

Rowell Heritage

Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre



No:31

October - December 2019

£2.50

Rowell Heritage Magazine

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our fourth magazine of 2019.

In this edition we have some touching tributes to Brian Richard Messinger, who sadly passed away during this year's Rowell Fair Week ~ the event with which he will be so well remembered.

We also look back to fifty and a hundred years ago at what was happening in Rothwell ~ from the state of the townspeople's health to escaped prisoners of war.

We have the first of three "recollections" of growing up in the area ~ stories from the late Leonard Buswell, remembered and related by daughter Jean.

There are stories of family pride and tragedy, memories of when you could get everything you wanted from your local Co-op stores, war years special constables and 1930s "keep-fitters" to identify, along with the sad tale of a 19th century Rowellian "Incurable".

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and remember, if you have a story to tell or memory to share, we'd love to hear from you.

The Editorial Team

Good to hear from you ...

In your last magazine you mentioned the first moon landing and asked for memories of that day.

We were married at Rothwell Methodist Church on Saturday 19th July and on the Sunday we travelled to the Lake District for our honeymoon.

We had no television in our hotel room so bought a newspaper to read about the landing.

Although we now live in the Staffordshire Moorlands, we still enjoy keeping in touch with our "home area" through the "Rowell Heritage magazine". Thank you for sending it to us.

Christine (nee Page) and Tony Holt.

Submissions etc. to:

editor@rothwellheritage.org.uk

Deadline for submission of articles or adverts for the January ~ March issue is **December 6th, 2019**

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

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PRINTED BY:

Kettering Borough Council, Bowling Green Road,
Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 7QX

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OUR HOME DEFENDERS

The Rothwell Force of Special Constables in September 1919



Top row: Messrs. **J.T. West**, **T.F. Almond**, **H. Phillips**, **Rev. J. Arthur M. Morley** (*Vicar*),
Messrs. **Geo. Dimbleby**, **John W. Burditt**, **A. J. Norton** and Councillor **A. Gamble**.

Seated: Councillor **A. Pentelow**, Messrs. **J. H. Smith**, **A. U. Gray**, Councillor **H. Cayley**, M.A., J.P.,
Councillor **J. L. Joyce** (*vice-chairman of the Urban Council*) and **Mr J. E. Smith**.

***Below are Rothwell's Specials who served during World War 2.
It would be good to get the names of these too.
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Rowell Co-op in the Fifties

When I was a child in the early fifties, the Co-op dominated Rowell High Street. On Bell Hill there was a Co-op butcher's shop, a largish grocery store, and the Co-op bank. Opposite The Heritage Centre was the Co-op furniture store. Immediately next door, where the Indian restaurant is, was a fancy arcade, at the end of which was the Co-op Menswear Department. Next to that was the Co-op Drapery, which sold ladies' clothing upstairs and downstairs was general haberdashery and smaller items of clothing. Further along, in Bridge Street where the betting shop is now located, was the Co-op confectionery. There were also Co-op grocery shops in Nunnery Avenue and in Wales Street. A Co-op hardware shop was situated on the corner of School Lane and this shop sold metal dustbins, pudding basins, saucepans and rolls of lino. I don't remember this shop very clearly, but my sisters, Joan and Dorothy remember it well. Possibly there were more Co-op shops in Rowell, but these are the only ones which I remember.

There was also Co-op milk. Sam March was our milkman and he came round early in the morning, every day delivering the required number of pints of milk, in glass bottles, to our doorstep early every morning. Mum used to leave the clean, washed empty bottles on our doorstep for Sam to collect and for them to be reused. Mum would pay Sam with milk checks - metal tokens which she bought at the Co-op grocery store. Each check represented one pint of milk.

A Co-op van also came round the streets of Rowell in the evening, once a week, where fruit and vegetables were sold. The vegetable seller came to Crispin Street on a Friday night. The man who drove the van and sold the goods lived in Coronation Avenue but I don't remember his name. He would stop the van and ring a loud bell which caused all the customers to come out of their homes to view the produce. The large van was a wagon-type vehicle which opened at one side so that the produce could be examined easily. Mum used to only buy fruit from him, as my dad kept the family supplied with vegetables by growing his own.

Our bread was not bought from the Co-op, but was bought from an independent baker and delivered daily by Arthur Mobbs. He brought the uncut loaf to our back door and took it out of a large wicker basket. Pre-packed sliced bread did not exist then!

Most people in Rowell shopped at the Co-op. However, there were other grocery shops in Rowell: Sharman's,

situated on the corner of Fox Street, the owner lived in Crispin Street; and Austin's, located where 'Bewitched' is now, on the High Street. This shop was owned by Flo Austin (nee Culpin) and my grandma bought all of her groceries from there as she was a close friend of Flo's.

Of course there were also lots of corner shops in those days. I was often sent to Tomlinson's (on the corner of Crispin Street and Rock Hill) for a tin of beans or peas. It was much easier, in those days, to use the corner shop for tinned goods so that the overworked mums didn't have to carry such heavy items home.

It must be remembered that the Co-op was part of the Labour movement, so anyone political and right wing wouldn't shop there, so there had to be other options. The corner shops provided well for such people and usually had their own delivery girl or boy who would take groceries on their bikes to customers, thereby earning some extra cash. My sister Joan delivered groceries for Tomlinson's shop.

My mum always shopped at the Co-op. Every time she purchased an item, she gave her check number to the cashier, then the cost of all her purchases were totalled each half-year and she would receive her 'divi' (dividend) in the form of a cash sum. Her check number was 1889!!

Mum didn't shop at the Co-op butcher's though - she always bought her meat from Frank West's (now Josef's Pianos). She liked Frank and his assistant Gerald and she thought their meat was better!

I remember the Bell Hill Co-op grocery store clearly. The manager was Mr. Ginns, a stout, jovial man. The assistant manager was a younger man, John Willis or Wills. He had a daughter, Helen, who was younger than I. Warren Eagle, who lived in Crispin Street also worked here. Sometimes he was on duty at the cash desk where customers paid and gave their check number. He had a daughter, Rhona.

At one end of the shop was a counter displaying cheese, potted meat, ham, corned beef, brawn, spam and haslet. The potted

Picture: Co-op store that stood on Bell Hill.



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meat was like a meat paste with a thick layer of yellow fat on top. It was displayed in a white enamel dish and a portion would be cut out and placed on grease proof paper and weighed. Haslet was slices of a pork meat loaf - a cheap sandwich filler. Brawn was pieces of meat set in a jelly ... ugh! Revolting!

Also on this counter were two cheeses - red and white. I liked to watch the wire cutter slicing through the large block of cheese. The lady who looked after this counter, was Ruby and she lived in one of the villages - Harrington or Loddington. She was very attractive and wore fancy glasses; her eyes were heavily made up with eye shadow and eyeliner. She had dark hair fastened back in a bun. As a little girl I admired her very much and liked looking at her make-up!

On Ruby's counter, biscuits were also displayed. Biscuits did not come in packets but were loose, in large tins. Ruby would put the biscuits into a paper bag and weigh them. Mum usually had a pound or half a pound at a time.


Of course, the variety of food in those post-war days was very limited indeed. We never tasted pasta, curry, savoury rice, yogurt or exotic sauces.

The cashier at the opposite end of the shop from Ruby, had a very important job. Mum would place the items from her metal wire basket on to the cashier's counter and the cashier would add up the cost of the items in her head. I used to follow her calculations, as she would mutter the costings as she went along. So I would hear her say 'one and threepence ... two and threepence ... three and five pence halfpenny ... four shillings ... four and ten pence ... six and sixpence etc. She rarely had to use paper and pencil. That sort of mental arithmetic was not easy! The till was only used as a receptacle for money and to allow the cashier to give change. It did not add up.

Next to the Co-op grocery shop was the Co-op Bank. To reach the bank you went through a small entrance and up some stairs. On the right was the bank, and on the left was a large assembly room where film shows and meetings would be held. The bank was quite an austere place, with a highly polished counter. My mum went to the Co-op bank, twice a year to claim her 'divi'.

I don't remember the Co-op furniture shop too well, but I remember the Co-op arcade with its window displays of bolts of cloth suitable for men's suits. At the end of the arcade was the men's outfitters where suits could be made to measure. I remember my mum buying tweed cloth from here, as I desperately wanted a winter coat with a hood. Mum bought the cloth from here and had the coat made for me by Mrs. Atter, the policeman's wife, who was an excellent, highly skilled seamstress. That coat lasted for years, as when I grew too tall for it, my mum, full of ingenuity, asked Mrs. Atter to add a strip of astrakhan to the bottom of the coat and to the cuffs. In those post war years, clothing had to last.

Next door was the Co-op drapery. This was a very old fashioned shop with lots of wooden drawers full of small haberdashery items such as pins, needles, press-studs, cottons, curtain tape and elastic; and in other drawers were all different types of ladies' underwear! I have memories of lots of big knickers, enormous, unflattering bras, corsets and warm vests! Thank goodness mum never made me buy any underwear from here as it was very old fashioned!



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ROTHWELL YOUTH CLUB

meets at the Community Centre in Rothwell and new members are always welcome, as are adult volunteers.

For more information:
Email: rothwellyouthclub@gmail.com
or see our Facebook page

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I recall that mum used to buy our liberty bodices from here. These were fine fleecy bodices, which we wore over our vests until we were about six or seven. They had horrid rubber buttons that were very difficult to fasten and unfasten. I think our mums thought that these liberty bodices would stop us from getting chesty coughs. All little girls seemed to wear these in those days, but I don't think there was a similar garment for little boys.

Upstairs in the drapery, there was a large showroom displaying items of ladies clothing - unfashionable dresses, dowdy blouses etc. The manageress of this shop was Brenda Hindes, a small, bustling, energetic lady who liked to chat.

The manageress of the Co-op confectionery shop in Bridge Street, was Audrey Clark who lived on Castle Hill. Her assistant was Betty Charlton, mother of Linda and Janet, who lived in Glendon Road. After I was sixteen, whilst still at school, I worked in this shop - part-time on Saturdays - and after school in the build-up towards Christmas.

This shop sold sweets, boxes of chocolates, loaves of bread, bread rolls and all sorts of fancy cakes. It was difficult remembering the various prices of the different fancy cakes and often half-pennies were involved.

I clearly remember one Saturday, a lady came in wanting over a dozen different fancy cakes and I had to serve her. She pointed to each individual cake which I duly picked up with my tongs and placed in a box. I added up the cost of the cakes, in my head, each time she pointed to a cake. She had such a variety - eclairs, vanilla slices, meringues, fondant fancies, frangipanes, cream puffs, doughnuts, etc. As soon as she had completed her order, I stated the price. She looked at me sceptically, with eyebrows raised, turned to Audrey and said 'I'd like you to check this price'. I stood to one side with my fingers crossed as Audrey added up the cost of the cakes. Phew! I was so relieved when her total matched mine.

Shopping today is so different from how it was in the fifties. The Co-op no longer dominates small towns. Shopping is far more impersonal because of self-service - food is pre-packed, enabling customers to help themselves; the choice of products now is vast, unlike years ago when food from faraway places had not been tasted or even heard of; bulk buying is now commonplace as people have refrigerators and freezers to store and preserve food; supermarkets are huge - quite mesmerising - such a contrast to the small shops which we used all those years ago; cars and transport have made access to large shops much easier for everyone; payment can be made by a plastic card and if paying with cash, the till even states the amount of change necessary!

It's easy for me to reflect nostalgically on all those Co-ops and small shops which were part of my childhood, but most people in the fifties were quite poor and children had to eat the plain fare which was put in front of them, unlike today's generation who are so fortunate to have such choice.

I am sure there are other readers who will have memories of Rowell Co-op stores. Also some of my recollections may not be accurate. It would be nice to read other Rowellians' descriptions of the various Co-ops and shops that dominated our town in the fifties.

... and we at the Heritage Centre would love to hear your stories about Rowell's former shops too. Feel free to drop in the centre and chat to one of our volunteers about your memories, or contact us via the details on the inside front page.

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Rothwell Health & Welfare Report 1969

 ne of our volunteers recently discovered a wealth of information about health and welfare in Rothwell fifty years ago. These are extracts from the Annual Report of the Medical Officer for Health for 1969.

The full report can be viewed on line at
<https://wellcomelibrary.org/item/b3004389x>

The Urban District Council of Rothwell

Chairman of the Council:

F. T. LEE, ESQ.

Vice Chairman:

R. R. WILLOCK, ESQ.

Public Health Committee:

C. W. CROSS, ESQ., *Chairman*

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F. T. LEE, ESQ.

R. G. BUCKBY, ESQ.

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W. J. COSBY, ESQ.

R. R. WILLOCK, ESQ.

Clerk of the Council:

D. R. KERRY, ESQ.

GENERAL STATISTICS OF THE AREA

Area (acres)	...	...	...	...	...	3,638
	<i>Year</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>		
Census Population	1951	2,211	2,408	4,619		
	1961	2,297	2,469	4,766		
	Increase of 147 = 3.2%					
Population (Registrar General's Estimate, mid-year 1969)	...			4,670		
Number of inhabited houses	(1951)	...	...	1,540		
	(1961)	...	...	1,724		
	(1969)	...	...	1,781		

PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOUSING ACTS

Housing - Four new dwellings were completed by the Council during the year. Eleven private houses were completed during the year.

Twelve houses were demolished during the year.

Slum Clearance - During the thirteen years 1956-1969, a total of 172 uninhabitable dwellings have been dealt with under the Housing Acts, and 127 families have been re-housed. 36 bungalows and 40 ground floor flats have been made available for Elderly and Disabled Persons.

The construction of a block of 25 dwellings for elderly persons was commenced in July, 1969 at Madams Garden. This accommodation will provide 16 single flatlets and 8 double flats together with a Warden's flat. Gas central heating will be provided and each flat will be wired to an alarm system in the Warden's quarters. An inclusive charge is made for rent, lighting, heating and cooking facilities.

SOCIAL CONDITIONS

INCLUDING CHIEF OCCUPATIONS OF THE INHABITANTS

The Chief occupations of the inhabitants are as follows: Boot and shoe manufacture, light engineering, agriculture and manufacture of agricultural implements.

The social conditions of the District are satisfactory and up to the end of the year the percentage of unemployment in the area was 1.8. The National Rate was 2.7%.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES

Ambulance Service - This is one of the services for which the County Council is responsible and is operated from Kettering Ambulance Station.

Domiciliary Services - These include District Nurses, Midwives and Health Visitors, who are all highly trained, qualified nurses on the staff of the County Medical Officer. The Home Help Service, also provided by the County Council, is proving more and more valuable in relieving people of domestic worries during periods of illness or confinement, and in helping old folks to remain in their own homes, so they can retain their treasured independence.

Child Welfare Centre - A clinic is held on the first Monday in every month at the Church Schoolroom, Market Place. A Medical Officer attends each session. In accordance with the policy of the County Health Department, a clinic which provides facilities for the teaching of parentcraft and relaxation to expectant mothers, is held on each Monday afternoon at 2 p.m. in the Health Clinic, Station Road, Desborough.

Welfare Foods, (National Dried Milk, Cod Liver Oil, Orange Juice etc.) are distributed at Messrs. Grays, (Chemist), 2 Market Place, during shop hours.

Immunisation and Vaccination - Immunisation against Diphtheria, Whooping Cough, Poliomyelitis and Tetanus and vaccination against Smallpox are free services, available either from the family doctor or at the County Child Welfare Clinics. Certain age groups of children can also be given B.C.G. vaccination to protect against Tuberculosis; this is done through the School Health Service.

A vaccine for the protection of infants against Measles is now available and, in accordance with the policy of the County Health Department, a campaign for the control of and, it is hoped, ultimate eradication of this disease, was commenced in the Autumn of 1968.

The report looks at water supply and sewerage for the town, public cleansing, tipping, salvage collection and even rodent control. It details rat baiting and rat borne infections as well as dog flea infestations.

A case report concerning the occurrence of Weil's Disease, in a young man of 28 years old, in November, 1969 was read. About 50 cases were notified in a year and of these, half were fatal. The mode of transmission was the infected urine of a rat entering a skin abrasion or cut in a human.

Dog-Flea Infestation

Sixteen school children from nine families, in Rothwell and Desborough, were found to be suffering from infestation by Dog-fleas in November. The source of the infestation was traced and I made representations to the Clerk of the Council who dealt promptly with the matter.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS 1969

Live Births				<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	...	...	...	26	33	59
Illegitimate	...	...	...	5	1	6
Totals				31	34	65

Still Births				<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Legitimate	...	...	...	2	1	3
Illegitimate	...	...	...	-	-	-
Totals				2	1	3

Deaths				<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Total</i>
Number registered all causes	42	37	79

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Recollections... by Leonard Buswell (1909-2000)

Back in 1991 I asked my father, Leonard Buswell, to write down some of his early memories. In the early 20th century he lived at 14/16 Bridge Street ~ where the Heritage Centre now stands (just two stone cottages in those days) ~ and helped his father with the family plumbing and decorating business, based in the yard at the back of the premises. In the first of these recollections he describes some of the family's holiday adventures.

[Explanatory comments in square brackets.]

JEAN BUSWELL

My first seaside holiday was when I was eight years old. There was great excitement at the prospect of going to Great Yarmouth for a week. We had to catch a train from Kettering and my father arranged for Mr Edgar Marlow to take us to the station with his horse and cart.

The great day arrived and we started off- my mother, father, my small brother and me. We got in the cart and when we got as far as the Jubilee Spring someone remembered we had forgotten to take our buckets and spades, which we had already bought. *'We must go back and get them,'* said my father. *'You will miss the train if you do,'* said Mr Marlow. *'We must go back,'* we said, and when we had collected them we started off at a spanking pace. It must have been hard on the poor horse, as we went tearing along.

When we reached the station the train was already in, and while Father got the tickets we rushed on to the platform. The guard already had his flag ready, but held up the train for a minute while we scrambled aboard. We were off on our great adventure at last. We had to change trains at Cambridge and had a three hour wait, but eventually arrived and had a good holiday.

In 1922 we arranged to go and stay with my grandfather Rickards, who had moved from Thorpe Malsor to a house near Higham on the Hill where he was the gardener at Lindley Hall. Unfortunately my brother Ray developed diphtheria and was taken to Hinckley Isolation Hospital. My grandfather's cottage was several fields from the road so they had to collect him with a horse and cart. The following week my mother also caught it and they both died within a week.

Mr Arthur Cooper brought them back in coffins in his taxi, and as a result lost some custom as people were very much afraid of catching it. They would not take the coffins in Church for the funeral and the service had to be held in the small chapel in the Cemetery, which was rather bad as they were regular churchgoers. My father never really got over the loss, and was very depressed for a long time.

After my mother's death my father could not face going along to the [Conservative] Club for a time, so in the evenings we would go for a country ride on our bikes, usually finishing up at the pub at Harrington. This was run by Mr and Mrs Cooper (Arthur Cooper's parents). They were friendly with Father, and would ask us in their private room, where Father would have a talk and one or two whiskies, and he would buy me a ginger ale and a 2d packet of biscuits, which I enjoyed. Sometimes we would go to Oakley Hay for a change, and he would bring my drink outside. In the darker nights we would go across the road [at Rothwell] to the Brotherhood Institute and play billiards.

When I was about twelve, Sarjeants had a new bus which was supposed to be very fast and alleged to have a top speed of 30mph, although the speed limit for buses was 20mph. We

decided to go to Yarmouth on it. We were supposed to start at 6am and get to Yarmouth about 1pm. We waited outside the Red Lion for the bus, and it did not arrive until about 7 o'clock. They apparently had had a puncture and they did not have a proper spare wheel, but just a blown-up inner tube.

We got started but as we entered Cambridge they had another puncture, so we sat by the river for an hour or so while they repaired it. We got as far as Newmarket and then stopped to cool the engine while we had a drink of tea or coffee. Of course I was very unwell [he suffered from travel sickness] long before we got to Yarmouth at about 5 o'clock, but soon recovered when our landlady gave me some magnesia and suggested I should lie on the sofa for a little while.

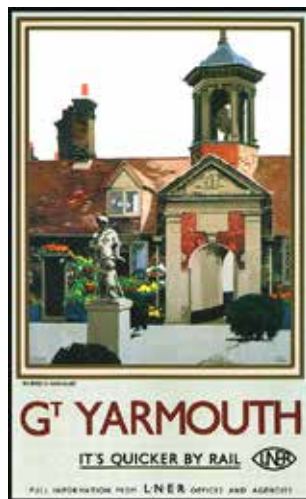
Soon after getting the car we thought we would like to go for a holiday in it, and of course that meant Yarmouth as usual. My Aunt Sally said she had been to Yarmouth nineteen times, which was quite a record, as people did not go so regularly in those days. It was Aunt Sally, Father and myself who went, and we stayed with Miss Osborne with whom Aunt Sally had become quite friendly as she had stayed with her so many times. We took a room and did our own shopping for food, and Miss Osborne cooked it for us and washed up.

At this time Jimmy Scotney (Dennis's Grandfather) kept the garage in Fox Street, now used by Coopers. Father asked him if he thought the car would get us there. He said yes he thought so. *'If you can get up Barton Hill you would be all right,'* he said, *'as there are no other big hills.'* He gave us a can of motor oil and said, *'stop half way to cool the engine and put in a quart of oil. Do the same coming back and put in some more oil.'*

The car was a touring model and if it rained you put up the hood but the person in the dickey seat was left outside in the wet. Fortunately when we went it was fine, and eventually, about seven or eight hours later, we arrived at Yarmouth. Being an open car we couldn't leave it outside, so had to find a garage where we could leave it. I remember they charged us 10s which seemed an awful lot of money, as we garaged it at Rothwell for 2s weekly.

At the end of the week we collected the car and started the journey back home. Going over a rough road the car suddenly went a bit low on one side and started bumping. No, it was not a puncture. It was fitted with leaf springs, like a cart, and one of them had snapped. In those days there were not many garages, so we crawled along as best we could until we found one. Of course, he did not have a replacement spring, but he cut a piece of solid rubber tyre which had come off a lorry, and by driving slowly we managed to get home.

In those days motoring was more of an adventure, but on reflection I wonder we dared to make the journey in that old banger. ■





Brian Richard Messinger

26TH JANUARY 1949 – 21ST JUNE 2019

Sadly, on the 21st June, Brian Richard Messinger ('Rich') died. He was well-known in the town, working with the Rowell Fair Society or driving one of his collection of vintage vehicles.

Ironically, he died during Rowell Fair Week. His funeral was held in the Edgar Newman Chapel on July 5th and lovely tributes were paid to him by a number of people. We have included those from Paul Johnson and Richard's son Tom.

TRIBUTE FROM PAUL & SUE JOHNSON

Paul grew up with Richard; they lived either side of a semi-detached house in Harrington Road and apart from close family, Richard was the person Paul knew longest. They played together, walked to school together, sang in the church choir together and always got on well. When Bonfire Night was approaching, they would spend their pocket money on fireworks, building up a collection, but it would predominately contain penny bangers which Richard and Paul would happily light and throw before they exploded. Sometimes they would place them in metal tubes as an experiment to see what happened. How they remained unscathed into adulthood Paul doesn't know.

Richard and Paul grew up in the 1950's and would spend their pocket money at Walker's toy shop. They bought Dinky toys, Matchbox toys and also caps for their six shooters to use as they played around the house. Their neighbours must have been very tolerant. They biked for miles together and usually found a brook to play in and get extremely dirty before venturing home. They built "chassis" using old pram wheels and axles and raced them at what seemed like high speed along the pavement, - crashes were frequent but again they somehow remained unscathed.

As they grew older, Richard and Paul widened their interests so didn't see as much of each other and eventually Paul moved

away with work. They met occasionally of course, but when Sue and Paul moved back to Rothwell, Richard and Val were the first to welcome them to parties to help them fit back into the community.

Richard was a great Rowellian and loved the town. Paul and he served together on the Rowell Fair Society Committee and Richard was Secretary for a number of years. Along with other committee members they arranged events in Manor Park. Richard was hard-working, popular, enthusiastic and he also became a member of the Conservation Trust and Church Parish Council. He even took on the role of Town Cryer a few times and looked resplendent in his robes.

Richard loved vintage vehicles and gathered a collection of them. Probably the most striking was the Bedford OB coach restored by Richard along with Alan Geraghty with help from Trevor East, John Holden and others. Paul and Sue joined them on many trips and had great fun especially on the Llandudno trips and the London to Brighton runs. As they drove along, Richard would often burst out with a reading of a roadside sign, done in such a way as to be extremely funny. It always made us chuckle.

Richard was a lovely man, even-tempered and full of fun and he always made the best of things. He was optimistic yet realistic. He looked for the best in people and when let down, his humorous side kicked in to turn it to fun.

TRIBUTE FROM SON TOM

Richard was a friend to people from all walks of life. His main passions were his family and friends and, of course, vintage motors.

Despite accidentally being hit over the head with a child's metal beach spade by his elder brother (stitches needed) Rich grew up to be a very normal yet wonderful human being. He was always kind, thoughtful, patient and an unfailing source of fun and laughter. He had an amazing memory and was able to recall who said what and where decades down the line. He was very intelligent, in his younger years he joined a debating society and enjoyed taking the stance of devil's advocate just to see how well he could argue the case. He was also a joker, finding delight in the everyday silliness that can be found in the mundane. He was an adventurous man who spent a month in Israel in the 70's (I still think he was a spy!) It was this Dad who once went to dinner with Alvin Stardust and was seen wearing brown velvet bell bottoms so tight even I couldn't fit in them.

Rich would enjoy telling Sam and I stories of his youth, pointing out hills he had cycled up while delivering groceries on the shop bike. He enjoyed telling stories of how his grandfather would offer a slice of elephant or ostrich to explain the joints of meat during rationing and pointing out the bend where he rolled his Mini. He also told us how he would attend an annual ball ~ I think at Olney Rugby Club. Here a couple made a beeline for Rich, clearly recognising him but he didn't recognise them. His unease grew when they asked if he was still flying his Spitfire and Tiger moth. Ever able to think on his feet, he told them that he sadly had to sell them after he lost his fortune in the Lloyds crash.

Richard had many "flights of fancy"; vintage motors such as "The Chummy", "Lea Francis", "Morris 8" and his beloved "Camilla" ~ the other love affair in his life which happens to be a 1952 Bedford coach. This was one of the few projects that reached fruition, in large part due to the hard work of Alan Geraghty ~ the other man in this unusual relationship as Camilla's co-owner, and all the other bus shed boys. Perhaps it was also due to Richard's kind and sharing nature which meant that a 29-seater coach was the completed project as it allowed him to share his passion with as many people as possible, often ferrying townsfolk to see the fireworks at the Hollowell Bonfire.

Sam and I will always remember how he had the ability to include us in his passions; being taken to see vintage car racing or huddling together in the back of the Darracq driving home on a typically cold and wet English summer's day. Another memory is of being taken to the Goodwood Festival of Speed on a school day with Rich phoning in to say we were sick. He would also include Sam and I in meals with friends, allowing us to join in the grown-up conversations.

Rich was a true home bird and had remained a loyal servant to the Rowell Fair and indeed the town itself throughout his life. Nobody will ever forget him as the Town Cryer. I feel this was the culmination of Rich's life's work to embarrass me at every opportunity (not to mention growing a handlebar moustache or dancing to 'Right Said Fred' in a spotty waistcoat).

He was an active committee member of the Rowell Fair Society for decades and was passionate about keeping the town's traditions alive. His vintage car parades were a well-loved spectacle of the fair, - any excuse to show off his wheels! Sam would help Rich with the quiet, unglamorous jobs behind the

scenes ~ putting up the infamous diversion signs, setting stalls and organising the aforementioned parade. After Sam went to university and learned how to drink, Rich actively encouraged him and his Uni friends to stay for Rowell fair, buying in extra beer and asking Val to cook them all breakfast.

His Rowell Fair Society associates look fondly on Rich as an all-rounder, friendly, polite, who could hold a conversation with anyone. He was always a generous host; something he learnt from his mother. Anyone who attended his famous Christmas parties at Rushton Road would testify to this. Rich was dearly loved by his close friends of which there were many. It speaks volumes about his kindness that many of his friendships have endured for nearly forty years.

Above all these different passions, his main love and commitment was to his family. He has been at the very centre of this particular branch of the Messinger clan from the outset. He took over from his formidable yet caring maiden aunt as the keeper of the family history and he also willingly cared for her in her twilight years.

Richard met his wife Val by chance in the Chequered Flag, Loddington, over a pint as she was refuelling after an afternoon riding. They were kindred spirits in their willingness to defy conventions, for example, finally getting married for "tax reasons" after 25 years together ~ and in Sweden of all places! Val kept the name Blow, and Richard was not fazed by this at all. They both shared a love of cars and Richard would enjoy driving Val's Lancias and Alfas. Val would encourage Richard to try new things such as French lessons and yoga. They settled in a few houses over the years but as Val's gardening aspirations grew and Rich's need for car real estate became critical, they moved to Well Lane. It was here that Richard's garage dreams peaked as he built himself a pit to work on his collection of cars.

Their loving relationship was blessed with their two boys; Sam and I. We have fond memories of our childhood, such as exploring the footings and sitting on Mark Spendlove's digger as he helped Richard with the double garage construction at Rushton Road. We recall how Rich always went the extra mile for us, whether this was taking a full-size shovel to the beach so we could build the biggest sandcastle possible, embracing playing in the sea so much that he lost 3 pairs of glasses over the years, or getting up at 6am with Sam despite being overtired from the night before.

Looking back now, Richard's love for us all meant that he would put aside his own passion for ours, such as supporting Val's gardening by creating an elaborate watering system to rival his work with the river authority. He also helped Sam create his own version of Lego Land and tolerated football for me. Rich was always there for us; supportive and kind but able to put boundaries in place with authority and humour. He was non-judgemental and knew that we would need to make the same mistakes that he did. We will always remember the support he offered when we too came home after drinking too much and played the "porcelain trombone" as he called it.

Now that we have settled down and begun to grow our own families, we try to capture our father's treasured qualities of loyalty, kindness and above all, how to be an excellent Dad. In the last few years, Rich revelled in the role of "Silly old Grandpa" and took great pride in his grandchildren. Rich was a genuine all-rounder and a real treasure of Rothwell. His smile and laughter will be greatly missed.

PRISONER

NORTHAMPTON MERCURY
Friday 10th May 1918

ESCAPED GERMANS

Captured by Lad of 17 at Broughton

About midnight on Sunday two Germans escaped from the prisoners of war internment camp near Rothwell. They were seen early on Monday morning on the road leading from Kettering to Northampton in the neighbourhood of Broughton, but though police patrols were out all over the district the whole of the day, nothing more could be seen or heard of them. They were recaptured in the evening by Thomas Gibson, the 17-year-old son of a licensed victualler living at Old. The young man was returning from Mr Steele's farm near Broughton, where he had been enjoying an hour or two's rabbit shooting. When he reached the main road he caught sight of two men walking in the direction of Northampton and who appeared to answer the description given him earlier in the day by special constables. He called out to them to halt and right about turn. They promptly did so, and he marched them into Broughton and at the Police Station there handed them over to Supt. Hooper.

WWI PRISONER

THERE IS BELIEVED to have been a **POW Working camp**, under the administration of **Pattishall POW Camp**, on **Bunkers Hill Road**, just before **Glendon** where the prisoners worked in the **ironstone quarries**.

Two POWs escaped on 8 May 1918 from the Rothwell Camp. These were Henrick Schmidt and Theodore Jaskula. They were captured the next night by Thomas Gibson aged 17 on the Kettering to Northampton Road. He had been hunting rabbits with a shotgun.

OUR GERMAN PRISONERS ... Kettering Leader

A play by German prisoners



WITH THE DISPERSAL of the huts, canteens, and equipment of the **Rothwell Prisoners' of War Camp**, the camp with its large complement of prisoners will soon be nothing more than a memory.

Unlike our own poor fellows incarcerated in Germany and Turkey, the prisoners at Rothwell were allowed a considerable degree of liberty and managed to get no small amount of interest and amusement from their life

ESCAPES!

OF WAR CAMP

He let them walk past him then turned round and said "halt, about turn" with his shotgun levelled at them. He took them to Broughton Police Station and was given a reward of £2.

According to information provided by Mr Royall, the site lay in a pasture field (National Grid Reference approx centre SP 8286 8120) on the north side of the Glendon road east of Rothwell.

This is the field that the houses on Connolly Drive back on to (on the left as you drive up Bunkers Hill).

DERBY DAILY TELEGRAPH

Wednesday 8th May 1918

BOY SCOUT CAPTURES ESCAPED HUN

Two German prisoners, who escaped from Rothwell Camp, Kettering, on Sunday night, were re-captured the next evening in a remarkable manner by Thomas Gibson, the 17-year-old son of a licensed victualler. He had been rabbit-shooting and returning along the main road between Kettering and Northampton and met two men answering the description of the escaped prisoners. He allowed them to pass, and then, swinging round, gave them the surprise of their lives by shouting, "Halt, right about turn!" The men came to a standstill, and wheeling round with military precision, found themselves facing the lad and his double-barrelled gun. "Now, get on; none of your messing," he shouted, and took up position immediately behind them. The pair deemed it the wiser course to obey, and the inhabitants of the village of Broughton were shortly afterwards astonished to see two formidable-looking German soldiers being marched by the boy to the local police station, where, after a night in the cells, they were taken back to the prisoners' camp.

3rd October 1919

Memories of the Rothwell camp

in captivity. Indeed, so enamoured did some of the men become with our English ways that they did not hesitate to express the hope they would be allowed to stay here instead of being repatriated.

The prisoners at Rothwell included some clever actors, and little plays were frequently got up for the amusement of the camp, one which we reproduce on the left.

In the camp clever acrobatic feats were frequently performed, such as the one depicted in our photograph to the right.

A clever acrobatic feat





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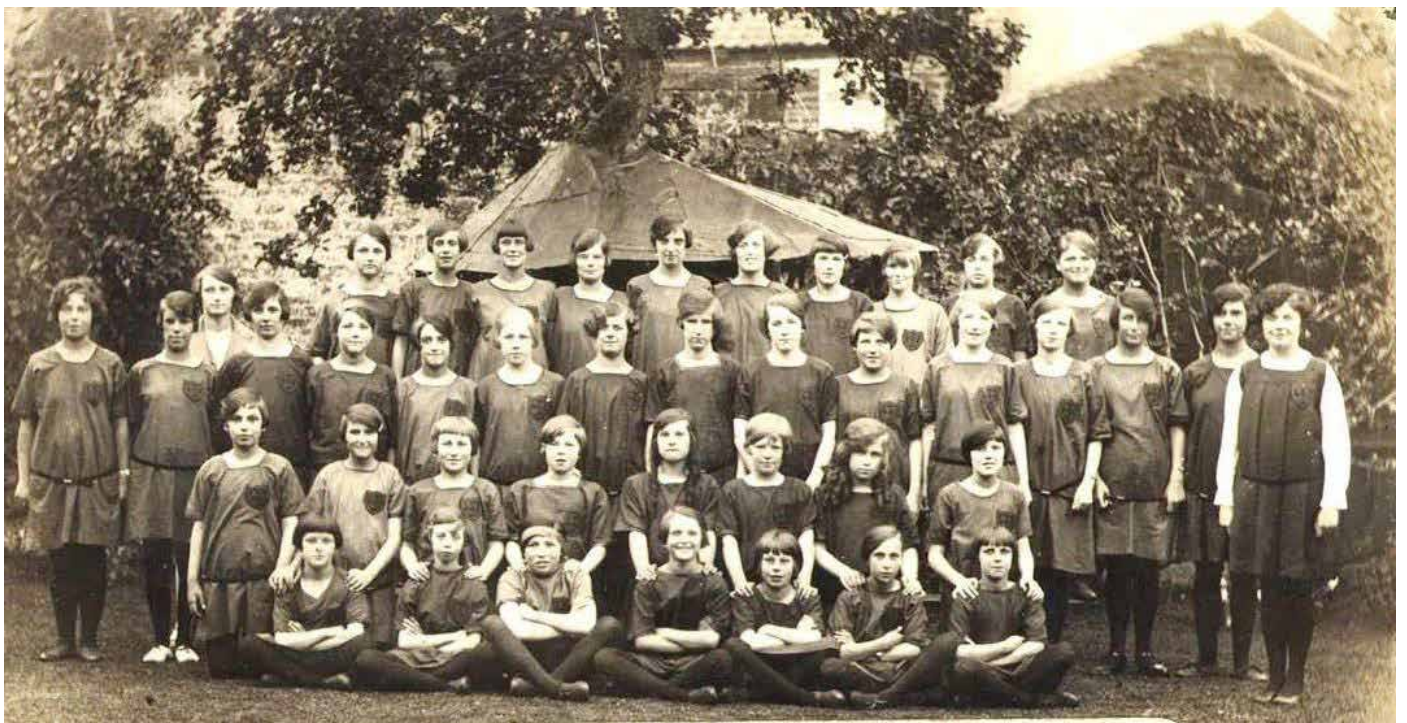
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FIT FOR TOMORROW ~ YESTERDAY

Health professionals are always reminding us of the importance of exercise and many of us do that in one form or another. Along with the usual sports, football, rugby, netball, cricket, cycling etc. there are gyms, running clubs, rambling groups, zumba classes and all manner of things to lure us away from the settee.

The photograph below was taken in the 1930's and is the Congregational Church ladies keep fit class. Do you recognise anyone?



I just love the clothes they are wearing and wonder what they would have said to today's Lycra clad enthusiasts like those of Desborough and Rothwell Running Club pictured here at East Carlton Park.

Lycra, or Spandex as it is sometimes called, is a synthetic fibre known for its exceptional elasticity and was invented in 1958 by chemist Joseph Shivers in the USA.

Did you know that "spandex" is an anagram of the word expands?





Janet Bassett Gallery

In this edition, we look at the work of **Annette E Sykes**, a new artist in the gallery. Her passions are wide and varied, the love of the sea and its wildlife have been instilled since childhood and still has an ongoing passion for ancient. Print making is her favourite genre and her latest works are embossed linocuts made on a mangle in her own studio; backed up by mixed media works on canvas. She has work in the *Victoria and Albert Museum* and is currently being represented by the *Rosso Cinabro Gallery* in Rome. Annette is a talented professional artist and her work is a joy to have in our gallery for all to see.



Featured in the **SEASONS EXHIBITION** in the small gallery are **Angela Stanbridge** and **Peter B Almond**. Angela is a botanical artist who adds a modern and abstract twist to her work that draws you to look at flowers in a new light. She has recently had work selected for the *Society of Botanical Artists* annual exhibition in London, plus 'Tidelines and Tulips' a joint exhibition with Peter in the *Rugby Art Gallery and Museum*. Peter has had a lifelong interest in nature initiated during his childhood growing up in the Wyre Valley in Lancashire and is the impulse behind this series of oil paintings.



Discover local art in our gallery upstairs at the Rothwell Arts & Heritage Centre

Janet Bassett Gallery

SEASONS EXHIBITION

5th October — early December

We are exhibiting the beautiful work of Amanda Drage, Angela Stanbridge, Peter B Almond, Stella Benford, Annette E Sykes and Anna De La Mare.

Discover the ever changing nature, excitement and beauty of the Seasons.



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Mr Barton has suffered with a hearing loss since the young age of 8 years old, so has been using hearing aids for most of his childhood and adult life. Just before Christmas he accidentally dropped his hearing aids in the toilet (we are almost all guilty of dropping objects such as mobile phones down the loo). Panicking on how he would manage to carry on through his day to day life without his hearing aids, he used some 15 years old NHS hearing aids that have been in the draw to see him through - unfortunately having no luck, continuing to struggle.

Hear4u ordered Mr Barton some Unitron Moxi Fit 600 as requested by the customer. These were received next day and Mr Barton was booked in for a home visit delivery as soon as possible.



Our fantastic audiologist arrived at Mr Barton's house prompt with all the equipment needed, including his new hearing aids! Paris professionally fitted the hearing aids and made sure Mr Barton was comfortable with the fit and settings of the aid. From the moment of the hearing aids being switched on Mr Barton said he could hear his wife talking to the dog in the kitchen. Mr Barton had not heard certain sounds for a long time, for example if people are in a different room having a conversation. He could also hear the wind and the rain on the conservatory roof again something he could not hear with his old hearing aids.



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Mr Barton was delighted he was receiving his new hearing aids in the comfort of his own home, not having to go outside of his comfort zone or worrying how he will travel to his appointment. Paris was very thorough explaining procedures and the technology of the hearing aid, for example; how the hearing aids work, plus how to change wax traps, batteries, domes and what is included in the Hear4u package. Mr Barton is over the moon with his hearing aids, how they fit, how they look - they are smaller, sleeker and better sounding compared to his old hearing aids.

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Sarah Gude and the British Home for Incurables

by JEAN BUSWELL

ON 24th August 1850 an article appeared in *Household Words*, a magazine edited by Charles Dickens, highlighting the lack of provision for chronically sick patients. In response to these concerns, the British Home for Incurables was established as a charity in 1861. One of its first patients, Sarah Gude, came from Rothwell.

In 1863 The British Orphan Asylum building in Clapham was purchased to house The British Home for Incurables. Admission was *'limited to persons over 20 years of age, except patients of the insane, idiotic and pauper classes.'*

Specifically, the Home was for *'the middle classes who had formerly lived in comfort and respectability and who had been reduced by incurable diseases to the most distressing poverty.'* For these the institution *'provides the best medical attendance, good nursing and all the comforts of home.'*

The wording seems to us patronising and dated, but these were the lucky patients who had been saved from the workhouse.

Sarah Gude was the daughter of a shoemaker, born in Rothwell in about 1822. She went into service, worked in Brighton and then in Tottenham, Middlesex.

In 1851 she was a cook for a whisky merchant at Stone Bridge, Tottenham. In 1861 she was one of three general servants working for a barrister in Tottenham Court, St. Pancras.

Just seven years later, on 3rd December 1868, Sarah became a patient in the newly-formed British Home for Incurables.

The book *The Incurables Movement: an Illustrated History of The British Home* by Gordon C. Cook lists the first hundred patients admitted to the home without giving names, but from the

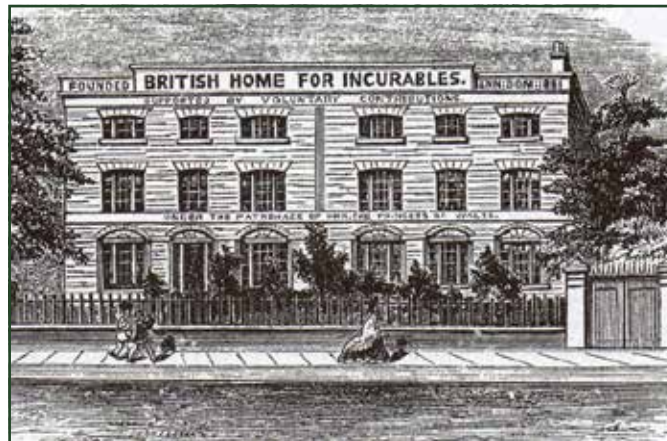
information given, Sarah can be identified as the 47-year-old admitted with a diagnosis of Paralysis. Whether this was as a result of a stroke, an injury or some neurological disease, I don't know.

Prospective patients had to be put up for election for a place in the Home. Their occupations included *music teacher, cabinet and pianoforte maker, milliner, dispenser's assistant, sub-manager iron works, governess, lady's maid, housemaid, barmaid and waitress.*

Sarah spent nearly twenty years in the British Home. Her death certificate states

that she died in 1888 at the County Lunatic Asylum, Wandsworth, of *'Senile decay, Brain disease'*, having been admitted from Wandsworth Infirmary. Did she develop dementia on top of her other infirmities?

Sarah's body was brought back to Rothwell for burial and her headstone can still be seen in the churchyard (pictured right). ■



The name 'British Home for Incurables' was later changed to the 'British Home and Hospital for Incurables'. It is now just known as 'The British Home'.



RESCUE AND REWARD

Recently one of our volunteers was sorting out some paperwork given to us by the family of the late Dr Froment and came across this interesting story.

On 11th July 1903, at around 2pm, a young lad fell into a Brickyard pond in Glendon Road, Rothwell. He was reportedly 18 feet from the side and in water 6-18 feet deep. Rothwell man George Stone dived in and managed to bring him out.

The young lad was Evan Phillips who lived in Glendon Road and his rescuer was Mr George Stone, a 35 year old shoe hand, who lived nearby. According to Dr Froment's notes, the incident was witnessed by Mr J B Jeffs of The Laurels, Rothwell, who recommended Mr Stone to the Royal Humane Society for an award.

The Humane Society held a Committee Meeting on 6th August 1903 and it was agreed that George should receive a pecuniary award. The Honorary Reward (Vellum Number 32.709) was sent to J B Jeffs on 20th August 1903.

The Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph initially reported the incident on 14th July 1903 as follows:

A Narrow Escape:- On Saturday afternoon, between one and two o'clock, a little boy aged about four years, named Evan Phillips, son of Mr. H. Phillips, of Glendon Road, was playing with other children near the brickyard pond, when he suddenly fell into probably about twelve feet of water. His companions screamed for help, and Mr. George Stone, who resides near by, and is a good swimmer, dived in and although considerable encumbered by his clothes, was successful in landing the boy, after the poor little fellow had twice been under. Mr. Stone's promptness undoubtedly saved the lad's life, and he was the recipient of hearty congratulations.

The award was then reported as follows in The Kettering Leader, Friday August 28th. 1903, page 8 under District News:

Reward:- We are pleased to learn that the application to the Royal Humane Society to recognise the efforts of Mr. G. Stone who saved a drowning lad in July last, has resulted in their certificate being granted. The "vellum" has now been received by Mr. Stone, and reads as follows:-
"At a meeting of the committee of the Royal Humane Society held at their office, 4 Trafalgar Square, on the 6th day of August, 1903 - present, Colonel Horace Montagu, Treasurer, in the chair - it was resolved unanimously that George Stone is justly entitled to the honorary testimonial of this society, inscribed on vellum, which is hereby awarded him, for having on the 11th July, 1903, gone to the rescue of E. Phillips, who was in imminent danger of drowning in a pond at Rothwell, and whose life he gallantly saved.
(Signed) Prince of Wales.
President; Horace Montagu, Chairman,
F.A.C. Cloughton, Secretary.

Our volunteers also found reference to this event and the award in a book we have at the Arts and Heritage Centre called Memorials of the Independent Chapel at Rothwell by George Streather.

On page 88 it says:

The awards of The Royal Humane Society take different forms and one award is known to have been made in Rothwell in 1903. It was an Award on Vellum with the citation: 'George Stone, shoe hand, who at great personal risk rescued a child from a brick pond at Rothwell Northamptonshire on the 11th July 1903'.

(The above report of the Kettering Leader titled A Narrow Escape, which was also reported in the Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph is then quoted).

Mr. Streather then continues;

On making enquiries, the present writer found that Testimonial had unfortunately been lost over the years. The Royal Humane Society kindly supplied the citation for use in this work. The wheel has come full

circle. The connections from Rothwell had spread far and wide and now back to their source in this instance.

The last sentence refers to his earlier reference to the Royal Humane Society, when he was referring to a Doctor Thomas Cogan, an apothecary who practised in Rothwell, who together with a fellow doctor, had 'worked up support and in 1774 founded the society which later became The Royal Humane Society, which had its particular interest in saving people from drowning, and presented awards in appropriate cases. Other forms of saving life were included at a later date'.

One of the volunteers made contact with the Assistant Secretary at the Royal Humane Society (RHS) who also happens to be editor of the Life Saving Awards Research Society Journal. He supplied us with photographs of the actual Committee Meeting Records from the RHS case books, so we are now fortunate to have these in the archives at the Arts and Heritage Centre too.

And so this article might have ended here, but our volunteers found the story so interesting they decided to research some more and see what happened to those involved.

They discovered that Mr Jeffs later moved away and became an Auctioneer in Dorset.

At the time of writing we have very little information on George Stone. In 1901 he was living at 118 Glendon Road with his wife and two sons and by 1911 he had moved to 8 Rushton Road and also had a daughter. We think he died in 1934. *Maybe you know more and can tell us.*

So what of Evan Phillips? Well there's a really sad end to his story as we discovered that he died just two years later, on 14th September 1905 aged five, from Tubercular Meningitis.

Further investigations led us to discover that he was interred in Rothwell cemetery on 18th September 1905 in grave number 453. This is situated in the first section behind the chapel, on the right hand side of the cemetery, (Loddington Road side).

Unfortunately the grave was not marked but the Bereavement Services department at Kettering Borough Council who had supplied us with this information, kindly placed a marker so that we could identify it and pay our respects.

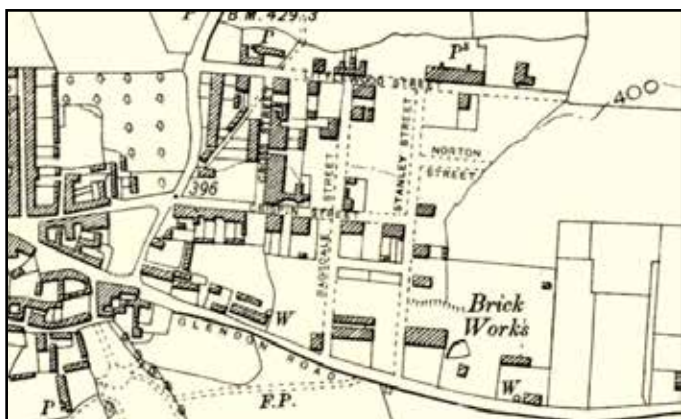
During our research we looked at the 1901 and 1911 census returns. The latter showed Harry Phillips living at 10 Bell Hill with his wife Hannah and daughter Alice. It also showed that three of their four children had died. Well we knew about Evan so what of the others?

Sadly we found a burial record for Gerald Phillips (age 2) of 96 Glendon Rd, Rothwell. This was for 11th May 1905 at Rothwell – just a few months before Evan died.

Just as you think how this poor family has suffered, another story comes to light. Sylvia Davis who was helping us with the research, remembered a story she had written about a tragedy in a family by the name of Phillips who lived on Bell Hill.

In 1915 a shocking event occurred which hit the headlines all over the country. Seventeen year old Alice accidentally shot and killed her mother with her father's hunting gun. The full story can be found in Rowell Heritage magazine number 4 from Jan/Feb 2015.

Old map showing Brickworks in Glendon Road



From The Archives ...

Northampton Mercury 20th November 1875

ROTHWELL

A SMALL RIOT

Last Friday Mr C. Palmer, butcher, of this town, having detected an assistant keeping back moneys received from customers, gave him in charge to the police. On Saturday night some friends of the young man collected in front of Mr Palmer's house, and, gathering a mob together, created a disturbance, hooting and yelling in the most disgraceful manner, and breaking the windows with stones. We understand that inquiries are being instituted in order to detect and punish the ringleaders. Mr Palmer, who is highly esteemed in the town, has the sympathy of all the respectable inhabitants.

THE CHURCHYARD

An improvement, long contemplated, has just been effected in the enclosure of the parish burying ground with a good-looking and substantial iron fence. The path leading from the Church Avenue to the Market-place is the only one that will continue to be used by pedestrians, the other, to Jesus Hospital, being fenced with the rest of the ground to be appropriated to burial purposes. The alteration is mainly due to our public-spirited townsman, William Ball, jun., who has, in company with Mr Whiteman, prosecuted active canvas of the parishioners to obtain funds to meet the expense.

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FLOAT WINS TOP PRIZE AT THIS YEAR'S CARNIVAL

Everyone at the Centre was very proud to win the prize for best float at this year's carnival. The theme was 'films' and our float was 'Oliver', organised by Cheryl Everett. Many congratulations to all who contributed to the win ~ by helping to make the float and those who donned their costumes and manned it on the day. Another great example of how the Centre helps perpetuate historical interest in the town whilst taking a lead in local events.



YOU CAN HELP US TO KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK ~ BY VOLUNTEERING AT THE CENTRE, BUYING THE MAGAZINE, PARTICIPATING IN OR ATTENDING EVENTS ~ OR JUST SIMPLY BY PAYING US A VISIT.

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ARCHIVIST MANAGER NEEDED

**OUR CURRENT ARCHIVIST MANAGER CLIFF IS LEAVING US, SO WE ARE
LOOKING FOR A REPLACEMENT.**

It is a volunteer role and we require someone to continue the challenging work of maintaining and cataloguing our large collection of heritage items and photographs etc.

If you think you might be interested in this fascinating and engrossing position please contact Cliff, who will show you around and explain the 'job' to you. Cliff is no longer working at the centre but will happily meet with you by arrangement.

If you then would like to take up the position, he will provide all necessary training, including use of the Modes Compact Database.

Please contact Cliff Ward on cliff.at.rahc@gmail.com - or leave your contact details at the Heritage Centre and he'll get back to you a.s.a.p.

Rothwell Ladies Thursday Club

Meets weekly in term-time from 8pm at
The Methodist Church, Market Square, Rothwell



2019/2020 COMMITTEE

Chairman: Janice Constable ~ 01536 710938

Secretaries: Barbara Farmer ~ 01536 711620
Janette Rowland

Treasurers: Dorothy Rudkin & Pauline Toseland
Committee: Tricia Butcher ~ Pam Hill

- 3RD OCT *Harvest Supper*
- 10TH OCT *Rural Wellbeing Service*
- 17TH OCT *Life in The Met ~ Working for the Metropolitan Police (part 2) ...* TOM MORRISSEY
- 24TH OCT *Demonstration of a
Seasonal Flower Table Decoration ~ (Plus Raffle)* MICHELLE TYLER
- 31ST OCT *Half Term*
- 7TH NOV *The Gunpowder Plot* KEITH MEREDITH
- 14TH NOV *Street Pastor ~ Who volunteers to help the young* KAREN HARRIS
- 21ST NOV *Methodist Players* ALAN JOYCE
- 28TH NOV *Barbara Talks about her time in Japan* BARBARA KNIGHT
- 5TH DEC *Talk on the Isles of Scilly* SHERALYN COE
- 12TH DEC *Christmas Evening with the Ukulele Band*



*Ann and Shirley enjoying Afternoon
Tea at Sandra's*



*Ann Joyce presenting a cheque for
£700 to Mary Hollands,
Fundraiser for Cransley Hospice*

At the time of printing, our annual subscription is £10 per year and £2 each time you attend. (Visitors £2.50) We offer a wide and diverse programme to suit all interests.

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