

Rowell Heritage

The Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre Magazine



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Rowell Heritage.

Issue 5

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I hope you enjoy this edition of Rowell Heritage I would like to thank all our sponsors and contributors for their support.
Editor.

Cover Picture:

The War Memorial & Rowell News.
G Davis.

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Deadline for Issue No 6.

Wednesday 22nd April.

Life next door to the police houses

by Helen Cox (nee Chapman)

There were nine girls living next to each other in Crispin Street, who were all born between 1943 and 1947; we all played together outside in the street after school, in the evenings. However, three policemen lived in the police houses in Crispin Street – P.C. Beasley, P.C. Atter and P.C. Panther. So we had to be very careful if any of the policemen were around when we were playing in the street. They especially disapproved of ball games. Three of the girls we played with were policemen's daughters but it still didn't stop their dads from telling us off. Fortunately there were not many cars at this time, so it was relatively safe for us to play outside our houses in the road.

One of our favourite games was rounders. We used an old tennis racquet to whack a tennis ball as hard as we could over the heads of any of the fielders, trying to ensure that our ball didn't go into anyone's garden. There was one garden in particular which we tried to avoid as we knew that our ball would never be returned to us if it vanished over a certain fence! We shouted and yelled in excitement as we cheered our teams on! However, as soon as a policeman appeared on his bicycle, our ball would instantly vanish from view and the racquet would immediately be hidden behind someone's back whilst the girl in question innocently leaned up against a garden wall, safely wedging the racquet between her and the wall, thus concealing it from the policeman. We would stand around idly chatting as if butter wouldn't melt in our mouths! The policeman would know that we'd been playing rounders, but as he hadn't actually caught us in action, he couldn't really reprimand us without any evidence! Occasionally though we were caught playing, and would be told off in no uncertain terms, but as soon as the policeman disappeared from our sight, we'd be back playing again.

Sometimes our ball would roll into the gutter and before we could reach it, it would fall into the drain. This was a catastrophe! A ball was a valuable piece of equipment and we couldn't play without it. My older sister, Dorothy came up with the perfect solution. With all of their strength, the biggest and strongest of the Crispin Street girls heaved the drain cover and pulled it right off. PHEW!!! The stench from the filthy, open drain was VILE! We held our handkerchiefs over our noses. However, there, bobbing about on the surface of the water was our ball!! Now all we had to do was retrieve it. What a challenge! How could we reach it? Dorothy came up with the clever idea that I, as a very skinny kid and a bit of a dare-devil, should lie down on my stomach and put my hand down into the drain and try to grasp the ball. I did as I was told. All the Crispin Street girls depended on me! Unfortunately, I couldn't reach the ball. Dorothy, then suggested that I should put my head down into the drain and she and the other oldest girls would hold my ankles. I duly obeyed! I slowly lowered myself down into the murky darkness of that stinking, putrid drain whilst the older girls held on to my ankles. I relied on them totally. I groped around in the smelly, rotten water until I grasped our ball. I gave a huge yell and I was heaved up out of the drain, jubilant! Our game of rounders could continue even though the ball was stinking, filthy and wet. We knew that our play would be uninterrupted provided that a policeman didn't appear out of one of the Crispin Street police houses.

My mother and father knew nothing of this particular escapade, though I must have stunk to high heaven when I got home that particular evening!! I shudder when I think about the possible consequences of doing something as dangerous as this, but am happy to be here to tell the tale!!

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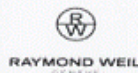
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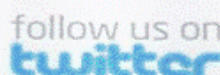
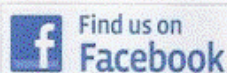
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SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S CONNECTION WITH ROTHWELL

by Sylvia Davis

Stan White's article in the Jan/Feb issue of Rowell Heritage prompted me to research the possibility of a connection between Conan Doyle and Rothwell. Stan had heard it rumoured that the author's housekeeper once lived here, so I started by looking at the various census records to see whether anyone residing with Sir Arthur had a birthplace in Northamptonshire. I was pleasantly surprised to find this entry in the 1911 Census:

Arthur Conan Doyle	Head	51	Married	3	2	2	—	Writer & Dramatist	457				Edinburgh
Jean Conan Doyle	Wife	33	"	"	"	"	—	"					Blackheath
Doris Conan Doyle	Daughter	2						"					Canterbury
Adrian Conan Doyle	"	4 mths						"					Canterbury
Mary Jakeman	Single	35	Single					Lady's maid	010				Kettering

At the time, the Conan Doyles were staying at the Royal Bath Hotel in Bournemouth and they had a lady's maid with them named MARY JAKEMAN (35 years). Her place of birth was listed as Kettering. From this information it seemed very plausible that Mary did indeed have a link to Rothwell and I started to search for corroborating evidence.

Mary was actually born in Church Stowe in the Daventry district on 3rd May 1878. Her father was an agricultural labourer named John, born 1839 in Flore, and her mother was Frances (nee Dove), born 1843 in Church Stowe. The couple married in the St Pancras district of London in 1870 where John was working as a railway engineer. Their address on the 1871 Census was 109 Malden Road. Frances gave birth in Kentish Town to Edith Lucy in 1872 followed by twin girls in 1874 who were named Frances Dove and Rebecca.

In 1881 John and Frances Jakeman were back in Church Stowe, Northamptonshire, and living at 73 Main Road. John was now an agricultural labourer and there were 6 daughters in the family with the youngest aged just 7 months. Mary, the 5th child, was 2 years old.

By 1891 the Jakemans were in Rothwell with 8 children, - all girls. They were living at that time in Castle Street and Mary at 12 yrs was still at school while her older siblings were stay makers and shoe workers.

John Jakeman	Head	51	General labourer	X	Flore
Frances	Wife	38		X	Church Stowe
Rebecca	Daughter	17	Stay Maker	X	London
Frances	Daughter	15	Shoe Fitter	X	Do
Harry	Daughter	13	Stay Maker	X	Do
Mary	Daughter	12	Shoe Maker	X	Northampton Church Stowe
Frances	Daughter	10			Do
Rebecca	Daughter	8			Do
Edith	Daughter	7			Do
Arthur	Daughter	6			Do

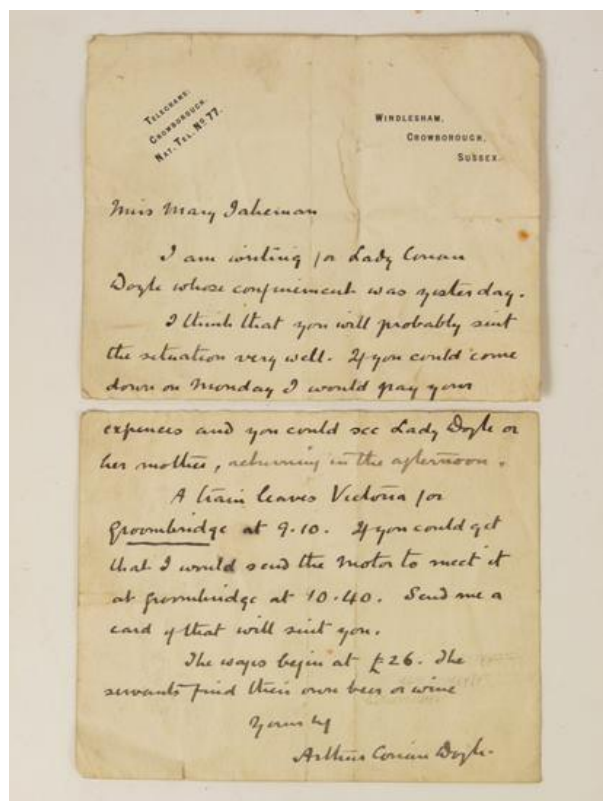
The 1901 Census records Mary as being 23 yrs of age and working as a dressmaker. She was with her parents and twin sisters Rebecca and Frances at 2 Co-op Villas, Evison Road, Rothwell.

John Jakeman	Head	61	General labourer (factory)	do	Flore
Frances	Wife	58		do	Church Stowe
Rebecca	Daughter	27	Shoe Fitter	do	London
Frances	Daughter	27	Shoe Fitter	do	do
Mary	Daughter	23	Dressmaker	do	Rothwell

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John Jakeman	Head	61	General labourer (factory)	born Flore
Frances Jakeman	Wife	58		born Church Stowe
Rebecca Jakeman	Daughter	27		born London
Frances Jakeman	Daughter	27		born London
Mary Jakeman	Daughter	23		born Church Stowe

Soon afterwards, Mary went to work as a servant in Surbiton and then in 1909 she applied for the position of lady's maid for Conan Doyle's second wife, Jean (nee Leckie), whom he married in 1907. Sir Arthur sent a letter offering her the post on 18th March 1909 which was the day after the birth of his son Denis. This letter was included in an auction at Sworders Fine Art Auctioneers at Stansted Mountfitchet on 10th July 2012.



The letter reads:

'I am writing for Lady Conan Doyle whose confinement was yesterday. I think that you will probably suit the situation very well. If you could come down on Monday I would pay your expenses and you could see Lady Doyle or her mother, returning in the afternoon. A train leaves Victoria for Groombridge at 9.10. If you could get that I would send the motor to meet it at Groombridge at 10.40. Send me a card if that will suit you. The wages begin at £26. The servants find their own beer or wine'.

Mary was to work for the Conan Doyle household from 1909 until 1932 and was mentioned in Sir Arthur's memoirs. There are references to her in his book 'Memories and Adventures' (1st published by Hodder & Stoughton in 1924) and the following sentence describes a comment made at the dinner table by George Meredith, poet and novelist.

When the jelly swayed about as the maid put it on the table, he said: "The jelly, Mary, is as treacherous as the Trojan Horse."

In the same book there is a paragraph on the constraints of rationing during the First World War.

Every house had its vegetable garden and every poor man his allotment, that we might at the worst exist until we could win our peace. The want of sugar and the limitations of tea were the worst privations. My wife, greatly helped by a faithful servant, Jakeman, did wonders in saving food, and we always lived well within our legal rations.

Mary Jakeman accompanied the family on their many travels and a letter from Lily Loder-Symonds, a close friend of Lady Conan Doyle, described an incident in New York during a trip to America and Canada in 1914: ***Jean's maid Mary Jakeman went out once, was nearly driven over by a cab, and returned much alarmed.***

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was one of the most famous authors in the world and consequently, he and his party were always met by large excited crowds. In his book 'The Wanderings of a Spiritualist' (1st published 1921), he relates his family's experiences in Australia and New Zealand during 1920-21. He mentions Mary Jakeman several times:

....With us were Denis, Malcolm and Baby, concerning whom I wrote the 'Three of them' sketches some years ago. In their train was Jakeman, most faithful of maids....

Describing the enormous throng that greeted their arrival at Sydney.....

My wife, covered with flowers, was hustled off in one direction, while I was borne away in another, and each of the children was the centre of a separate group. Major Wood had gone off to see to the luggage, and Jakeman was herself embedded somewhere in the crowd, so at last I had to shout, "Where's that little girl? Where's that little boy?" until we reassembled and were able, laden with bouquets, to reach our carriage. The evening paper spread itself over the scene.

Other references:

In every civic amenity Sydney stands very high. Her Botanical Gardens are not so supremely good as those of Melbourne, but her Zoo is among the very best in the world. The animals seem to be confined by trenches rather than by bars, so that they have the appearance of being at large. It was only after Jakeman had done a level hundred with a child under each arm that she realised that a bear, which she saw approaching, was not really in a state of freedom.

Before leaving we spent one long day at the famous Jenolan Caves which are distant about 45 miles. As the said miles are very up-and-down, and as the cave exploration involves several hours of climbing, it makes a fairly hard day's work. We started all seven in a motor, as depicted by the wayside photographers, but baby got sick and had to be left with Jakeman at the half-way house, where we picked her up, quite recovered, on our return.



THE PARTY EN ROUTE TO THE JENOLAN CAVES, JANUARY 20th 1921

(Mary Jakeman is the lady sitting in the back with the child on her knee)



MAJOR WOOD (far left) & THE CONAN DOYLES: ADRIAN, LADY JEAN, JEAN LENA, SIR ARTHUR & DENIS. MARY JAKEMAN IS SEATED (far right). Melbourne, 1920.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle died of a heart attack on July 7th 1930 and members of the Jakeman family were present at his funeral in Crowborough, Sussex. Mary herself continued to work in the household until an unfortunate incident in 1932 which is described briefly in a note written by Lady Conan Doyle. This was included amongst letters auctioned at Christie's on May 19th 2004 and listed in the catalogue as follows:

..... the largest number of letters are from Mary Jakeman, a nurserymaid who had, according to a note by Lady Conan Doyle left 'suddenly... without notice because of a row she had with John Matthews (the parlourman) the night before when he tried to push her into the river'; the group also includes three letters (two fragmentary) from Lady Conan Doyle to Jakeman, who is looking after the children in the Conan Doyles' absence, reporting 'Sir Arthur's Addresses have been a tremendous success', giving instructions for the children's supper and referring apparently to Innes Doyle's health. (Arthur's brother)

Mary took up new employment with Mrs Gertrude Findlay of Stansted Hall. Gertrude's husband, Arthur Findlay, was a well-known spiritualist as had been both Sir Arthur and Jean Conan Doyle. Mary continued to correspond with the three youngest Conan Doyle children (Denis, Adrian and Jean).

She never married and died back in Northamptonshire in 1961.

**JAKEMAN Mary of 78 Rothwell Road Desborough
Northamptonshire spinster died 4 April 1961 Probate
Leicester 3 May to Annie Plowright (wife of George
Henry Plowright) and John Kingsley Plowright
warehouseman. Effects £987 19s. 1d.**

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Mary's mother Frances had died in Rothwell on 25th October 1910 and her father John on 17th June 1917. Both were members of the Independent Chapel (now known as the URC) and John was recorded in the Northampton Mercury of 28th Jan 1888 as having preached there. The only Jakeman daughter who died young was Miriam whose death, at just 18 yrs, took place in 1898. Several of the sisters married and raised children in Rothwell but the most remarkable lifespan was that of the youngest girl, Annie Jakeman, who in 1915 had married a Desborough man, George Henry Plowright. She died aged 104 yrs in 1990, just days before her 105th birthday.

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www.rothwellheritage.org.uk

If you like our new Facebook page you will be kept informed and up to date on all that is going on
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In the Evening Telegraph during the 50's and 60's, a cartoon character was featured, known as 'Air Ada'. She was created by Rushden born Reginald William Norman who signed himself R.W.N. In the cartoon, Ada was depicted talking to her friend Maud. The conversation was written in the very strong Northamptonshire dialect which was common then. This dialect has gradually weakened as a result of population movement, travel and education.

'Air Ada' only said a couple of sentences, but they always raised a laugh in our household when I was a child. Any true Rowellian could understand what Air Ada was saying. I will try to emulate R.W.N. in the hope that some Rowellians will be able to understand what I've written:

"Nee sez, 'air gel ent gooin pictures at Kettrin cus she en owdenuff".

She c'n roar n oller, budee wunt change is moind, Mawwud. Ee sez she enner gooner goo! Air gel givim a loada chelp un ee tolder ta shuter chops n ta stop roarin. Tentorfen thudee putsis foot dayoon. Blimey Mawwud, I dunt wanna goo um cus thurawl mardy....but I spose I slatter goo."

"(And) he says our girl isn't going to the cinema at Kettering because she's not old enough.

She can cry and shout but he won't change his mind, Maud. He says she isn't going to go. Our girl gave him a load of cheek and he told her to shut her mouth and stop crying. It's not often that he puts his foot down. Blimey Maud, I don't want to go home because they are all upset.....but I suppose I shall have to go".

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MAX SCOTT (16th April 1936 – 6th January 2015)

Max was a well-known and much loved figure in Rothwell who sadly died at the beginning of the year. His funeral on 21st January was attended by a great many people, including members of CTC Groups, some of whom had travelled long distances to pay their respects. The eulogy was read by Rev. John Westwood and had been written by Max's family. It seems only fitting for parts of it to be included in this issue of the magazine because Max was a valued volunteer and friend to us at the Heritage Centre.

Maxwell Charles Scott was born in the village of Holbrook near Ipswich in Suffolk on 16th April 1936 and was the eldest of four children. His first job was with the heavy engineering company Ransomes and Rapier, where he worked as a clerk. At 18 he was called up into the Army and was posted for 2 years to the very desirable, exotic location of Norwich, where he wielded a pen for the whole period. After being demobbed he worked for Pickfords, where he planned the routes for large or heavy loads across England. He recalled it as his favourite job. In 1957 he and his sister Maureen joined the Cyclists' Touring Club in Suffolk and thus began a lifetime association with the CTC. During the next few years Max organised cycle tours to Scotland, Southern Ireland and the Black Forest. He was renowned for never travelling light on a bicycle and he took three library books 'in case he was bored.' His cycle was so heavy that nobody on the tour could lift it an inch from the ground. Throughout his life he never carried less than a full bag while cycling.

His next move with Pickfords was to Luton where he became the CTC Bedfordshire Secretary and made many lifelong friends. He often looked back on this period of his life as his most enjoyable, cycling with a young group of enthusiastic like-minded riders. He had many friends, a loud chuckling laugh and a big personality with a liking for colourful attire. He was well known throughout the cycle touring and racing community. Max enjoyed organising many touring events including CTC National Birthday Rides, his favourite form of holiday. He loved catching up with cycling friends at regular meets such as the Cider Meets in Normandy, at Beaumanor, the Birthday Rides, Home Counties Rally and the Mildenhall Rally in his home county of Suffolk. Max's dedication to cycling is shown by the fact that he was the CTC Secretary not only of the Kettering branch but also of Northampton and Milton Keynes. He loved gardening, classical music (especially opera) and enjoyed cooking and baking, being renowned for producing three large fully decorated cakes each Christmas.

He was awarded the National CTC Certificate of Merit in 1988 for his many services to the club and he was the Regional Volunteer of the Year in 2004 for his work in Northamptonshire.

His sister, Maureen, remembers that on cycle rides, if he was leading and was asked "How far now Max?" he always replied "Not far" "But how far Max?" "Oh not far" and you never found out the distance you had to cover. Max always had a policy of never being early to any meeting. If he arrived more than two minutes early for a ride or meeting it was probably a mistake. Committee meetings could sometimes be a bit hectic at his house, as he would arrive late home from work and start baking cakes for the group to eat later, as well as also cooking his evening meal!

Max also aimed never to go to bed on the same day that he woke up, which meant he would be still up when his visitors had long retired because they did not have his staying power.

In the last few years he took a shine to recumbent cycles and enjoyed the experience by zooming along at great speed, until illness slowed him to a gentler pace. Sadly, that joy was taken away from him as his health deteriorated, but latterly with the help of friends he was transported to his favourite cafes to meet with other cyclists. Max was a keen writer, edited several local CTC magazines and was also instrumental in setting up the CTC Kettering website. In addition he helped to produce a Council map for cyclists in the Kettering area. He liked to blog about the funny things that happened to him whilst cycling and travelling on buses. An excerpt from one of his blogs follows this obituary. With such a big personality, strong voice, welcoming smile and booming chuckle, Max will leave a very big hole in the lives of his family and friends.

He was a funny, happy-go-lucky, good humoured brother, uncle and friend to all. He asked that his ashes be scattered along a favourite lane in Northamptonshire so that he will always be part of his adopted county. He used to say "I am CTC through and through, like a stick of seaside rock, and if you cut me in half, I would have the letters CTC running right through me". Those who knew and loved him can hear his loud chuckle even now.

Friday 15th February 2013

Another Tuesday, another bus trip. Less of an epic, more of a routine. Things began well when the Kettering bus arrived nearly 15 minutes late in Rothwell, already bursting with Desborough pensioners eager to shop in the metropolis. I squeezed myself on board with the Rothwell party and was almost immediately offered a seat by a young lady. I have experienced this before and it comes as an embarrassment to we independent old codgers who, even on empty buses, walk past the front seats bearing notices that these are to be given up for the elderly or disabled. We don't consider ourselves to be either. It's intriguing that the young ladies offer their seats whilst young men sit solidly in place.

On arrival at the hospital, at least half the passengers alighted, most of them elderly, disabled or struggling with prams. Everyone now had a seat. I had about 5 minutes to spare in Kettering before the Raunds bus arrived and I climbed aboard, accompanied by an elderly lady. We both naturally ignored the seats marked 'please give up this seat, etc.' The ride to Cranford was short but exceedingly noisy with just about every component rattling and banging and I even feared that we might have to get out and push as pedestrians appeared to be walking equally quickly up Barton Hill. The bus emptied at Cranford where both of us passengers staggered off and the driver was left to make his lonely way towards Thrapston with his rattle-trap of a vehicle.

Considering the weather conditions, with snow still on the ground and ice much in evidence, The Old Forge was quite full and, to my surprise and pleasure, there were at least 9 of us cyclists. I was even more surprised when the proprietor, who also happens to be a cyclist, said to me, "Do you remember coming in here shortly after we opened?" That would be at least three years ago and yes, I did remember and I've been in several times since, on my own or with others. Indeed, on one occasion, I arrived 5 minutes before closing time and he stayed open for me to have a pot of tea.

"I over-charged you," he said.

"I've been in here several times since then," I replied, "and I wouldn't have noticed anyway".

"You may have your scone free", he offered, when I ordered a cheese scone, due to arrive in 15 minutes.

"That's fine," I said, "my bus doesn't come for nearly another hour".

It appears that I have one of the most recognisable of faces and people have even reported seeing me in places where I've never ever been. What a relief that I never embarked upon a criminal career....



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One from the Archive

The photograph above is one of a collection that was gifted to the Heritage Centre by Betty Cobley.

Perhaps you could identify one of the men in the picture.

If so we would like to know his name and any other information that you may have.



Butlin Cup Winners 1948

At Rowell Swimming Pool.

L to R: Pat Turner, Daphne Sharman, Maureen Murphy and Marjorie Beal (Bette Cheaney).

The team coach, Miss Bonham, is in the centre.

The Butlin Cup was awarded by the Butlin Factory and was competed for every year by Kettering Senior School. The Central School Team won three years in a row. The race was normally held at Kettering Swimming Pool but as Butlins Factory was situated in Rothwell, it was thought that the race should be held there. The average age of the teams was 14 years and the above picture was taken in June 1948.



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The club was more commonly known as Rowell Photo Club. It was formed in the early to middle 1930s by a group of young camera enthusiasts, mainly from the business community in the town, - shopkeepers, factory owners etc. The club expanded in membership to welcome anyone interested in taking photographs and doing their own developing and printing.

Then came 1939 and the war years which curtailed the activities of the club due to members being called up for military service and other duties. There was also the difficulty of obtaining photographic materials due to wartime restrictions.

The club started activities again soon after the end of the war and it was thriving by 1946. Meetings were held each week in an upstairs room at the rear of the Blue Bell which was accessed through the yard at the back. Members would exhibit their work for others to see and cameras would be brought along for comparison and discussion.

Fred Covington, a painter and decorator who lived in Cambridge Street, introduced me to the club in those early post war days and with a 1930s Ensign Folding Camera belonging to my parents, he taught me all about developing and printing. Fred used a projector for making enlargements. He built it himself, making use of an old plate camera and he did all of his processing in the bathroom.

I naturally wanted to do my own printing and enlarging so Tom Joyce, who was another member, sold me a plate camera of great age which I used to build my own projector. Tom was a builder/handyman with premises at the bottom of Church Lane. My Dad constructed a shed for me in the garden and installed electricity so that I could use it as my photographic darkroom. I should point out that you could not buy things like darkroom projectors in those years, which is why people built their own. Plate cameras used glass plates instead of film. Darkroom projectors were (and still are) known as enlargers for projecting enlarged negatives on to photographic paper to obtain bigger prints. 3 & a quarter by 2 & a quarter inch negatives were the popular size in the 1940s. A number of members produced contact prints of this size, filling albums with them so at some meetings it was contact prints versus enlargements, - all were black and white, of course. I do however, remember Lance Barlow showing us how to make bromide prints by dabbing the developer on to the photographic paper with a brush that had very stiff bristles. The resulting print of the windmill (which once stood on Windmill Hill above the cemetery) was sepia coloured.

Outings were arranged to various locations and Fred Buckby's buses were always used. The bus drivers were usually Charley Willis of Fox Street and George Simcoe of Crispin Street. Several photographic trips were made to the Cotswolds and always on a Sunday. I recall visits to Chipping Camden, Chipping Norton, Burford and the Oxford Colleges. There was a trip to Kirby Hall one summer evening and those members with cars transported others who didn't have them. All the cars were pre-war models and I had a lift from Eric Bowyer who was the General Manager of all the Rothwell Co-op shops (Bell Hill, Wales Street, Nunnery Avenue plus bakery and coal delivery). Eric always wore a hat which looked the same as that worn by Clement Attlee! At that time Kirby Hall was derelict but was an excellent subject for our photography.

At one club meeting the photographic topic was disrupted when Leslie Woolston arrived with a pen which could write for 6 months without being re-filled. It was the first ever Biro pen and it seemed a marvel at the time because until then there had just been the fountain type pens which had to constantly be filled with ink. Leslie's Biro was expensive and in an attractive case so was quite a talking point that night.

Most of the cameras were pre-war. Derek Taylor caused a lot of interest when he brought in his 35mm Leica, but Club Secretary Bert Dyke wasn't impressed as he preferred the larger film format. Nevertheless, a German Leica was regarded as the Rolls Royce of cameras by most of the group. The members usually obtained their film development chemicals and papers from Herbert Winterhalder's shop in Montagu Street, Kettering. He died in 1946 and the business was carried on by Philip Barlow until the 1960s.

Rothwell Camera Club visited the Wellingborough Club one night to see a slide show presentation by Lancelot Vining FRPS. He was a photographer for the Daily Mirror before WW1 and he later made his name through his work with the earliest Leica miniature cameras, mostly in the sports field with close-ups of cricketers and footballers in action. Many years after his talk, an American contact was looking for photographs of Bing Crosby that were different from the standard ones taken by studios. He was writing a book and I recalled that Lancelot Vining had shown us a photo of Crosby at the stage door canteen in London in 1944. As a result of this, Lancelot was able to make a copy for the book.

I lost touch with the camera club during the 1950s when I was in the army and it seems to have gradually faded away and ended in the 1960s. Today of course, the photo scene is looked after by the Desborough and Rothwell Photographic Society which has been going for far longer than our original club.

As I write this, I only know of one other member who is still alive!

Here is a list of late 1940s members:

Bert Dyke (Secretary)
Lance Barlow
Henry Parmenter
Tom Joyce
Harold Wager
Geoff Pentelow
Leslie Woolston
Derek Taylor
Fred Covington
Arnold Sargeant
Lawrence Jarman
Colin Bamford
Arthur Willis
Eric Bowyer
Ray Dainty
Stan White



Rothwell windmill at Windmill Hill (above the cemetery & Windmill cottages) probably c.1900.
Copied from a bromide print made by Lance Barlow.



The 1.23pm United Counties bus service 251 to Kettering, passing the old Ball's Foundry building in 1985. The Charter Inn is at the top of the picture. Photo taken by Stan White.

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The United Reformed Church is still open for worship today, but for the purpose of this article I will focus on 300 hundred years of history from 1655 to 1955.

The United Reformed Church formerly known as the Independent Chapel and the Congregational Church has an interesting history that was part of a wider movement known as non-conformism. This term refers to those who did not worship in accordance with the authorities. In regards to Rothwell's Independent Chapel non-conformism dates as far back to 1655 when the chapel was founded, although the exact date is unknown the town of Rothwell is considered to be the birthplace of non-conformism in the East Midlands. The following year John Beverly was ordained as the first pastor. Prior to this Beverly lectured around the country on religious reformed teaching and since Rothwell was already receptive to reformed teaching the people converted to his teachings. He was loved by the people and it was devastating for the church when he died in 1658 since he was the driving force behind the it. The church then lost its direction. Although a small group of members still administered, members travelled to Desborough to see Thomas Browning preach. In 1662 when the Act of Uniformity was passed through Parliament, Browning was actually ejected from Desborough because he refused to take the oath to preach and conduct services in accordance with the Church of England. Part of the traditional Anglican form of worship was the use of the common book of prayer; this was considered essential because it contained the complete forms of service for daily and Sunday worship and all the details for the different services. So, as a result from Browning's refusal he was ejected from Desborough but was then asked to become Rothwell's pastor at the Independent Chapel which he accepted. The authorities treated non-conformists like criminals if they were caught deviating from the Church of England. Even during a meeting dissenters or non-conformists had to be wary in case they were caught by the authorities. To avoid this, members of the Congregational church met in Rothwell woods (near the A6) and posted look outs just in case they were caught by Justices of the Peace. Although many independent churches were burnt down Rothwell's was never attacked in any way. This is why many non-conformist churches were built on the back streets and out of the way and explains why Rothwell's was built out of the way on Fox Street. Preaching would also have taken place in people's homes; an example of this is Susannah Ponder who used her house to hold meetings. Her father (John Ponder) was one of the founding members of the church and was appointed as a deacon.

Many ministers that followed Browning all had to be careful of being caught but since the church was built in the back streets the authorities never got involved. This encouraged people to attend the church from far and wide, throughout Northamptonshire, and even as far as Buckinghamshire and Bedfordshire. Not only did Rothwell's church encourage people to worship in their own way which wasn't dictated by parliament or state, it was also unique because it accumulated so many members that other churches were formed from it. One example shows many of Rothwell's members came from Wellingborough and were encouraged to form their own church in their home town and soon after many other members broke away from the Congregational church and formed independent churches more local to them. As well as bringing people to the church Richard Davis the third minister, whose ministry began in 1689, employed lay preachers who travelled to those who could not attend every service the church held, particularly those people who lived further afield and it was because of Davis that the members of the church increased because he drew people in from far and wide. Under the next minister Matthias Maurice the lay preachers soon finished.

By 1715 the Riot Act was passed through which allowed non-conformists to meet without the building being attacked, and if the building was attacked it was considered a felony. The majority of the church building we see today was actually built in 1735, prior to that the building that was used was just an old barn until the decision was made to build a new church. The new building was actually built around the original barn and achieved in just 17 months. The new church accommodated the ever expanding members and eventually new features such as an organ and new rooms such as the Sunday school. After Maurice there were no regular sole ministers until Reverend John Wood in 1789. After his resignation in 1811 the next pastor Reverend Walter Scott whose pastorate began in 1813 wanted to incorporate education with the church and it was him that led the way to starting a British school in Rothwell, one room opened in 1826. This schooling room was only used for boys it

was not until twelve years later in 1848 when girls were allowed to be educated at the church. It was not until the latter half of the late 19th century that an extension was added for both upper and lower school rooms which are still visible today. The building was actually designed by William Dawkins a stone mason by trade but was also the first organist for the church. Dawkins also built the first organ for the church which was ready for use. In 1862 the choir gallery was built, which has been renovated since then, along with the anteroom. By 1887 the upper and lower classrooms ceased to exist as school rooms instead, the upper room at least, was used for other functions, particularly for meetings.

By the 1890s the church thought about creating a magazine for the church, the first of these being published in the January of 1893 by a small committee on the church and the then current pastor E.W. Wilson. Inside this magazine was an inset titled 'Bright Leaves for Summer Days and Winter Nights' this magazine did not last for very long but the title was shortened and so the magazine that is produced today is called 'Bright Leaves'. By the 1800s being a non-conformist was no longer something to hide, in some part of England attendance of a non-conformist churches was actually higher than Anglican churches. Despite this, congregational churches and non-conformist churches in general were not allowed to hold marriage ceremonies until the 1898 marriage act. This allowed non-conformist churches to be licensed to hold their own marriages without the presence of a registrar. By the time of the First World War church numbers dwindled, and several groups and societies formed within the church had to be closed down. Therefore the war affected the life of the church. The minister at the time, Leslie Atkins, kept in touch with the men who served in the war and after his ministry finished he returned a few times for certain occasions particularly for the 1955 tercentenary. The war gave women an opportunity to work in jobs that were very male orientated and therefore enabled Constance Coltman to be ordained as the first female minister of the Congregational Church. It is at this point where I should mention John Smith who was born in Rothwell, Ponder Street to be precise in 1790. The only education he received was presumably at the Congregational Church. After he moved to London he was ordained as a minister and set up his own church near Georgetown, Demerara (Now British Guiana). He is known mostly for his work to abolish slavery; he died in prison in 1824 fighting for his cause. This links with the congregational church because members of Smith's church visited Rothwell and would preach where John Smith was educated.

The Second World War came in 1939 and at the end in 1945 Reverend William T. Hunter became the new pastor. In 1947 he was instrumental in arranging a performance at the church by a male voice choir of German prisoners of war. By 1955 things were going well for the church and it celebrated its tercentenary under its 23rd minister William T. Hunter in the May of 1955. Hunter invited a few of the previous minister's back to preach for this momentous occasion to celebrate how far the church had developed in 300 hundred years.



The Ghost in Rushton Road

A story from 140 years ago.

THE GHOST IN RUSHTON ROAD.—For some weeks past, after nightfall, a figure in white has been seen hovering about the neighbourhood of this spot, to the great terror of superstitious persons passing late between Rushton and Rothwell. On Thursday night last, the spectre-shape amused itself by paying a visit to the yard of Mr. Enos Shaw, who, having no qualms as to his supernatural visitant, let loose his large dog upon the intruder. The ghost, in very unghostlike fashion, hurled a couple of stout cudgels at his canine antagonist, wounding the poor creature seriously in the nose, and then, taking to his heels, succeeded in making good his retreat. Several persons have since been on the look-out to waylay the spectre; but, believing discretion to be the better part of valour, he has not put in a further appearance. Suspicion points to the son of a clergyman staying in the neighbourhood, as having adopted this means of gratifying his talent for practical joking, at the expense of timid children and superstitious old women.

Northampton Mercury June 19th 1875

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Newsletter Section.

Our thanks to County Councillor Jim Hakewill who has kindly granted £500 to the RAHC under the County Council's Empowering Councillors and Communities Scheme. The scheme grants £7000 per year to each of Northamptonshire County Council's 57 councillors to spend within their electoral division.

Ray Davis (Heritage Centre Manager) gratefully receives a cheque for £450 from The Mayor's Charity Fund.

Presented by Cllr Roger Wilson (Mayor) accompanied by Mrs Jennifer Wilson (Mayoress) and Mr Paul Johnson (President of The Rowell Fair Society) who received a cheque for the same amount on behalf of The Rowell Fair Society.



The official presentation was made at the A.G.M. Of The Rowell Fair Society in The Tresham Hall on Wednesday 18th February 2015.

Photos by G Davis

Jim Dale is to perform 'Just Jim Dale' his one man show at the Corby Cube on 11 & 12 April before taking the show to London. There are still some seats available (24.02.15) & bookable online. There is a link from our website. www.rothwellheritage.org.uk



The RAHC had a record number of visitors through its doors last year.

2014 : 4503

2013 : 2255

2012 : 2507

Dates for your Diary

March & April

Throughout March in Gallery 2

An Exhibition of work by Janet Bassett & Rae Greenshield

March 7th. 10.00 ~ 15.00

Art & Craft Fair in The Tresham Hall

Access for setting up from 09.00

March 13th 19.00 ~ 22.00

A Talk by Dennis Binks, Clairvoyant, Medium and Psychic.

Entrance strictly by ticket available in advance from The Heritage Centre.

March 27th 19.30

Grandpa's Dream. A Talk by Christine Surl.

April 2015 in the Galleries

An Exhibition by Ashley Medlock

April 17th 19.30

A Talk - Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Date & time to be confirmed

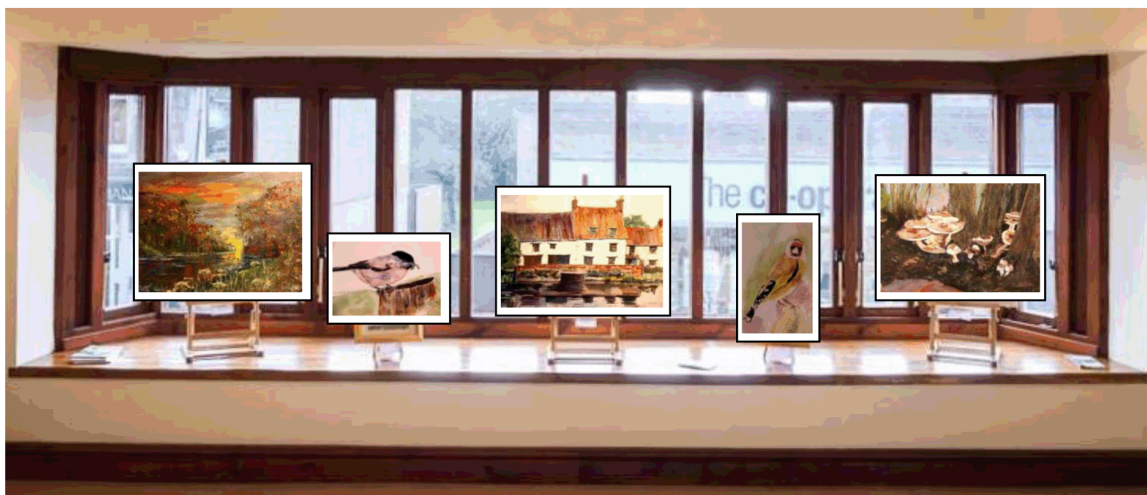
The Newmans. A Talk by David Newman.

April 25th 10.00 ~ 14.00

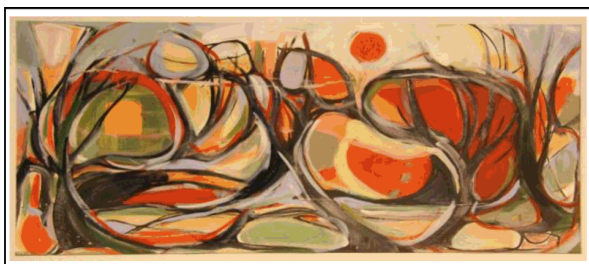
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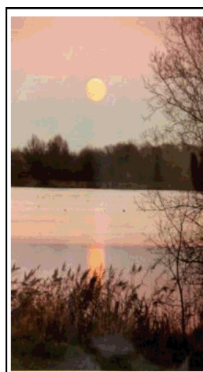
Greenshield

and from April

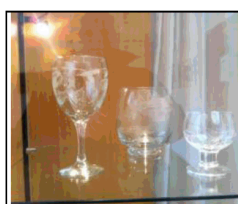
Ashley Medlock

Stella Benford Joe Green

Bob Cully Annie Ford



Work on this page
from Our Recent
Exhibitions



ENGLISH TOWNS

1. Stroll gently.....
2. Ghost town.....
3. A way to prepare potatoes.....
4. A lot left on the plate.....
5. Access for the sheep.....
6. Farm implement.....
7. Type of bread
8. Favourite place of Noel Edmonds.....
9. Wide steps.....
10. Keep decorating.....
11. Falling ice.....
12. Final section of the cemetery.....
13. The first lady is a fake.....
14. Famous 18th century artist.....
15. Crimson vehicle.....
16. Canine film star.....
17. Leafy green vegetable.....
18. Humpback river crossing.....
19. Place of tranquillity.....
20. Professor of herbs.....

Entries to be submitted to the Heritage Centre by
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The winner will receive
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Answers to quiz no 4. Northamptonshire Towns & Villages. 1. Achurch 2. Brixworth or Farthingstone 3. Crick 4. Grafton Underwood 5. Lamport 6. Moulton 7. Newbottle 8. Old 9. Quinton 10. Titchmarsh 11. Warkton 12. Roade 13. Spratton 14. Aldwinkle 15. Duston 16. Weekley 17. Ringstead 18. Adstone 19. Rushton 20. Deanshanger

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