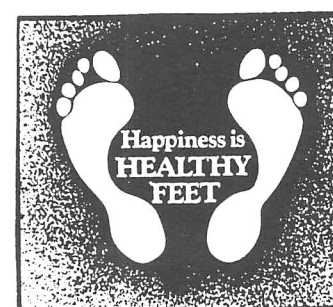
One highlight of the year was the group's first trip. A visit was made to Sulgrave Manor for this year's APPLE DAY event. A range of activities and over 300 varieties of apple made it an inspiring trip.

**RATBY ORCHARD GROUP WISHES ALL
VILLAGERS HAPPY FESTIVE WASSAILING
AND A FRUITFUL NEW YEAR**

**DEADLINE FOR
FEBRUARY ISSUE
FRIDAY 18th JANUARY
ARTICLES MAY BE SENT TO
3 INGLE DRIVE or left at LIBRARY.
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LEMON PAVLOVA

Ingredients

4 Large egg whites
8 oz/22gr caster sugar
2 level teaspoons cornflour
1 teaspoon vinegar
1 teaspoon vanilla essence

Filling

4 egg yolks
4oz/110gr caster sugar
3 tablespoons lemon juice & Grated rind
1/2 pint /275 ml whipping or double cream

Oven temperature

150c/300F/Gas mark 2

Method

1. Whisk egg whites until stiff
2. Gradually beat in 4oz of sugar
3. Fold in remaining sugar, cornflour, vinegar and vanilla gradually
4. Pipe or spoon onto silicone lined sheets on two baking trays to form two 9-inch circles.
5. Bake for approx. 45 minutes until firm and easily removed from the paper.
6. For the filling, put yolks and sugar into a solid saucepan and cook over a low heat, continually stirring until creamy.
7. Add lemon juice and rind.
8. Cook over gentle heat, stirring continually until the consistency of lemon curd. **DO NOT BOIL!**
9. Remove from heat, pour into large bowl and stir gently until cold
10. Whisk cream and fold into lemon mixture Sandwich the lemon cream between the Pavlova layers and refrigerate overnight, or freeze as required.

Scrivener

