

Rowell Heritage

The Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre Magazine



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**Rowell Heritage.
Issue15.**

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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 Red Lion & Market House
(This is available as a Christmas card from the Heritage Centre)

G Davis. 2015

Thanks to everybody who attended the Macmillan Coffee Morning at the Heritage Centre on 1st October. Brian Laywood kindly provided live keyboard music & there was an attendance of over 80 people. We were able to make a donation of £200 to Macmillan in memory of Alan Mills.



Brian Laywood.

Photo.. Jean Buswell

This will be my last magazine as editor but I am delighted to report that Val & Barry Panter have agreed to take my place which will ensure that 'Rowell Heritage' continues into 2017. Please do give them your support and either send or bring to the Centre, information & photographs for inclusion in future issues.

Val & Barry can be contacted by email at:
editor@rothwellheritage.org.uk

I send my personal thanks to our sponsors & to those people who have helped me by supplying articles. Without you there would have been a lot of empty pages.

Finally, I send my very best wishes to everyone for a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Geoff Davis

**Deadline for January—February issue is:-
Monday 12th December 2016**

Please note that while we take every care to be accurate, no liability will be accepted should any of the contents of this magazine be incorrect.

'Hi' to all members of the Rothwell Methodist Church in the fifties and sixties!

We (Max Green, Jayne Atter and Helen Chapman) are trying to organise a get-together, with lunch, for all those involved in the Methodist Church Sunday School, Youth Club or Social Hour during the fifties and sixties. Unfortunately this makes us all old codgers!! We already have a list of people interested and the plan is that we should all meet for a buffet lunch at the Rowell Methodist Chapel. The date for this will be Wed. 29th March 2017.

If you are not already on our list and are interested and would like to come, could you please email: helencox1812@gmail.com. Also if you know of anyone else who was part of our group during that time, we would appreciate it if you could pass on this information. Further details, including cost, will be circulated, nearer the time. All profits will be donated to Rothwell Methodist Church. We think it would be fantastic just to meet with everyone again.

The photo of the fancy dress pram race around Rushton and Glendon might help jog a few memories.

Best wishes,

Helen, Jayne and Max



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ROTHWELL MARKET HOUSE

by Sylvia Davis

Sir Thomas Tresham (1543-1605) leased a large part of the town from the Crown and other manors. His family home was Rushton Hall but he was also the Lord of the Manor of Rothwell. Amongst papers found at Rushton in Victorian times was one entitled '*An agreement between Sir Thomas Tresham and William Grumbold, for certaine workes at Rothwell Crosse, 2nd July 1578*'. Grumbold was an accomplished stonemason from Weldon and he was paid £62 to construct the building and incorporate the coats of arms of notable Northamptonshire families. He completed 90 shields on the exterior and also a frieze in Latin which runs around the building and explains Tresham's motive for the project. A translation is: '*This is the work of Sir Thomas Tresham, Knight. He did it for the sake of his beloved native land and county of Northampton but most of all on account of this his neighbouring town. He sought nothing but the public good and the lasting honour of his friends. He who wilfully mistakes his intentions is unworthy of such great benevolence. In the year of our Lord one thousand and sev....*' Here the inscription is either damaged or incomplete. Interestingly, the written agreement with Grumbold states that Sir Thomas was to supply '*all the stoane wyndowes that are ready wrought, stoane, lime, sand and scaffold tymber, as well as hurdles, studdes, hoddies, corde, nayles and such things needed charged to the inhabitants of Rowell*' so it wasn't entirely a free gift to the townspeople.

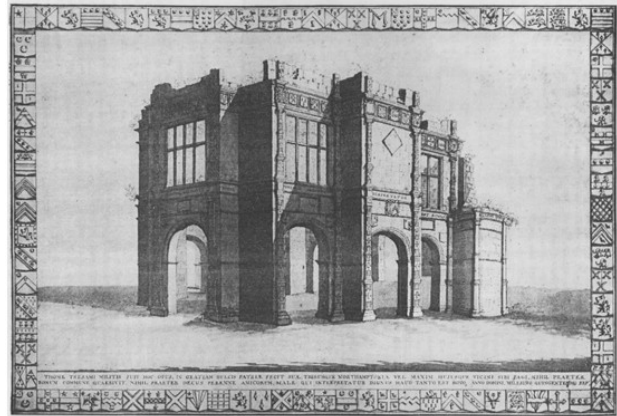
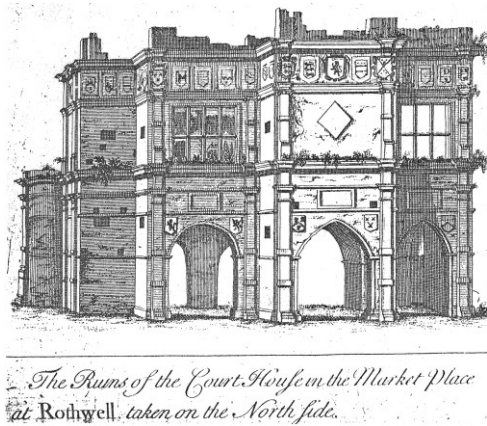
Kettering architect John Alfred Gotch who examined the drawings found at Rushton Hall, believed that the prominent 16th century architect John Thorpe probably designed the Market House and that he was also instrumental in working with Tresham on the designs of Lyveden and the Triangular Lodge. The reason Gotch gave for this theory was that the work had clearly been produced by an experienced architect rather than an enthusiastic amateur.

Alfred Chamberlain in a booklet of 1888 stated that the Market House was probably left unfinished because Tresham was persecuted for his Catholic faith and eventually faced financial ruin after being fined and imprisoned on several occasions. Chamberlain did however, draw attention to Paul Cypher's 'History of Rothwell' in which it was asserted that timbers had been laid for the upper room. A report funded by English Heritage and written by Glenn Foard and Jenny Ballinger in 2000 concluded that the building was never completed and although this view is widely held, there are some historians who feel that it might have been finished and then damaged. Lewis John Stanley in his book 'Rowell alas Rothwell' quotes a letter from Tresham to Sir Christopher Hatton in 1583 thanking him for the gift of stone from his quarry at Weldon '*for the finishing of Rothwell Crosse*' (another name for the Market House). Stanley thought that the building may have been damaged when the Tresham name was disgraced after the involvement of Thomas's son Francis in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, or after the Rushton riots of 1607. Stan White and William Franklin have also expressed their beliefs that the building must certainly have been very near completion in the 1580s which was well before Thomas Tresham's death. It does seem plausible that Tresham's dangerous personal stance as a Catholic during those turbulent times was linked with subsequent damage to his building.

William Franklin in his book 'Rothwell with Orton – A History of a Midland Market Town' wrote that Ferdinand Poulton of Desborough (1536-1618), a lawyer friend of Owen Ragsdale (1536-1591), made some interesting references when writing the latter's biography. Poulton apparently intimated that Ragsdale paid for a market house at his own expense during his lifetime. Franklin concludes that Ragsdale might well have funded the work as part of a deal with Sir Thomas Tresham involving the 'old' manor house which once stood on the site of Jesus Hospital and was given up in order to facilitate that project. The hospital was built under the terms of Owen Ragsdale's will but the house still remained because his widow continued to live in it until she died in 1602, after which it was presumably pulled down. If Owen Ragsdale had helped fund the Market House, this would explain the very prominent position of his coat of arms (pelican and 3 fleurs-de-lis) on the right-hand side of the southern entrance (the original entrance). The arms of Ferdinand Poulton are prominent on the left-hand side. It should be noted however, that other historians claim that Ragsdale was the reviver of the market and don't mention him in connection with the actual Market House. William Franklin goes on to say that at some point between 1583 and the 1700s, the roof of the Market House was lost either from decay or deliberate damage. Stone from the stair turret had also been stolen.

The Flemish artist Peter Tillemans (1684-1734) was commissioned in 1719 by the antiquary John Bridges to 'make about 500 drawings for a projected history of Northamptonshire' and some of these were later published in 'The History and Antiquities of the County of Northamptonshire' edited by Rev. Peter Whalley (1791).

Below left: Tillemans' drawing of the Market House as it was in the early 1700s. Below right: An illustration reproduced from a sepia drawing by S. Black, 1736. It is in the Beattie Collection and appeared in *The Northampton County Magazine* (published 1928-1933).



There is still no definitive answer as to whether the Market House was left unfinished or was actually completed and later damaged. Its exact history will probably always be a matter for conjecture. It was however, of very sound construction because J.A. Gotch, after careful analysis wrote '*all the details were carefully worked and the joints of the stones are so fine as to be scarcely perceptible*'. It was also noted that the building had withstood all weathers even though it had been completely roofless for centuries.

As with other market houses, the lower part had been designed to remain open with semi-circular archways and would be used by traders. The section known as the Round House, the stairwell of the circular stone staircase, was for many years used as a lock-up. Alfred Chamberlain wrote '*on occasion some 10 or 12 drunk and incapables were said to have been in this place at one time previous to being taken to Kettering for sentence*'. He added '*In the angle formed by the Round House wall may still be seen the narrow stone seat on which sat the unfortunate delinquents who for drunkenness or other misdemeanour were condemned to the disgrace of sitting for six hours in the uneasy loop-holed jail, hampered by the fetlock*'.

Some basic restoration work had been carried out in 1827 but it was in Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee year of 1887 that a movement was started, mainly at the suggestion of Frederick Barlow, to complete the Market House and convert it into a Library and Reading Room for the use of the townspeople. A Restoration Committee was formed and plans were prepared which if carried out would '*make the building into what Sir Thomas Tresham intended it should be - an ornament to the district and a benefit to the inhabitants of Rothwell*' (Alfred Chamberlain). He added '*there is every possibility that the lifetime of the greatest of British Queens will see a completion of the work commenced three hundred years ago in the reign of Elizabeth, a queen second only to Victoria in the estimation of her people and in the success of her reign*'.

Restoration work was clearly essential as can be seen from this news cutting:

THE MARKET HOUSE.—This old building, which is one of the most remarkable objects in the town, is beginning to show signs of decay. On Sunday a large portion of the masonry fell in with a great crash. No person was underneath.

Northampton Mercury 10th March 1877

It seems that another benefactor helped out with the provision of Weldon stone for the building work. This was Murray Edward Gordon Finch-Hatton, 12th Earl of Winchilsea and 7th Earl of Nottingham (1851–1898). He had a family link with Sir Christopher Hatton who had gifted the original Weldon stone to Sir Thomas Tresham.

THE MARKET HOUSE.—We are pleased to record that the Earl of Winchilsea has most generously promised the whole of the stone for the completion of the Market House, free of cost. The stone is that known as Weldon stone, and is the same kind and from the same quarries as used for the present building three hundred years ago. The secretary will be glad to hear from other gentlemen who have expressed an interest in the restoration scheme.

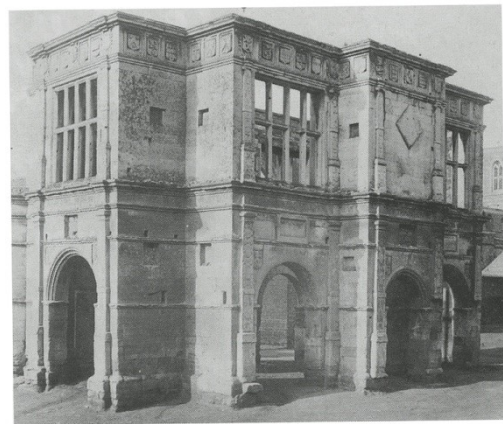
Northampton Mercury 23rd July 1887

Newspaper reports in August 1888 stated that subscription money for the Market House had been held in the Thrapston and Kettering Eland and Eland Bank which went into liquidation but fortunately it was confirmed that this wasn't so and all funds were safe in the Leicestershire Bank.

In 1894 it was announced that the restoration and completion of the Market House would go ahead under the auspices of architect J. A. Gotch and would be ready for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Previously it had been proposed that a third storey should be added but this was now disregarded because it would change the overall look of the building. Subscription money was already available to be put towards the funding, a bazaar had been held and various contributions had been received from concerts. This money was for the refurbishment and books for the library/reading room which was to be on the upper floor. The Lord of the Manor, Captain John Borlase Maunsell Tibbits, gifted the Market House and any manorial rights that he had over it. He also promised money for furnishing. Mr Gotch estimated that the cost of the structural alterations would be £700 (c. £81,200 today). Frederick Barlow was Chairman of Rothwell Urban District Council at that time so made an application to the Local Government Board for a loan to fund the building work and in the end the alterations cost £753.



Photograph from the collection of Trevor & Diana Smith



Market House before completion (c. 1890)



The original J. A. Gotch plan for a 3 storey building



A postcard that was sent in 1914

In 1895 the Market House was opened as a meeting room and office for the council. The upstairs was used as a reading room and the following year this became the public library which was so successful that in 1899 it issued 11,000 books. The news reports below illustrate the desperate need for new stock and help was received from Gladstone Street School and later from Andrew Carnegie.

URBAN COUNCIL, WEDNESDAY.—Mr. F. Barlow in the chair.—The seal of the Council was affixed to a District Rate of 3s. 4d. in the £.—The Chairman read a letter from Mr. A. F. Austin, Head Master of the Gladstone-street Board School, as follows:—“On behalf of the Henry Potbury Memorial Committee, he had pleasure in asking the Council to accept the first instalment of 108 books for the Public Library. A fund had been raised for a testimonial to Mr. Potbury, but as he did not live to enjoy it the money had been returned by the family, and the committee thought it best to devote it in this way. The second instalment of books would be ready at Christmas.”—The Chairman proposed, Mr. Whiteman seconded, and it was unanimously resolved, that the best thanks of the Council be given for the books, which the Public Library was in sore need of. Each book bears the following inscription:—“This book, with 108 others, is presented to the Rothwell Public Library, in memory of Henry Potbury, who was assistant master for 7½ years at the Gladstone-street Board Schools, and served through the South African War as a trooper in the Imperial Yeomanry. He entered into rest at his home at Whimble, Devonshire, on May 30, 1903, aged 30 years. This memorial is a token of the high esteem in which he was always held by the parents and children of the school, and the townspeople of Rothwell. He was ever a faithful and beloved teacher, a valiant soldier, an honorable man, and an exemplary citizen. October, 1903.”

Northampton Mercury 23rd October 1903

The benevolence of Mr. Carnegie towards Kettering has filled the people of the neighbouring town of Rothwell with no little envy, intensified by the knowledge that appeals to the millionaire had proved fruitless. Now, however, it is the turn of Rothwell to rejoice. The munificent millionaire, in response to a second appeal from Mr. F. Barlow, chairman of Rothwell Council, has sent a letter to that gentleman intimating his willingness to pay £350 towards the removal of the debt on Rothwell public library if the remaining £219 is raised by voluntary effort. The offer was considered at a special meeting of the Council on Friday, and a telegram was dispatched to Mr. Carnegie thanking him for his offer and assuring him that energetic endeavours would be made at once to raise the remainder.

Northampton Mercury 8th July 1904

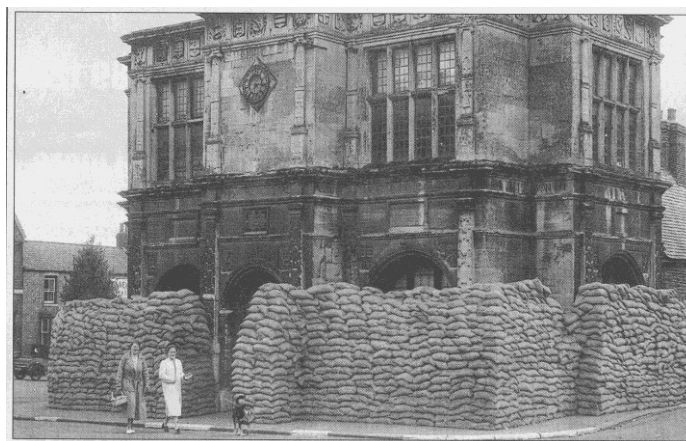
The Urban District Council remained in the building until it acquired the Manor House from Lady Cullen in 1936. The library remained there until moving to its current premises in 1986. Rothwell Preservation Trust (formed 1985) is responsible for overseeing the Market House and it initiated much needed repair work in the 1980s. There was an official visit by the Duke of Gloucester in 1989. The town council now holds its meetings in the upstairs room and there is currently a charity shop on the ground floor.

Below left: an account of the library's opening. Below right: the Market House during the war when it was used by the Air Raid Precaution wardens and the St. John Ambulance Brigade.

A COUNCIL'S ANCIENT MEETING PLACE. THREE HUNDRED YEARS IN BUILDING.

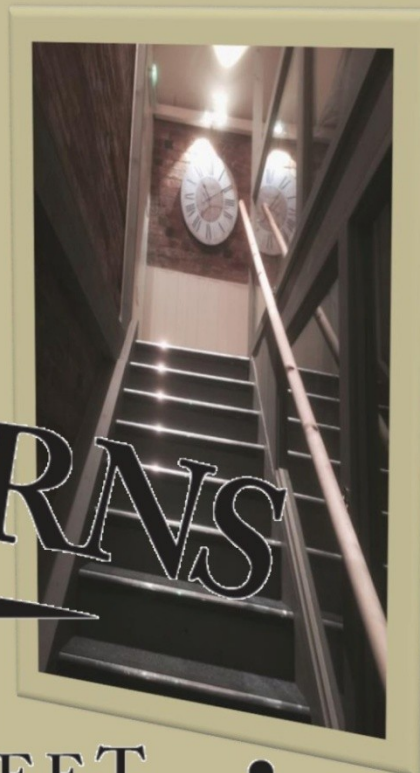
There was formally opened yesterday, at Rothwell, in Northamptonshire a free library, reading-room, and district council offices in a building the erection of which was commenced more than 300 years ago, and was not completed until this week. The original builder was Sir Thomas Tresham, appointed by Queen Mary the last Prior of the re-erected Order of Knights, Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem. Sir Thomas, who was several times incarcerated for his adherence to Romanism, built the extraordinary Triangular Lodge at Rushton, near Rothwell, to typify in every detail—shape, ornaments, fenestration, measurements, and inscriptions—the threeness of the godhead. Near by, at Lyveden, he commenced a magnificent mansion designed to illustrate in its architectural features, within and without, the Passion of the Cross. This was never finished, and is now a ruin. The Rothwell erection was intended for a market-place on the ground-floor and an assembly-hall above. The building, however, never reached the roof. The floors disappeared years ago, and for 300 years the place has been simply the playroom of the children, save that for some time the circular stone staircase was used as the local lock-up. The architecture is not good, but the stone and the workmanship are excellent. In the lower frieze is a long Latin inscription running entirely round the building, stating that Sir Thomas Tresham erected it as a tribute to his sweet (“dulcis”) fatherland and county of Northampton in 157—, “millesimo quingentesimo sep—.” On the upper frieze are ninety shields bearing the arms, mostly in excellent preservation, of the chief Northamptonshire families of the day. Captain Tibbitts, the lord of the manor, transferred his manorial rights in the site and building to the council, who have spent nearly £1,000 in transforming it into a library and public reading room.

Pall Mall Gazette 20th March 1896



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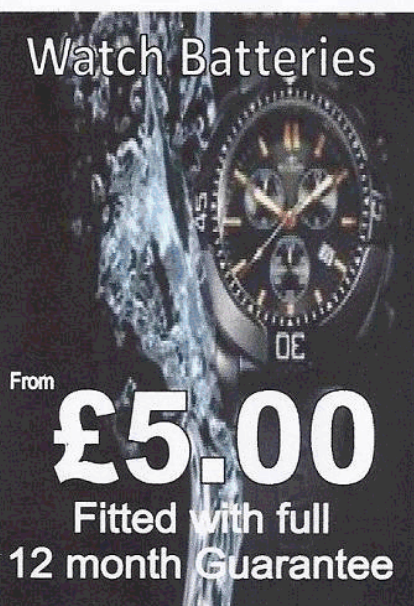
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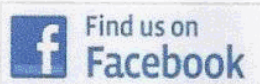
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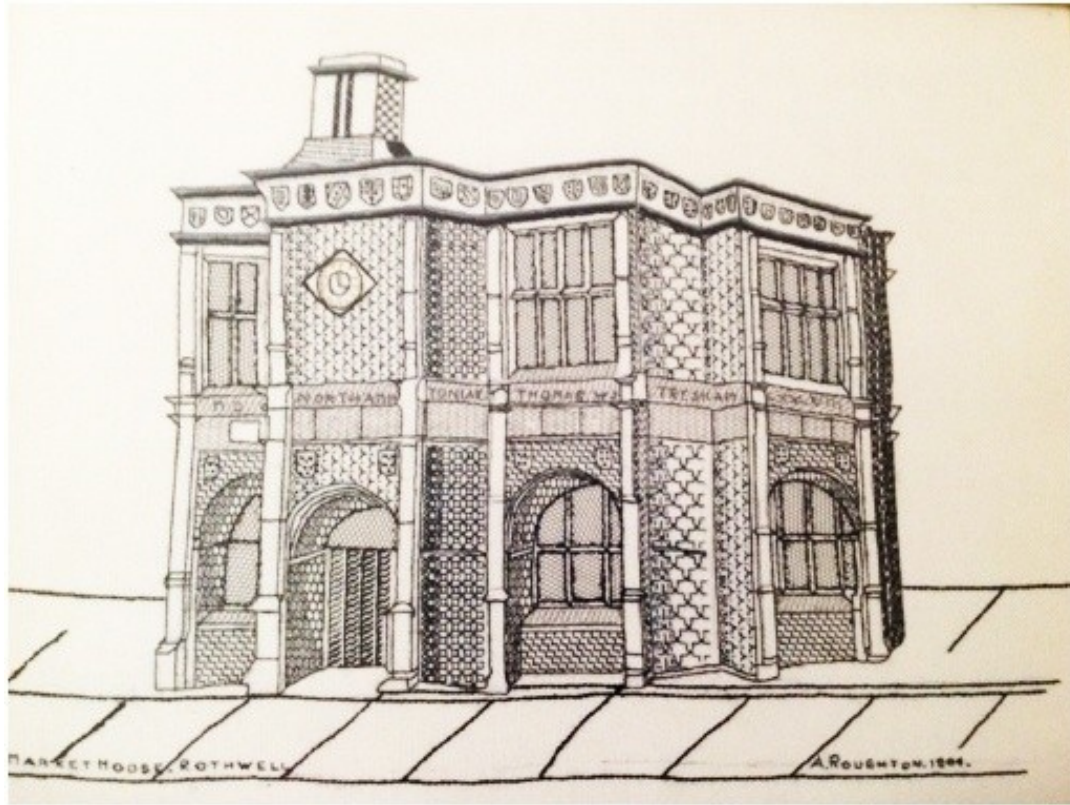
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THE NEEDLECRAFT OF ADA ROUGHTON

by Helen Brown (nee Chapman)

The two photos here show the beautiful, intricate needlecraft of my late aunt, Miss Ada Roughton. She attended embroidery and needlecraft sessions which were run by the late Mrs. Eva Dainty who lived in Ragsdale Street. Eva Dainty was a very talented and artistic embroiderer, and after my aunt retired from work, she attended Mrs. Dainty's weekly classes. My aunt's black on white, embroidered depiction of Triangular Lodge and The Market House are, in my opinion, very impressive. Mrs. Dainty was instrumental in setting up the twinning between Rothwell and Droue. Photograph by kind permission of Mrs. Christine Holt (nee Page).



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50 GLORIOUS YEARS OF THE ROTHWELL LADIES THURSDAY CLUB

On 15 September 2016 the Thursday Club gathered in the Methodist Church Hall to celebrate 50 years of meeting together since 15 September 1966. Fifteen members were present at that first meeting and there were still four founder members at this celebration. These were Ann Joyce, Sandra Marlow, Margaret Read and Eileen Joyce. We were also pleased to welcome our Member of Parliament, Philip Hollobone, and the Deputy Mayor of Rothwell Council, Clive Cross. Everyone enjoyed a delicious buffet provided by Rowell's Rolls and a special Golden Anniversary cake baked by Margaret Read was cut by the founder members. Also, to mark the occasion, Margaret generously presented to every member a special pot of homemade jam.

During the speeches, Philip Hollobone commented that the Club could be proud of its achievements and in particular of its steadfast role in providing community support, friendship and social cohesion which sadly was now fast disappearing in towns and rural areas.

The Club meets weekly except during school holidays and enjoys a variety of events and activities, visits and speakers and has supported many charities, local and national, raising over the years more than £5,000 for good causes. Trips to local theatres, restaurants, museums, gardens, summer picnics and park walks are included and some of our best evenings have been entertainment by our own members with a hidden talent or a particular interest.

One of the reasons for the Club's success was the decision at the outset that a new committee would be elected each year so that no person could hold the same office for more than one year over a given time. This has worked well for 50 years and means there is a fresh committee with new ideas each year.

Rothwell is a very friendly place to live. We welcome our new neighbours as our town grows and hope some will join our Thursday Club, find new friends and find out what it is to be a "Rowellian" Please do come along to one of our meetings or to find out more information contact our Chairman – Margaret Read: 01536 710252 or Secretary - Janice Constable: 01536 710938



Left to right: founder members Ann Joyce, Sandra Marlow & Margaret Read.



*Left to right:
Ann Joyce, Philip Hollobone MP,
Ann Jones, Clive Cross Deputy Mayor,
Margaret Read, Sandra Marlow.*



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My First Acquaintance with Gladstone Street School in 1947 *by Joan Humphrey (nee Chapman)*

Life in the mid to late forties was hard. We were still reeling from the devastation of the war, poverty was rife and rationing was just a way of life. Another big setback was the extremely hard winter of early 1947 with people struggling to keep warm and finding enough food to feed their families.

By September 1947, as a girl of 7, there was a massive step to take that filled me with excitement and trepidation because soon I would be going to the "big school". This was Rothwell Gladstone Street Council School which was perched at the top of a steep hill. People would say to me, "Joan, you'll be learning how to do 'real writing', (joined up writing) using pen and ink. There'll be men teachers with canes"! Also I'd have to climb the steep hill, twice each day.

At that time the school was for pupils aged 7 to 15. The Junior classrooms were towards the end of the main corridor and the Headmaster's Study was about halfway down. There was a detached hall used for assemblies, singing lessons and practical subjects for the senior pupils. That's why there was a kitchen sink, cookers and sewing machines. Whilst I was in the higher classes of the Juniors, a cookery room was built alongside the hall. That meant the hall could now be used for country dancing and basic P.E. Whenever we approached or left our classroom we had to move in an orderly fashion in single file down the corridor. Anyone found messing about would be pulled into the headmaster's study or given a quick swish of the cane, on the legs! Mr Evans, the headmaster was always vigilant at such times.

My first teacher was Miss Alice Tye, a motherly lady (who also taught my Dad)! She insisted, when we practised our joined up writing, that we formed thin letters, not fat ones. It was a daily discipline we got used to. The downside was that we had to use simple dipping pens as we got more proficient. These often had crossed nibs. Reality struck when you dipped into the inkwell, bringing up hairs, old blotting paper and other debris. By now neat work was impossible! However, we persevered and were very grateful when ink monitors from higher classes filled up the inkwells.

Arithmetic was a daily ritual, beginning with the chanting of multiplication tables. Often you could hear the sing song rhythm from other classes as they did the same.

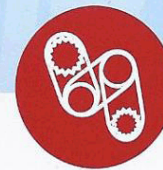
I loved the stories that Miss Tye told. One was a recent publication in those days, "The Little Grey Men" by BB. She was obviously supporting a Northamptonshire writer. I shall never forget some key words from her history lessons on the Babylonians, - the Tigris and Euphrates. Handwork was a lesson I enjoyed, making dolls house furniture out of empty matchboxes, or making a calendar backed with wallpaper.

Assembly was a daunting experience as it had to be geared to all ages from 7 to 15. We stood at the front of the hall, using C.of E. Prayers and Responses and singing traditional hymns. It was hard to follow at first, but soon we knew the responses off by heart. Miss Slarke played the piano for the hymns and following the words was challenging for a 7 year old. Playtime or morning and afternoon breaks were welcome diversions. The school day was long - 9.00am to 12 noon and 1.30pm to 4.00pm. Most children, as I did, went home for lunch but there must have been some provision for those pupils who travelled from Harrington or outlying farms. Once I was caught at about 1.35pm for being late, despite running up the steep hill. I think my Mum was a bit late with the dinner that day. With a few other pupils, I was escorted to Mr Evans' study. I was terrified and managed to say "My Mum thought the clock was fast, but it wasn't!" How frightening for a small child!

The playground was vast with plenty of space for running around but the senior girls were huddled into small groups. In the winter there was often a sheet of ice so very long slides were made by the most daring. I recollect that the Gladstone Street pavements were lethal with all the sliding that went on so elderly residents were confined to their homes. Once the whistle had gone for the end of break, there were allocated spaces for each class to line up. Then when instructed a class would lead in, marching to the teacher's cry of "Left, right, left right, left, left" and so on. This was continued down the corridor, - Mr Evans at the ready.

How different schools are today. Pupils are not confined to a wooden desk for many hours; discipline is fairer and more appropriate. The range of subjects taught is much wider and initiative is encouraged so pupils can direct their own learning. Education has certainly changed for the better in the last 70 years!

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REMARKABLE HEALTH RECORD

SLOGAN SUGGESTED FOR ROTHWELL

"Come to Rothwell and live for ever," was suggested as a slogan for the town at the monthly meeting of Rothwell Urban District Council.

It had been reported that during May there were four births and no deaths.

Mr. C. Coe said this must be a record as regarded a complete absence of deaths in a month. Such a thing had not previously happened for a great number of years.

Mr. F. C. Dempsey: We had better advertise Rothwell as a health resort where people live for ever. "Come to Rothwell and live for ever," we might say in the advertisement.

Northampton Mercury 24th June 1938

DAVENTRY TAKES UP A CHALLENGE

VERY proud is Daventry of its fame for longevity and it does not allow to pass unchallenged a similar claim by another town in the same county.

Because in Rothwell during one month there were four births and no deaths, this does not justify the town, thinks Daventry, setting up a rival claim as the place of long life.

And certainly Rothwell's adopted slogan, "Come to Rowell and live for ever," is a serious challenge to the wireless town's prestige!

"GROW YOUNG AS YOU GROW OLD" SLOGAN

DAVENTRY'S Mayor (Councillor T. E. Barnes) has picked up Rothwell's gauntlet.

The Mayor was attending a Congregational Church fete at Daventry and the chairman was Mr. J. F. Tebbutt, of Rothwell, very well-known in the Daventry area.

"There's a rivalry between Rothwell and Daventry," said Councillor Barnes, who went on to refer to the "very topical cartoon" in the "Mercury and Herald" concerning Rothwell's new found fame.

"Rothwell is trying to take our fame for longevity away from us," continued the Mayor. "We can't be behind Rothwell and if they fancy the slogan 'Come to Rowell and live for ever,' we say, 'Come to Daventry and grow young as you grow old. Here we don't have a lot of decrepit old folk. When they approach the century mark they feel fit to go on for another!'"

Northampton Mercury 15th July 1938

TOWNS FORTUNATELY FAR AWAY!

THE Mayor intimated that he was getting Rothwell's medical report to compare it with Daventry's to be presented at the next meeting of the Town Council. "That will prove, I think, that Daventry is first," was Mr. Barnes's comment.

Then Mr. Tebbutt had a word to say in reply.

"This is the first time I have met your Mayor, but he seems a very combative individual. No soon did he know I was from Rothwell than he came for me."

Probably it is as well that the two towns are at extreme ends of the county, for when honour is at stake...

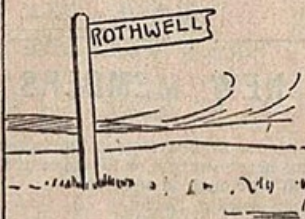
....and the response of Rothwell's Mr Tebbutt.

Northampton Mercury 15th July 1938

NEW FAME FOR NORTANTS

By "Gibbs"

ANOTHER NORTHAMPTONSHIRE TOWN CLAIMS HEALTH RESORT STATUS.



DURING MAY, ROTHWELL HAD FOUR BIRTHS, — AND NO DEATHS.



AND ROTHWELL HAS INVENTED A SLOGAN.



WHICH WILL CAUSE A STIR AT DAVENTRY.



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ROTHWELL CHURCH - The Cirencester Connection

by Muriel Watkins (nee Panther)

Not long after we moved here in 1985, my mother gave me a copy of the then newly published 'Holy Trinity Rothwell - a guide'

It was there that I discovered the Cirencester connection.

Rothwell Church was a satellite church of Cirencester Abbey in the 12th century.

As I drove back and forth to Rothwell by a whole series of different routes, I used to ponder on how these monks made their journeys. What route did they use and how long did it take? Whatever, it was a far cry from my Fosse Way M6 and A14 at a speed of an average 50 mph!

Last week our local paper came and in it was a feature about proposed celebrations for the 900th anniversary of Cirencester Abbey in 2017. I suggested to my husband who is heavily involved with Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society (Arch & Hist to us) that they could invite the satellite churches of the Abbey. In Northamptonshire, apart from Rowell, there is Brigstock and its chapel at Stanion (where my mother was born and christened in 1919). There are lots in Gloucestershire and some in Berkshire as well as properties that generated rents in London, Bristol and Wiltshire. Its tentacles stretched far and wide.

The Abbey is no more, but the Abbey Grounds are a much enjoyed place of solitude in the centre of town. Cirencester is delightful and so far comparatively unspoilt.

May I invite you to come and celebrate the 'Cirencester Connection'?

I will try to publish up-to-date information as it becomes available in this great little publication.

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A tragedy of two generations

ATTEMPTED WIFE MURDER.

SUICIDE OF THE HUSBAND.

A terrible domestic tragedy was enacted at Rothwell on Tuesday evening, a jobbing butcher, named Frederick Boone, aged about 52, making a furious attack upon his wife with a huge butcher's knife and afterwards committing suicide with the same weapon.

Rothwell, which last week was joyously celebrating its ancient Chartered fair, was thrown into a state of great excitement when the shocking news became known, and the house of the grim tragedy in Well-lane was quickly surrounded by a large and excited crowd.

Doctors, Ambulance men, and police hurried to and fro in their endeavours to keep the flickering flame of life alive in the woman, who was suffering from fearful gashes in the neck and throat. Amidst pools of blood, which was also bespattered over the walls and furniture of the humble dwelling, lay the huddled body of the attempted murderer, with a gaping wound extending right across the front of the throat. The poor woman's injuries were carefully attended to by Dr. Pitcairn, and as soon as possible she was removed to the Kettering General Hospital, where she lies in a very critical condition.

From inquiries it appears that Boone, who was a butcher by trade, had been rather peculiar in his manner for some time, and one Sunday had a succession of epileptic fits.

Not many minutes before the tragedy he was noticed standing on the Market-place with his head sunk on his chest. Subsequent events give rise to the impression that he was then planning his cold-blooded deed. He went from the Market-place to his home—one of two cottages situated about midway along Well-lane, a back thoroughfare leading from the Market-place to the Glendon road. Mrs. Boone was sitting in the house repairing a mat, and her husband walked straight through into the pantry without speaking. There was nothing unusual in the man's appearance, and being of a somewhat taciturn nature the fact of his silence did not arouse the wife's curiosity.

When he emerged from the pantry the woman glanced up and saw a large butcher's knife in her husband's hand. Instinctively she sprang from her seat, but she was too late, the unemotional man thrusting the knife deeply into her neck.

With piercing screams of "Murder" the woman ran into the yard, followed by her husband. The presence of several neighbours who were in the yard probably had a restraining effect upon the man's attack, for he left his wife bleeding profusely in the yard and returned into the house, locking the door behind him. Two neighbours named Mrs. Cox and Mrs. Chambers went to Mrs. Boone's assistance, the latter endeavouring to check the bleeding with her apron. In a minute the street was in a whirl of excitement.

Through the window of the blood bespattered room Boone could be seen hacking at his own throat with the knife, and a blood-stained steel subsequently found in the house proves that he must have sharpened the knife after his attack upon his wife.

P.C. Smith, who hurried to the scene, reached the house just as two men named Shortland and York had forced the door, found the man dead with a deep gash in his throat. Death had apparently been almost instantaneous.

Mrs. Boone is 45 years of age, and there are three daughters and one son in the family. They are most respectable people, and the greatest sympathy is extended to the children in their awful trouble.

P.C. Dunkley assisted the ambulance men to remove Mrs. Boone to the Kettering General Hospital, where she is receiving the constant attention of the medical staff. It is stated that there were some hopes of her recovering from the terrible injuries.

The inquest was held on Thursday afternoon before Mr. J. T. Parker. Evidence was given bearing out the above facts, and the jury returned a verdict of "Suicide whilst Temporarily Insane."

SHOCKING TRAGEDY AT ROTHWELL.—The town of Rothwell, near Kettering, was the scene of a shocking tragedy on Tuesday night, a butcher and drover, named Boon, cutting his wife's throat, and afterwards taking his own life by the same means. It appears that about 8.30 on Tuesday night Mrs. Boon was sitting in the house mending a hearthrug when her husband came behind her with a large butcher's knife and cut her throat from right to left. The poor woman rushed out into the street, blood pouring from the terrible wound in her throat, and fell down in the road exhausted. Assistance was quickly forthcoming, and, after the wound had been stitched up, she was conveyed to Kettering Hospital, where she lies in a precarious condition. Meantime, neighbours who went to find Boon discovered that the door was locked, and, upon looking in the window, they were horrified to see him in the act of cutting his throat with the butcher's knife. When admission was gained to the house, he was discovered in a pool of blood with his head nearly severed, and he died within a minute or two. It is stated that Boon was subject to fits, and had several severe attacks on Monday. It was a significant fact that over thirty years ago Boon's father attacked a woman with whom he was living with a hatchet, and, although she recovered, he was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude. Boon was well known at local markets, and the affair caused a great sensation throughout the district. At the inquest, on Thursday, a verdict of "Suicide during temporary insanity" was returned. The deceased, it was stated, was subject to epilepsy.

The report on the left is from the Northampton Mercury of 18th June 1909. The cutting above is from the Grantham Journal of 19th June 1909 & it mentions Boon's father who committed a similar crime in 1872...(see below). N.B. The Mercury has added an 'e' to the surname in error. The 1861 Census shows Frederick Boon with his father John & there are other records too.

The article below is from the Northampton Mercury of 6th April 1872 and summarises the hearing of the previous day.

On the following page is the Northampton Mercury news report (9th Mar 1872) of the attempted murder.

THE ATTEMPTED MURDER AT ROTHWELL.

John Boon, Rothwell, was charged with the attempted murder of Elizabeth Walters, at the same place, on March 4th. After various adjournments, rendered necessary by the critical state of the prosecutrix, resulting from the serious injuries inflicted upon her by the prisoner, this case came up for hearing late yesterday afternoon. Mrs. Walters was still in a weakly condition, and was accommodated with a chair during the period she was under examination. The prisoner appears to have entirely recovered from the wound he inflicted on his own throat, and pending the uncertainty of his victim's recovery has exhibited the utmost anxiety for her safety. It appears from the evidence adduced that Boon had formerly lived with Mr. Walters, at Rothwell, and she apparently wished to sever the connection which had existed between them. For about a fortnight they had been separated, and on the night in question he came into the house, fastened the door after him, and after some words he struck her five or six severe blows on the head with a hatchet. Then he attempted to cut his own throat, but was prevented inflicting a fatal injury by the forcible entrance of P.C. O'Hora and another constable. For many days Mrs. Walters lingered between life and death, but at length could be pronounced out of danger. She has been under the care of Mr. Moore, of Rothwell. The prisoner was committed for trial. We are compelled to give only a brief report this week.

ATTEMPTED MURDER AND SUICIDE AT ROTHWELL.

The small but interesting town of Rothwell, near Kettering, was on Monday evening the scene of a very determined attempt to murder, followed by an equally determined attempt, on the part of the would-be murderer, to commit suicide. And though the murder contemplated has not yet become a *fait accompli*, there is every probability that death must ensue from the injuries inflicted. The victim, Elizabeth Walters, is a married woman, and is, we believe, a native of Rothwell. Twelve years ago, in consequence of unhappy differences arising between herself and her husband, who was a dealer in horses, pigs, &c., they separated, and he, though it has been reported, since the commission of this crime, that he was dead, is now living at Brighton. Having a little private property of her own, sufficient to constitute a small independency, she has been enabled to live, in a pecuniary sense, in a moderate degree of comfort, up to the present time. She is now between forty and fifty years of age, and is very respectably connected. She has one son, but he is grown up, and is married. In more recent years she appears to have formed the acquaintance of a man named John Boon, and for the last three years, up to about a fortnight ago, has been cohabiting with him. Boon is about fifty years of age, is a widower, and also has a grown-up family. He has gained a livelihood as a job-gardener, being occasionally employed by gentlemen and tradesmen of the town. When not otherwise occupied he used to work at the neighbouring ironstone works, and was generally a handy man. Outwardly, at least, both parties appear to bear the reputation of well-conducted persons. At one time they were both under religious impressions, and meetings of a religious character were held in the house; and it has been stated that, desirous of reforming herself, the woman had determined to sever the connection between herself and Boon. Be the reason what it may, and it is exceedingly difficult to ascertain the actual cause of her determination, it is very clear that at the time the crime was committed it was her desire that he should not continue to live with her. On one or two occasions within the last two or three weeks she had been compelled to obtain the assistance of Police-constable O'Hoorra, of the county constabulary, and stationed at Rothwell, to eject Boon, who, notwithstanding her determination not to receive him into the house again, would persist in coming. On one of the occasions he was drunk, and made a disturbance. It was only a few days before that he had come into the house and threatened to smash her things, and she was obliged to send for her brother, Mr. Walter Austin.

On the evening of the attempted murder (Monday), Boon came into the house at about seven o'clock, and bolted the door after him. He said he had come to fetch his hatchet to take it to Mr. Hopkins's, where he was sometimes employed. He again expressed his wish to stay in the house, but she persisted in her refusal to allow him. The hatchet, which had been in the house for some time, and was of an ordinary description, was lying in the coal-place, in two pieces. He coolly fixed the head of the hatchet upon the handle, and then said he would "do" for her and himself too. She appears to have had no opportunity of resisting his murderous intention, for he at once savagely seized her by the throat with one hand, and when she struggled and attempted to alarm the neighbours, he attacked her with the hatchet striking her five or six extremely severe blows on the crown of the head apparently with the back of the hatchet. The house is situated in what is called Fiddler's End, a locality near the Glendon-road, and the neighbours appear to have heard sufficient to have almost immediately had their suspicions aroused. A crowd congregated in a very short space of time, but nothing but confused sounds could be at first heard. The window-blind was down, and there being no light in the room, it would appear that the dark deed had been fittingly associated with the darkness of the evening. The woman was heard to say, "What have you done? You have knocked my head." The reply heard was, "I have knocked your head; you ought to have been my wife." It seems that the unfortunate woman had instinctively put her hands to her head for self-protection, for she was heard to say, "Look at my hands; they are all over blood;" and he responded, "I won't meddle with you; I'll cut my own throat." During this time none of the crowd appear to have

responded, "I won't meddle with you; I'll cut my own throat." During this time none of the crowd appear to have had the presence of mind, or the courage, to break open the door, and prevent the tragedy going further than the murderous assault upon the woman; although Mrs. O'Hoorra, the wife of the constable, who lives in close neighbourhood to Mrs. Walters' house, had immediately, on discovering how matters stood, sent for her husband, who was happily in the village. There had been some foot-racing on the Kettering-road, in the immediate vicinity of Rothwell, in which the shoemakers of Kettering, Rothwell, and Desborough took great interest, so that the constable had remained in the village with a view to preventing breaches of the peace should any be likely to occur. He had also, for the day, the assistance of P.C. Stringer, of Desborough. The two constables were therefore speedily found, and forthwith proceeded to the scene of the murderous assault. They at once broke open the door, and discovered Boon sitting on the floor against the sofa, just in the act of cutting his throat. On the sofa lay the victim of his vengeance. She was sufficiently conscious to recognise the familiar face of O'Hoorra, and cried, "O, save me, save me!" The first act of the constables, however, was to strike Boon's arm, and their action was sufficiently prompt to prevent the complete carrying out of his suicidal intention. A very deep wound had, nevertheless, been inflicted, the instrument being an ordinary pruning knife, but, though the wound bled profusely, the knife had missed the large blood vessels, so that there was no serious bleeding, and immediate danger was averted. The woman, however, appeared to be on the verge of death, and directly she recognised the police-constable she became insensible for a time. Boon having been secured, O'Hoorra despatched a messenger for medical assistance, and Dr. More, who resides at Rothwell, was promptly in attendance, and did all that was possible. He found that the woman was suffering from six wounds on the crown of the head, five of them very large ones, all evidently inflicted by a hatchet, and apparently, as we have already intimated, by the back of the hatchet. Of these wounds, three are distinct fractures of the skull, two of them being of an exceedingly serious character. The marks of the man's fingers were also left on the woman's throat. She has lingered, and in the main, we hear, has preserved consciousness, but no hope is entertained of her recovery. Boon had an impression he had really inflicted a fatal wound on himself, and, saying he wished to die, would not at first submit to the wound being sewn up. He said he had got to die, and he would rather die. Dr. More ultimately prevailed upon him to have the operation performed, and on its successful completion by that gentleman, the culprit was removed to the lock-up at Kettering, where he was placed under the medical care of Mr. Dryland. The man is now going on well, and although rather sullen and silent in his demeanour on the first day, he has become more cheerful since learning that his victim was not dead.

On the same night the crime was committed, Mr. Stoker, the superintendent of the Kettering county constabulary district, proceeded to the house of Mrs. Walters, and, it being thought she was dying, at once took her statement of the facts of the case. On the following day, Tuesday, she made a formal statement in the presence of W. S. Rose, Esq., of Cransley, one of the magistrates of the division, she then believing that she was dying.

Whatever the motive for the crime, and that appears to be tolerably clear from the woman's refusal to live with Boon, and his desire that she should do so, it seems very evident that he went to the house with the deliberate intention of assaulting the woman, from the fact of his bolting the door after him, and his threatening to "do" for her and himself.

Boon, we believe, will be brought before the magistrates at the Division Petty Sessions, at Kettering, on Wednesday next, when probably only sufficient evidence will be taken to justify a remand, should the woman still be living at that period.

The trial took place at Northampton Assizes on 11th July 1872 and John Boon was sentenced to 10 years penal servitude.

Images courtesy of Findmypast.

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ROTHWELL PARISH CHURCH YOUTH CLUB 1972



Photograph by J. B. Cleaver

- Back Row:* Carol Horsley, Valerie Oram, Darryll Holloway, Sandra Mason, Gillian Dainty, Teresa Willis, Malcolm Horsley, Heather Partridge, Stella Lovell
Centre Row: Verna Armstrong, Rona Eagle, Stephen Dainty, Alan Taylor, John Dainty, Alan World, Ian Lewis, Richard Haynes, Jennifer Jones, Keith Panter
Front Row: Helen Willock, Ellen Barratt, Rosemary Chamberlain, Miss E. Cobley (Leader), Rev. J. C. Cocks (Chairman), Christine Haynes, Kay Willis, Linda Woolmer

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