

# Rowell Heritage

Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre



No: 27 November - December 2018 £2

Dear Readers

Welcome to the winter edition of Rowell Heritage magazine.

Sadly for us, this is our last publication as we are standing down as editors at the end of the year. The magazine will continue though, with a new editor at the helm. Stuart Everitt is taking over from us and with a background in printing and publishing, he will bring so much more to the design of the magazine and we are really excited about seeing it in a new format. In fact you'll see a couple of articles in this edition which Stuart has arranged for us.

We start on a celebratory note with an article about a Rothwell couple celebrating 65 years of marriage. Then we have an article about a local girl who has recently made a name for herself because of scones, a spooky tale written by Ann Jones, of our regular contributors and two more from Stan White.

There are a few historical pieces this month and also the 5th and final part in our Pubs Past and Present series.

From January 2019 the magazine will be a slightly bigger production but will only be published quarterly. Unfortunately, as with so many things these days costs are rising and therefore there will be a slight increase in the price to £2.50 (£1.50 for Friends of the Centre).

For those of you who have an annual subscription, the cost will remain at £20 which includes postage and packaging. If you wish to subscribe, application forms are available. (See contact details below)

We hope that you will all continue to support the centre and buy your copy. We are certainly looking forward to the new style.

So finally we would like to say a very big thank you to all who have supported us over the last two years. It has been a pleasure putting the magazine together and we have both learned so much about our heritage in doing it. We will still be part of the editorial team and volunteering in the centre, so hope to see you in there.

Kind regards to you all

*Val & Barry*

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**Website:** [www.rothwellheritage.org.uk](http://www.rothwellheritage.org.uk)

**Deadline for submission of articles or adverts for January issue is December 7<sup>th</sup>**

***Please note that whilst every care is taken to be accurate, no liability will be accepted should any of the contents of this magazine be incorrect.***

Printing by Kettering Borough Council, Bowling Green Road, Kettering Northants



# Rothwell Couple Celebrate 65 Wedded Years



**ROY OWEN** and his wife **SHEILA** (nee Martin) were both born in Rothwell, Roy on Castle Hill and Sheila on the High Street.

They both went to school in Rothwell but met at *The Old Time Dancing Club*



which was held at the old Sunday School building (now a dental practice). Their first date was also at a dance at Brixworth Village

Hall. Sheila told me she was 17 when they first met, they were engaged at 19 and married at 21.

Roy joined the army in 1948 and they were married at Rothwell Holy Trinity on 17th September 1953. They started off married life in Gladstone Street, later moving to The Avenue and currently live on Glendon Road.

Roy and Sheila have two children Martyn and Philip - plus six grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Sheila worked at the Co-op Drapery before becoming a cook supervisor at Montsaye School, where she remained for a remarkable 23 years!

After leaving the Army Roy worked at Sargents Shoe Factory amongst others and joined Rowell Lions, but continued to love the shoe trade speaking fondly of his trips to visit shoe factories abroad.

Roy - a founder and acting member of Rowell Lions for 30 years (1982-2012) said that Rothwell was one of the finest towns in the world, everyone was helpful and no one locked their doors.

They both said how proud they were to be born in Rothwell and to have lived here all their lives, although things have changed as the town expanded and it is no longer the place it once was.



*The couple's message from the Queen*

**Happy 65th Wedding Anniversary Roy & Sheila, it was a real pleasure meeting you.** Cheryl Everett

*The original anniversary symbol lists stopped at the fifty-fifth anniversary and jumped to the seventy-fifth anniversary. The sixtieth, sixty-fifth and seventieth wedding anniversaries were not included on these original lists.*

*When Queen Victoria celebrated her Sixtieth Jubilee (or Diamond Jubilee), the sixtieth anniversary was included for the first time on the anniversary gift lists. After that many anniversary gift lists also added the sixtieth and seventieth anniversaries. The sixty-fifth anniversary was not included until*

*recently when the sapphire became associated with the sixty-fifth anniversary.*

*Sapphire means blue in Greek. The blue sapphire is often called the gem of the sky and it comes in many shades of blue. In ancient time it was believed that the earth was embedded in a big blue sapphire and that was why the sky was blue. Prince Philip gave a blue sapphire to Queen Elizabeth as an engagement ring and later Prince Charles gave that same blue sapphire to Lady Diana as an engagement ring.*





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# *In Search of the Perfect Scone*

As winter and Christmas approach, cream teas may not be foremost in your mind but for Rothwell born Sarah Merker (nee Clelland) they often are. For what started as a hobby has now become a passion.

It all started when Sarah joined the National Trust on a visit to Chartwell in Kent (the home of Winston Churchill). Four years later she realised that all the time she was visiting the National Trust properties she was thinking about the tea rooms and cakes rather than really learning about the places and their history. So she decided to write things down and started a blog - [www.nationaltrustscones.com](http://www.nationaltrustscones.com)

In the blog, which is both factual and amusing, she records the details of her visits. She writes about the history of the properties and the often quirky stories associated with them. She also writes about the tea rooms and their scones. At the end she gives a personal rating for both.

The National Trust contacted Sara and asked if they could use the content of her blog to create the Book of Scones.

The book contains not only the historical information about 50 of the sites but also the recipes for the scones she sampled at each one. These include more traditional ones like fruit and cheese and also the more unusual ones with chocolate, Stilton and cranberry and beetroot. There is even a recipe for Singin' Hinnies and Wet Nelly Scones. (You'll have to look those up now). I never knew there were so many.

The book is now on its 7th reprint so clearly many others share her passion.

To date Sarah has visited more than 171 National Trust sites but still has more than 300 to go.

National Trust properties near to us in Rothwell include Lyveden New Bield and Cannons Ashby (both with tea rooms).

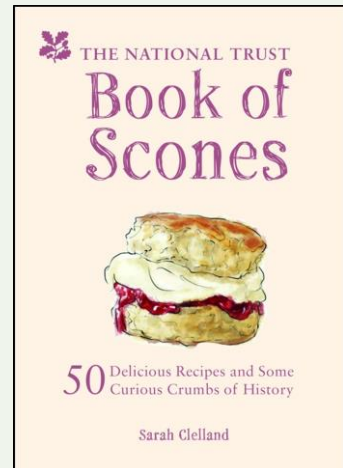
I think Barry and I will be planning some days out next year and there is a new book going on my Christmas list.

There is a Facebook Page for National Trust Scones

<https://www.facebook.com/nationaltrustscones/>

The book is available from their shops.

<https://shop.nationaltrust.org.uk/books-stationery/c218>



Sarah now and as a schoolgirl at Montsaye



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# RAHC Events & News

We'd like to start by thanking everyone who supported us in our Macmillan Coffee Mornings on September 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup>. Together we raised an amazing £411.64 for the charity and had a lot of fun doing so. It was lovely to see so many people in the centre and hope to see you all again soon.



## ***What's On Next?***

<b>Wed 21<sup>st</sup> November</b>	<b>2.00pm</b>	<b>Film Club – State of the Union (1948)</b>
<b>Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>4.30pm – late</b>	<b>Christmas Gala Night Friday</b>
<b>Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>10.00am – 1.00pm</b>	<b>Table Top Sale</b>
<b>Wed 19<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>2.00pm</b>	<b>Film Club – Whatever happened to Baby Jane (1962)</b>

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## ***INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC -***

### **Hundreds of Cases in Desborough and Rothwell**

The biggest epidemic that has ever occurred in Rothwell and Desborough in the memory of man, declared an authority, is the influenza scourge which is now rampant in those towns.

This is not a notifiable disease, so the numbers of cases are not available; but it is believed that the total runs into hundreds in each of the towns. Some, however, are of a mild type.

At Desborough about eight deaths have occurred as a result of influenza, and at Rothwell six. All the schools in those parishes have been closed.

At Desborough whole families are down with it, and it is stated that one woman was in bed with seven children.

The medical officer - Dr More and Dr Gibbons have been most energetic and hard worked in doing their utmost to stay the epidemic.

In the village of Harrington practically every house contains one or more influenza patients. The Rev. F. Dean, the vicar, cycled over to Rothwell on Monday to get extra nursing aid. It was then reported that his wife and child and maids were all ill. This (Tuesday) morning the sad news was received that Mrs Dean, wife of the esteemed Rector, had passed away.

A maid in the service of Capt. Butlin, J.P., C.C., and Mrs Butlin, of Rothwell, who was married to a soldier in August last, and belonging to Harrington, has also passed away in that parish.

**This is a children's playground song from that time:**

*I had a little bird  
Its name was Enza  
I opened the window  
And In-flu-enza.*

The 1918 flu pandemic also known as the Spanish flu was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic.

It was nicknamed 'Spanish flu' as the first reported cases were in Spain. As this was during World War I, newspapers were censored (Germany, the United States, Britain and France all had media blackouts on news that might lower morale) so although there were influenza (flu) cases elsewhere, it was the Spanish cases that hit the headlines. One of the first casualties was the King of Spain.

Although not caused by World War I, it is thought that in the UK, the virus was spread by soldiers returning home from the trenches. Soldiers were becoming ill with what was known as 'la grippe', the symptoms of which were sore throats, headaches and a loss of appetite.

Returning from Northern France at the end of the war, the troops travelled home by train. As they arrived at the railway stations, so the flu spread from the railway stations to the centre of the cities, then to the suburbs and out into the countryside.

Young adults between 20 and 30 years old were particularly affected and the disease struck and progressed quickly in these cases. Onset was devastatingly quick. Those fine and healthy at breakfast could be dead by tea-time. Within hours of feeling the first symptoms of fatigue, fever and headache, some victims would rapidly develop pneumonia and start turning blue, signalling a shortage of oxygen. They would then struggle for air until they suffocated to death.

Hospitals were overwhelmed and even medical students were drafted in to help. Doctors and nurses worked to breaking point, although there was little they could do as there were no treatments for the flu and no antibiotics to treat the pneumonia.

During the pandemic of 1918/19, over 50 million people died worldwide and a quarter of the British population were affected. The death toll was 228,000 in Britain alone.

More people died of influenza in that single year than of the Black Death Bubonic Plague (1347 to 1351).

# The Bone Crypt

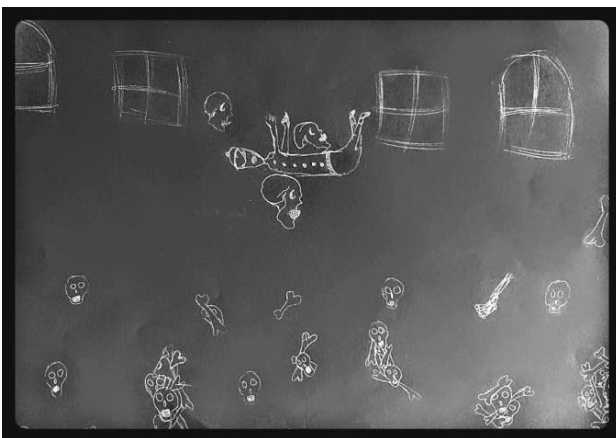
The parish church of The Holy Trinity, Rothwell dates back to the 13th century and is said to be the longest in the country. It is a huge church for such a small town and also has another unique feature - The Bone Crypt. Legend has it that the existence of the crypt was forgotten until 1700, when an unfortunate grave digger fell through the hole, he was excavating into the neglected crypt.

It is estimated that the charnel house contains the remains of unto 1500 people. At one time there was a picture of the Resurrection on the east wall but it was obliterated by time. Romantic theories that the bones were those of Danish invaders or victims of the plague, or even dead brought back the Battle of Naseby have now been rules out.

It is thought that ordinary people from as far back as the 13th century were put into the vault when the cemetery became full. Because the space was limited, only the skull and thigh bones were put into the crypt, because these were thought by the early Christians the only part of the skeleton necessary for the erection. The skull and cross bones which stared out as a religious symbol were later taken over by pirates and used on their sailing flags, finally to become a contemporary emblem of death.

In 1910 the local sexton and helpers from Rothwell stacked the bones in the crypt into two neat piles reaching from floor to ceiling. But now because of decay they have been compress into 3/4 of the space. One reason given for the decomposition of the bones is that they have been attacked by fungal growth.

*From the book Northamptonshire Ghosts and Legends by Marian Pipe. Available at Rothwell Library*



*Picture by Lola Fuller aged 10*

The Bone Crypt is open 2pm - 4pm Sundays.

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# *The Ghost of the Nunnery (Porch House)*

*Desborough Road, Rothwell by Ann Jones*

In 1956 I married Walter Jones, a true born Rowellian. We lived with his mother and father, Ada and Bill Jones at 7 Cross Street, while we saved for a home of our own. During this time I learned the family history from Ada.



Her grandmother Elizabeth Cross was born in 1854 at Porch Hose, now known as The Nunnery, in Desborough Road. She lived with her brother, mother and father. They took in lodgers at the farmhouse. The house was built in 1631 on the site of a small Augustine Nunnery. In 1849 part of the house was demolished and the convent burial ground was discovered.

In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Bishop Repingdon issued a mandate to the Prioress to re-admit an apostate nun called who had left the convent to care for the family of William Suffewyth. When William's wife died and he subsequently lived with Joan but then when he made her pregnant he turned her out. At first the Prioress refused to take her back and the Bishop cited her for disobedience so she had no choice but to re-admit her. But she made the poor girl do three years penance, confined in the nunnery in iron chains. On Wednesdays her food was bread and cheese and pulses and on Friday only bread and cheese. After her death, local legend has it that her ghost haunted the house.

During the 1850s William and Sarah took in paying guests as so many people came to Rowell Fair. One of the guests who was a stranger to the district, complained that his sleep was disturbed all night as a nun kept coming to his bedroom and stood at the foot of his bed.

Sarah and William Cross continued to live at Porch House for many years but after their children had left home they moved to live at the Chequers Inn on the Market Hill (now Tesco). The family were known locally as the Chequers Crosses.

Elizabeth, their daughter, married John Page Frisby in 1872 and had 14 children (2 boys and 12 girls). John worked at balls Foundry but died aged 47. Elizabeth lived to be 96 years old and lived in a cottage in Well Lane and in 1934 aged 80, actually owned the row of houses. Not bad for a mother of 14 who made shirts for a living.

I would visit her youngest daughter, also called Elizabeth and I once asked her if her mother saw the ghost while she lived at the Nunnery. The reply was yes but she and her brothers had always been told to keep quiet about it.



# Janet Bassett Gallery

In every edition, the Janet Bassett Gallery will endeavour to feature either an established or new artist who have exhibited in our gallery.

This time we explore the multi-disciplinary work of **Stella Benford**.

Stella has been part of our gallery for many years and we are always very proud to exhibit her work, which is of great interest to all of our visitors. Her career is rooted in the arts, having worked as a technician in pottery and crafts at Henry Gotch School followed by 20 years as resident potter at Wicksteed Park. Over the years Stella has produced many outstanding pieces which have included ceramics, metal-work, paintings and her renowned and indeed popular papier-mache buildings and figures.



“Stella’s mind must be filled with creative ideas. I’m always amazed and inspired by each new creation she brings into the gallery. I only wish that I could think of such ideas with my works, as sometimes it takes me weeks to think of concepts that come naturally to Stella. I’d like to thank you, Stella, for your commitment to our gallery and the enjoyment you bring to our viewers.” **Peter Watts, Gallery Co-ordinator.**

Upstairs at Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre, 10am — 12.30pm Mon to Sat.  
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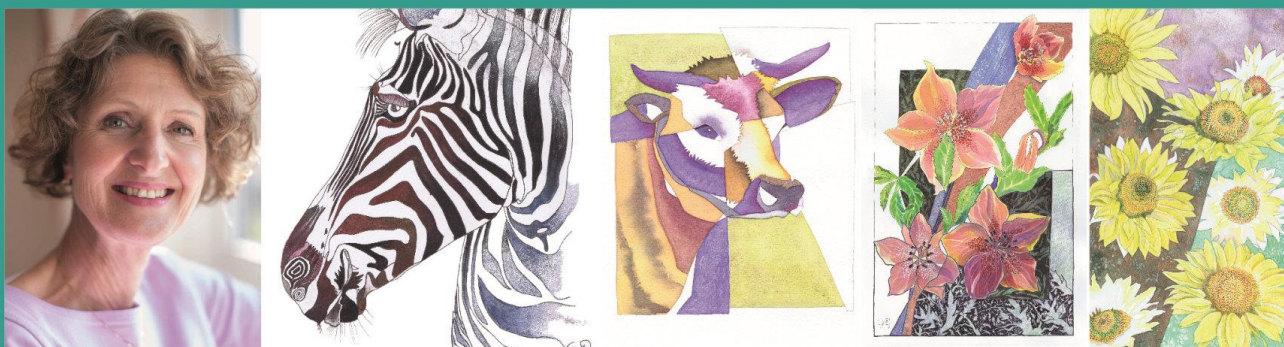


# Janet Bassett Gallery

## Monochrome vs Colour Exhibition

**Discover local art, 15th September — 1st December**

Our Autumn exhibition is well under way and has seen some brilliant new artists being showcased. One of those is the talented contemporary artist **Caroline Duffield**, who has brought beautiful colour to our walls with her vibrant water colour paintings. As we know, the water colour medium is very unforgiving – once the colour is applied to the paper it has to be right first time. The detail and craft within each piece show the obvious hours of dedication and the high level of skill involved.



### The Art Group at the Janet Bassett Gallery

Are you interested in art? Are you looking to share your enjoyment of art, develop your style, supported by fellow local artists? Join Rothwell's art group held fortnightly at the Janet Bassett Gallery, upstairs in Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre. Beginner's are welcome, right through to experienced artists. Meeting every other Monday afternoon from 2 to 4pm. Sessions are just £2, and you will get to enjoy a cuppa and the chance to meet with like-minded people. We ask that you supply your own materials. If you want more information please call Gallery Co-ordinator, Peter Watts, on 01536 711550 who will provide any information that you require.

**Find us at Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre**



# Newmans of Rothwell <sup>Est 1922</sup>

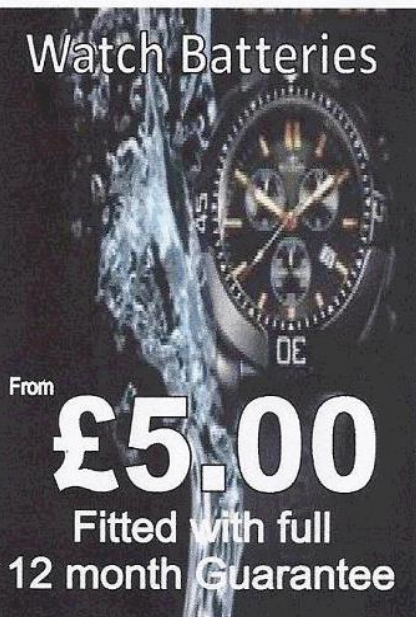
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Recently, one of regular contributors Stan White, sent us this lovely note and photograph along with some more information about Rothwell Camera Club. Here's what he told us...

Regarding the photograph of the Rothwell Camera Club (more often called Rowell Photo Club) outing to the Cotswolds in the 1930's – Keith Vincent has certainly given the photo a remarkable restoration which must be about as good as the original print when new.

The Rothwell Camera club/Photo Club did not become Desborough and Rothwell Photographic Society until the 1960's when the Rothwell Club ended. This was due to the secretary Bill Dyke being unable to continue as he grew older. With others not willing to take on the position, the Desborough club invited Rowell enthusiasts to join them.

Bert Dyke moved to Bedford to be with relatives but every Friday morning he would phone Derek Taylor at the shoe factory, for a chat about the old days. Derek never joined the moved to Desborough. He said "Desborough is a foreign country to me".

Certainly Frank Marlow used to go to the Desborough meetings, as did Keith Vincent's dad.

Derek Taylor & Valerie.

ENCLOSED IS MY UP DATE ON THE 1930s PHOTO CLUB WITH FRED BUCKLEY AND HIS BUS.

YOUR FRONT COVERS TO THE MAGAZINE ARE EXCELLENT WITH LOTS OF COLOUR. THE PRESENT ONE FOR SEPT/OCT CAPTURES THE SEASON IT COVERS IN ITS ABSTRACT WAY. I LIKE IT A LOT.

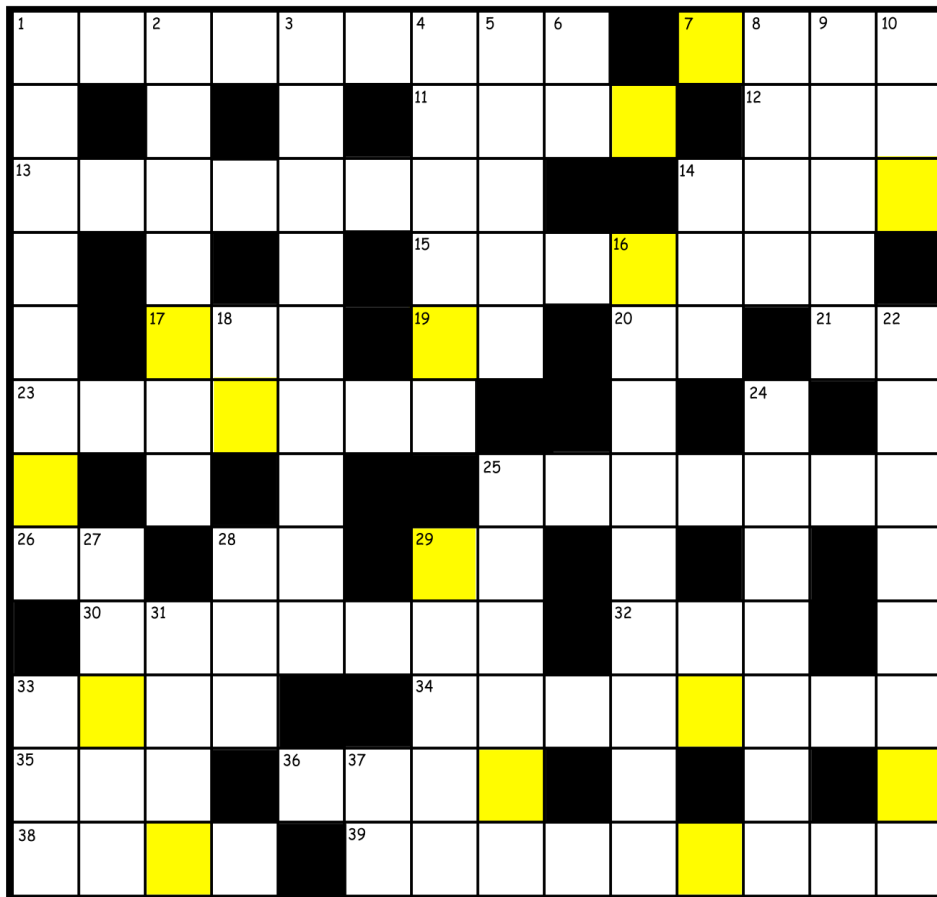
ENCLOSING A PHOTO I TOOK IN THE COLD WINTER OF 1963. I WAS THEN WORKING ON THE TESTING OF OXFORD PRODUCTS WELDERS WHEN THEY WERE STILL AT THE 'NEW INN'. SOON AFTER THEY MOVED TO MARKET HILL. THIS SCENE USED TO CATCH MY EYE AS I WALKED TO WORK. SO I TOOK THE PHOTO.

Stan

A BIT DIFFERENT TO THE USUAL SHOTS OF ROWELL.



Left is Stan's photo.  
Chimneys of the  
Manor House



## Across

1. Christmas show (9)
7. Very rich, luxuriant (4)
11. Variety of plum (4)
12. Mineral spring (3)
13. Becoming apparent (8)
14. Medieval beverage (4)
15. Have an effect on (7)
17. Charged particle (3)
19. Musical Note (2)
20. What (2)
21. Mother (2)
23. Town facility (7)
25. Camping blaze (7)
26. Thank you (2)
28. Object, thing (2)
29. Leave; depart (2)
30. Small furry pet (7)
32. Stole, maybe (3)
33. Dog's cry of pain (4)
34. Birth of Christ (8)
35. Consume food (3)
36. Small remnant (4)
38. Speck; blemish (4)
39. Most stable (9)

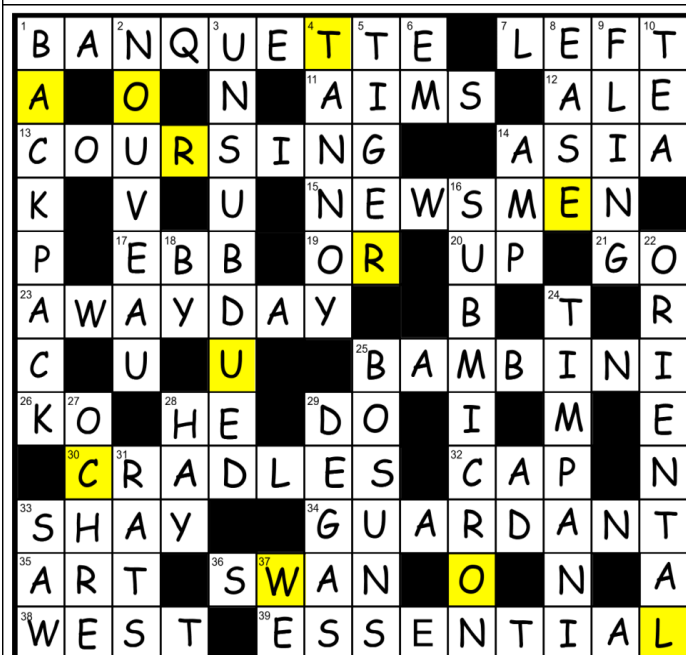
## Down

1. A game bird (8)
2. Poorer (7)
3. They play while people pray (9)
4. To turn into fire (6)
5. Fluid rock under the earth (5)
6. For example (abbr) (2)
8. Avails of (4)
9. Muscle jerk (5)
10. Possessed, once (3)
14. Not impressed (3)
16. Brought back together again (9)
18. E's lost one (2)
22. Purple gemstone (8)
24. Lemon-coloured quartz (7)
25. Blue flowering herb with hairy leaves (6)
27. Lots (1,4)
28. Mischievous sprite (3)
29. Catlike viverrine mammal (5)
31. High male voice (4)
33. An affirmative (3)
37. Coins of India (abbr) (2)

Rearrange the yellow squares to spell out the answer

Clue - My true love gave to me (4,6,5)

Answers in next issue



Answer for last issue

Water Colour



# The Five O'Clock Jubes

by Stan White

**4** P.M. and a group of boys would rush from the school in Gladstone Street, jump on our bikes and pedal to the Blue Bridge (railway) along the Glendon to Kettering road to see the various passenger trains which travelled up and down the main lines and the Manton lines from 4.45-5.15pm on weekdays. We were 'engine' spotting rather than train spotting. This all came about in the later war years of 1943/45.

In 1943, Ian Allan Ltd published the 52 page booklet called 'The ABC of L.M.S. Locomotives', which amounted to 7,575 engines in all. These were steam of course except for the six diesel railcars and one rail motor.

The Clow brothers, John and David, asked their parents to buy this booklet for them, which they did. John took it to school and in no time at all, other boys were asking their parents to buy it too. At seven shillings and sixpence, it was quite expensive in those days.

The big attraction in the listing of engines became the 191 Jubilee Class engines (Jubes) which were used for express passenger trains, because these were the ones which did most of the express work on the Blue Bridge lines.

The ultimate aim was to spot all of these 'named' engines and underline them in the book. I doubt if anyone did get them all because for one thing, the engine number 5678 *De Robeck* was never seen on those lines. Although there was a rumour that it did pass through with a train from the north one Saturday.

Some were regulars such as *Arethusa*, *Keith*, *Malta* etc. and they usually got booed because they had been noted many times.

The ABC of London, Midland and Scottish engines was also interesting for the details of all sorts of engines which



pulled passenger trains and freight, some dating back to the 1880s or earlier.

These were the war years and sometimes a big strange engine would steam past pulling a train of wartime stuff like tanks and guns. These were not L.M.S. engines and on the tender it just said 'W/D' (War department). They were built in America and sent over here to help.

Some years ago I came across a copy of the L.M.S. ABC booklet which Trevor Smith gave to John Clow for me. John was really pleased to see it again and it brought back so many memories of our wartime bike rides to Blue Bridge.

One other memory I have of that time was when five or six of us were biking home to Rowell from one of these trips. Just past Violet Lane and an army convoy of about thirty 3.5 ton lorries came roaring along a quite a speed. Like us they were heading for Rowell.

We decided to keep riding but it was a bit frightening with such a narrow road and the noise they made. It was a British Army convoy. I say that because American Army lorries were often about as they came from

Harrington. British Army Bren Gun carriers were stationed behind Rushton park wall and their metal trucks used to shatter the kerbs on the street corners in Rowell.

So many years have now passed since then (74-75) as I write this and many of the boys who went to see the Five O'clock Jubes are no longer with us.

Photo taken at Blue Bridge much later in August 1962



## Rowell's Pubs - Past and Present (part 5)

And so we come to the last part in this series and this time we start with **The Woolpack**.



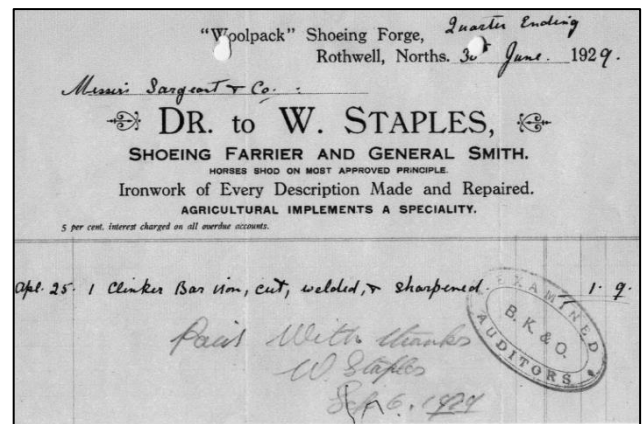
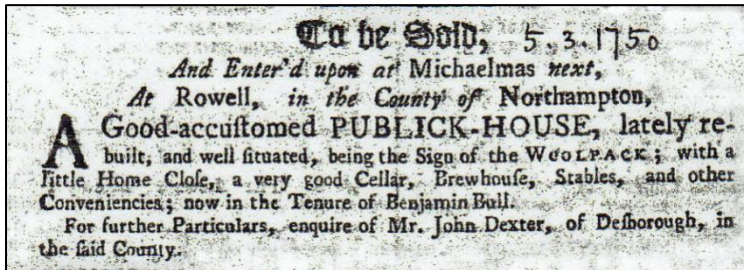
It was once a coaching Inn and situated in a good position very close to the Market Square and had until very recently stood the test of time.

The original Inn, built sideways to the street appears to be the first of a small row of three cottages which have, over the years, been incorporated into the main building.

The fact that it was a very old Inn is confirmed in the advert (shown below left) which was discovered at the Records Office. It dates from March 1750.

At the end of the row of three cottages was the blacksmith's forge and stabling for the horses.

The stables are no longer there, but the Smithy, complete with forge, has also been incorporated into the building. A copy of an invoice is shown (below right) when W Staples operated as a shoeing Farrier and General Smith in 1929.



A fairly large extension was added to the building about 1930 which reduced somewhat the size of the original wide yard in front of the cottages which had been an ideal entrance for coaches and horses.

The Smithy chimney was demolished during the years Mrs Bessie West was the landlady (1978-1982) and the room converted into a kitchen, all these changes make for a very long, narrow interior with low ceilings, nooks and crannies where some inner walls have been removed, or a doorway widened. The stable yard became a back garden, complete with flowers, a vegetable patch and at one time even had a brood of egg-laying chickens.

There is a large beer cellar under the oldest section of the Inn, with a chute leading up to the footpath outside. Before the days of modernisation the hefty wooden barrels of beer were transported by horse drawn drays and lowered down by ropes into the cellar. In more recent years the staff rolled the empty metal barrels onto a metal plate, pulled a lever and in seconds they are pushed up through the hatch and the full barrels lowered down.



It is not clear whether beer was ever brewed on the premises, or who supplied it. Mrs Bessie West stated that at some time prior to her time as landlady Phipps Brewery were the suppliers followed by Watneys Brewery and a Brewery named Courage. Latterly the inn was a Free house owned by Churchill Taverns.

Information acquired from Kelly's and other Trade Directory's, the Rothwell Census, and some valuable help from local people whose families were involved with, or were patrons of the Woolpack, have revealed a most comprehensive list of innkeepers dating from 1831, when a William Speed was the Innkeeper.

In 1849 the William Whellan & Co' History Directory Gazetteer recorded Benjamin Bull as Victualler and then from 1866 to 1877 James Burditt is recorded in the Post Office Directory as the Innkeeper.

Sarah Mawby became the innkeeper next and is recorded in the 1881 census an 1885 Directory and also Kelly's directory of 1895. From 1903 to 1905 George E. Dixon was the innkeeper.

On Tuesday 24th of October 1905 a Market Harborough firm of Auctioneers, Holloway Price and Co, were instructed to sell by auction 'The Woolpack' due to the dissolution of the partnership of Messrs J and E Flint (wine and spirit merchants of Market Harborough). The property was described as a substantial, stone built, fully licenced, old established Hotel, with yard, stabling and other out buildings situated on Market Hill. Also two stone built and thatched cottages adjoining in the occupation of Mr Smith and Mr E Willis.

The Inn was sold and from 1906 - 1910 Jesse Warren Judd was the Innkeeper. In 1914 Thomas William Dunkley was the Innkeeper. There is a gap of some years until Kelly's Directory of 1936 shows Mr Harold Sharman had become the innkeeper.

Mr Joseph Wiggins (the editor's grandfather) moved from Northampton to become landlord during the Second World War and his daughter Joan's ATS service papers show the address change from Northampton to The Woolpack. Joan married Mr William (Bill) Parker and he remembers that Joseph took over from Walter Covington. He also remembers that when he and Joan married in 1947, his father in law and other nearby licences victuallers, got together to supply beer for the wedding.

Another story from that time is of a German aircraft which crashed in the field just off the A6 (now the A14) and the body of an airman who lost his life was taken to the garage of the Woolpack to await identification. The inquest was held in the Police House before the body was laid to rest.

Over the next few years the publicans included Reg Mortimer, Mick Hyde, Cyril Damms and then Mr Jerry Hughes was the publican from 1973-1977. Mrs Bessie West was then publican from about 1978 to 1982 and according to her Mr Bill Lacey and his wife Joyce were the publicans from 1989 until 1999 when Mrs Susan Cleary took over.

Further information from Mrs West gives us an insight into the regular goings-on at the Inn. Apart from the usual pub activities like Darts and Skittles, the inn was the meeting place and included things like the meeting of the Stock-car Racing Club. Meals were not served on a regular basis but on the morning of the Rowell Fair Proclamation, enormous breakfasts were served to those very early risers. Mrs Susan Cleary carried on the tradition started serving lunches too.

Other forms of entertainment was organised which included a weekly Quiz, an "Acoustic Night" and even an annual horticultural show with the proceeds going to charitable causes.

Right: The Woolpack Skittles team in the late 1950s. From left to Right - Trevor Smith, Sammy Savage, John Sandy, David Oram and Raymond Parker.



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Just across the road from the Woolpack sits **The Blue Bell**.

Bell Inn was originally the middle cottage (possibly 2) of a row of cottages situated at the end of Bridge Street on what is now called Bell Hill. The adjoining cottages were occupied on one side by a blacksmith with the back entrance to the forge in Rushton Rd and the Police House, beside the Glendon Road.



It is thought that all the cottages were acquired to extend to the size that it is today around the year 1900. A careful study of the front of the building shows on one side faint evidence of a bricked up doorway and also on the other side, less clearly, a window has been placed across the bricked-up section. The Inn has had a number of coats of paint over the years; some blue some pink, which tended to cover up any clear markings.

Research through Trade Directories and the Census of the 1800's revealed a number of persons with the title of Innkeeper or licensed victualler who, with their families were hosts at the Bell.

1831 William Hayes  
1849 S. Shortland  
1881 Samuel Shortland with Hannah Gammage (house-keeper) and Rebecca Slow (servant)  
1885 William Ward Jesson

On the 6th July 1885 the body an 81 year old farmer Benjamin Cheaney was found murdered on the footpath leading to Kettering. His body was taken to the Police House. An Inquest was held on the 14th of July where a certain 19 year old Isaac Pinnock was indicted for his murder but was later reprieved.

Rothwell Deaths and Burial Records 1915-1946 report the deaths there of Richard Willis on the 26th June 1924 and Elizabeth Willis 28th November 1929. Kelly's Directory of 1936 shows Mr Percy Smith as the Landlord.

During the war years, 1940- 1945 Mr Freestone was the Landlord although nothing much is known about the activities at the Bell during that time. However there was a lot of friendly rivalry between the inns of Rothwell and they competed with each other in the Darts League and of course all of them welcomed the service- men who were stationed in and around the town.

In 1955 the Crown Inn which was owned by Phipps Brewery closed and a Mr Martin who was working there at the time, moved to the Bell and stayed until 1962.

He is pictured here (left) with Skittles winner Robert Voss.





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Mr Sam Oldham took over in 1962 and stayed, along with his son-in-law and family until February 1968.

He is pictured below behind the bar with regulars Florence Gibson, Horace Chambers, Robert Voss, Cliff ?, Dill Plumber and Chequer Cross in 1965. Mr Lovell of Well Lane is in the corner with a contented four legged customer.



At one time the pub was the home base of the Corinthians Football Club and the area in front of the building, now used mainly for parking cars, was the meeting place for the Salvation Army Band. For many years, every Sunday, (except during Rowell Fair) they held their hymn and prayer meetings.

Mrs Nora Field tells of the time many years ago, when her Great Grandfather played the fiddle and would entertain all who cared to join him on a patch of green grass on the opposite side of Glendon Rd to the Inn. So much fun was had that the patch of grass has forever been called Fiddlers Green.

In 1969 after Sam Oldham left, Jack Barlow and his wife Violet became tenants and they stayed until 1978.

The next 28 years saw many changes with various breweries taking possession. These included Campbell Praeds, Phipps and Watney Mann.

When the name Bell Inn was changed to the Bluebell is not clear. We do know that sometime during the late 1990s the management changed and it became renamed THE PUB. However the Brewery changed again from Unique to Enterprise and it reverted to its ancient name again.

There was a great deal of refurbishment under the management of Janice E Flynn who stayed until 2006 when she moved to the Red Lion.

In 2008 Lee Abraham and Gail Lawlor were custodians of the Bluebell and it was owned by Kelly's Taverns.

We have little information about the pub after this. Maybe you could help fill in the gaps.

***We hope you enjoyed this series of articles about our pub history. If you have any information to add or photographs to donate or loan, please call in or contact the Heritage Centre. We would love to hear from you.***

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