

CLUBS, SOCIETIES and other GROUPS.

It is probably the sign of a vibrant and healthy community that there are people willing to voluntarily give their time and energy to the organisation and running of Clubs, Societies and other Groups for the benefit of others. If this is a valid measure of a lively community then East Bridgford has certainly qualified throughout the century.

At the end of the century we can identify at least thirty voluntary organisations operating in the village. In addition there have been other organisations that have existed for varying periods during the century. Times and interests change and organisations come and go. For example the Pig Club, the Poultry Club and the Patriotic Rabbit Club would today probably have problems sustaining viable membership numbers given the paucity of Pig, Poultry and Rabbit keepers now living in the village. It is also important to recognise that in addition to the more formally organised clubs and societies the village has often had 'ad hoc' teams playing darts, skittles, tug-of-war, table tennis, whist, cribbage and dominoes.

The details of the various organisations that follow have, in the main, been provided by members of those organisations. We are indebted to them for the work they have undertaken to put down on paper the story of their Club, Society or other Group. We should also like to record, on behalf of the village, our appreciation and thanks to all the officers of all these organisations, many of whom serve their organisation for year after year, for all they have contributed to making living in East Bridgford such an enjoyable and rewarding experience.

It is also considered important to pay tribute to those responsible for the provision of the facilities used by so many other organisations. We could not sustain such a variety of activities in our community without the use of Butt Close and its facilities, the W.I. Hut, the Methodist Chapel and most importantly the Village Hall. The latter was the subject of a concise history written by Dr. Geoffrey Brooks "East Bridgford Village Hall – 100 years on" published in 1980. It is worth quoting verbatim the final sentence of this history "*It is good to think the spirit of voluntary service, started by the volunteers who built the original Hall, has been maintained in East Bridgford and is as strong now as it was then.*" As we progress through the 21st century let us hope there will be sufficient volunteers coming forward to support community activities for the enjoyment of future generations.

The order in which the organisations appear has no particular significance other than that there has been an attempt to loosely group organisations by area of activity.

The Sports Club.

The Sports Club was founded in 1985 when the old wooden pavilion on Butt Close was in need of replacement. The Bowls, Cricket and Football Clubs, through the leadership of Hugh Francis, Albert Lodder and Fred Hunt, got together to raise sufficient funds for the building of a modern brick constructed pavilion. The Tennis Club only later joined the Sports Club when the hard courts were constructed.

With the active support of many other villagers there were many fund raising activities, including Sponsored Swimming, Car Boot sales, Auction of Promises, Coffee mornings, Raffles, Millionaires nights etc. By December 1989 £21,000 had been raised and with grants from Rushcliffe Borough Council and £5,000 from Home Brewery the new pavilion was built. A Licence to the Club was obtained from the Parish Council granting use of the site and adjacent area for 20 years from 24th March 1989.



The new pavilion faces both the cricket field and, to the left, the bowling green.

The aims of the Sports Club are to maintain and run the pavilion complex and the playing fields for the benefit of the clubs using them and for the benefit of the whole community. The use of the playing fields by St. Peters School is governed by the terms of a Lease by Nottinghamshire County Council (as freeholders and Education Authority) and East Bridgford Parish Council dated 10th August 1988.

The playing facilities have continued to be well used and supported and in 2000 the Village Show was held for the first time in many years on the Playing Field and with fine weather and a large attendance the day was an outstanding success.

Cricket Club.

In the Parish Magazine of June 1991 Albert Lodder wrote *"It may not be generally known that East Bridgford Cricket Club is without doubt the oldest organisation in the village after the established Church of St Peter"*. A proud and justifiable claim as it is recorded in the Nottingham Journal of 20th August 1814 that a cricket match had been played between East Bridgford and Bingham on the previous Tuesday. The village won both innings, with familiar local names Foster, Curtis, Huskinson, Reddish, Bradwell, Wood and Whittaker in the team.

The Club holds records going back to 1894 when the subscription was 2s.6d (12.5p). The groundsman cum scorer was paid 9s.6d (47.5p) for the season and was cautioned *"His work must be done better next year"*. A player's subscription remained at 2s.6d until the outbreak of World War in 1914; by 1929 it was 6s.0d and in 1946 was raised to 7s.6d. By 1991 it had risen to £20.

The minutes of 1946 reflect on one of the issues of the period; *"Teas. It was decided that the Secretary write to Bingham Food Office for necessary permit for, Tea, Sugar and Fats. Members to ask wives and Sisters to help in the preparation of these Teas, same to be held in the Village Hall"*.



Left: The East Bridgford Cricket team in the 1920s. Right: the 1956 pavilion

Today the Cricket Club runs two teams; the Saturday team plays in the South Notts Villages League and the Sunday team is in the Newark Alliance. The teams have the use, along with other sports organisations, of the fine pavilion opened in 1989. The original cricket pavilion was erected in 1906 and was in use until 1954 when a second pavilion was built, which lasted until 1989. The first pavilion remained on Butt Close as a store until 2000 when it was demolished. An interesting discovery when the building was demolished was four large horseshoes covered with material. Presumably these belonged to the carhorse used to pull the roller over the cricket square before modern technology was introduced to East Bridgford.

Football Club.

The origins of the Football Team are regrettably lost in the mists of time. It is thought a team existed at the beginning of the twentieth century but unfortunately there are no longer any Football Club records to be found. There are photographs of teams from the 1920's and some of the older people can recall the team playing on the field that was then opposite Hunt's coalyard on Kneeton Road, in the 1930's. Fred Hunt recollects the pitch being on the opposite side of the A6097 in the first field to the right of the road to Newton in the years immediately before WW2.

At the end of the war the school headmaster, Nelson Rhodes, took a firm grip on the running and coaching of the team. Many of the players were returning servicemen who had attended the school before the war. "Mr" Rhodes, who is reputed to have played at one time for Aston Villa, only allowed players from the village in the team and in this way generated a strong team spirit. What was lacking in skill was made up for by enthusiasm and by a fierce competition for places in the team. Fred Hunt was an outstanding player for many years and is said to have taken every penalty for about ten years and never missed! It was in this period that the pitch moved to Butt Close where there is an excellent playing surface and facilities, which are amongst the best in the area.

The team has enjoyed successes over the years winning several trophies in the Notts Alliance League in the 1960's and 1970's and in 1988 were awarded the Sportsmanship Trophy



The 1948 football squad

in the Notts Amateur League. The team has been managed by amongst others Alan Bostock, Ian and Pete Lodder, Ian Pacey, Mick Pankowski and latterly Paul Taylor.

Over the years the number of players from the village has decreased steadily to the point now where almost all come from outside the village (recently there has been an American in goal). However in 2000 Paul Taylor and Mick Pankowski had consid-

erable success in starting and subsequently developing youth teams for 'under 9's' and 'under 10's' and it is hoped this will eventually result in more local players coming forward to play in the Adult team.

The following quote is genuine – *"Whatever happens we want to keep the team going. Frank Smith of the Royal Oak has maintained a high level of enthusiasm for us over many decades of football in East Bridgford and 'the Oak' has always been the training ground."*

Tennis Club.

The Tennis Club was formed following a meeting held on 29th May 1923 at the Old Hall, then the home of Dr. and Mrs Duff. Those present included the Jollands, 3 Lodders, Misses Mason, Sharp, Jesson and Wilkinson and Messrs Coville, Dexter, Rhodes and Allwood. All agreed to join the club and to each find one more member. The Club was established and is now the second oldest surviving Tennis Club in the County.

A sub-committee was formed to find a "ground" but in the meantime play commenced on private courts at the Old Hall on Wednesdays at 4.00pm, at Mr Dexter's at 4.00pm on Mondays and at the weekend at the Misses Upton's. The sub-committee managed to rent "Mr Shipman's field" below the windmill (where the grass courts are still located today) for £4.00 per annum. A contract was arranged with a local man, Mr Priestley, to lay out two courts, for £18 and to maintain them for £3.00 per annum. Netting cost £1-10s-9d (£1.54) and 12 ft long posts were provided by Mr Dexter.

In 1924 the Club started to play friendly matches against other clubs and welcomed visitors to the Club charging 1s-0d, before tea and 6d, after tea. By 1925 the adult subscription had been set at 7s-6d and remained unchanged until 1946. The original Minute Book, complete from 1923 until 1962, records that initially junior membership was specifically excluded but in 1925 an under 16 subscription of 5s-0d was introduced. This appears to have been controversial as each year saw a minor change to the rules and rates including *"members children may join from age 13 provided parents have provided some coaching beforehand"*.

From the earliest years the Tennis Club was very active in organising social events and very quickly established the pattern of a New Year's Eve Dance (live band – tickets 1s-6d), a late winter Whist Drive/Dance and then a Tea Party held at the tennis courts early in the season. The Village Hall was used for the New Year's Eve dance, and either the W.I. Hut or the King Edward Club for the winter social. This pattern of social events has, in the main, been followed up until the Millennium.

The courts proved to be a success but the netting was a constant problem. Over the years wooden poles, gas pipe, iron supports, concrete posts and several lots of netting were purchased before a successful construction was achieved. Groundsmen also proved to be a continuing problem. Local men were recruited via advertisements in the Post Office and were paid £6.00 per annum to maintain the courts and their surrounds but few stayed more than 2/3 years. Some sort of pavilion existed in 1925, but in 1929 debate started on the provision of a replacement. Finally in 1934 it was decided to buy the materials for the members to build their own new pavilion.

During World War II the usual social programme continued although the New Year's Eve dance was cancelled in 1939. Tennis matches against other clubs declined but the most important change was the arrival of RAF personnel in the area. Whilst the committee was pleased to welcome them the increased wear on the courts caused great concern. It was decided RAF personnel should pay 6d a visit, or preferably become full members. The RAF members were even granted a place on the committee. During 1944 time and resources were found for the men to re-roof and the ladies to paint the pavilion.

Just after the War the club's fortunes went rapidly downhill with only 7 members attending the 1948 AGM. There was no groundsman and the club was unable to find much needed replacement netting to buy. The New Years dance was not held that year.

In 1949 there was a surge of interest and an upper limit of 45 was placed on membership and in 1951 RAF membership was restricted to 6 members. A Junior Section was formed in 1949 with one court reserved for them every Monday and Thursday. Matches against other clubs were resumed and junior matches and doubles matches were started.

The early 1950's saw major changes on the committee with long serving members, Mrs Boyce (26 years) and Mr Rhodes and Mrs Owen-Taylor (both 24 years) standing down and new names coming to the fore. Names such as Whyley, Metcalf, Bly, Lander, Morris, Mallett, Roberts and Paling came to prominence for the next decade. The new committee was faced with the immediate challenge of negotiating a new lease of the courts. In 1951 a new 10 year lease was secured but the landlords sold a 16' strip on the South and East sides of the plot and insisted the club erect wire netting at the cost of £122-10s-0d at a time when the club balance showed assets of only £67.

Falling membership was again a cause for concern in 1956 and in 1958 the club was on the verge of winding up but it was decided to carry on for another year. In 1960 with the club finances reduced to a balance of £15, match fixtures had been lost, the pavilion in need of urgent attention, the lease coming up for renewal in September 1961 and the 1960 AGM hav-

ing to be adjourned; the members faced a major crisis. At a meeting in April 1961 it was agreed every effort would be made to raise support from the younger residents and parents. This achieved some success as the season started with a membership of 25.

The issue of playing tennis on Sunday had been a source of controversy for many years. In 1958 it was reported that the Rector had received, as local representative of the Freeholders, The Church Commissioners, a written complaint about noise from the courts on Sundays. Whilst the club protested, it appears the Rector banned play on Sundays because in 1960 the records show he was asked to "*renew his permission*" to allow play on Sundays. The request was repeated in 1961 and permission to play between 2.30 and 5.30 was then granted. The strict observance of this timing has been enforced ever since.

By the end of 1961 the membership was sufficient for the Club to continue and the Church Commissioners granted a new '3-year rolling lease'. The Church views the land on which the grass courts stand as a potential extension of the graveyard and in consequence are unwilling to grant a longer-term lease.

The 1960's saw a steady expansion of new housing in the village and many houses were occupied by people with young families. Recruitment was encouraged and names such as Atkins, Hampson, Nicols and Lewis start to appear in the minute book. Chris Lewis remembers that looking after the courts "*was an absolute nightmare – cutting the grass, hacking down the nettles and the continuous need for repairs and renewals.*" However, the new members pulled together and new supports and new netting were eventually installed. The pavilion continued to be a problem and was a target of acts of vandalism in the 1970's. About this time George and Judith Warren moved into the Windmill and began an extended stint as unofficial guardians of the courts and in due course became 'officially' responsible for the upkeep of the courts.

In 1985 the movement began to raise funds for a new pavilion to serve Butt Close. The Tennis Club reluctantly felt unable to make the necessary commitment as their participation would not only involve working for the pavilion but also the construction of new courts on the land adjacent to Butt Close. With membership in decline at that time it was a difficult decision for the Club and even today with the Club booming with the new hard courts the lack of pavilion facilities for tennis is as a direct result of the non-participation in 1985.

In 1986 new names come to the fore including Watkins, Lawrence, Mitchell and later Kelly and a reappraisal of the Club's position was undertaken. The grass courts were in poor condition as was the pavilion and it had to be recognised that with such a short-term lease it was not sensible to make expensive long-term investments on the existing site. The most significant and brave decision was made to build all-weather courts adjacent to Butt Close. A massive funding effort saw £34,000 raised within the village through jumble sales, dances and other functions, private loans, a loan from the Parish Council and a grant from Rushcliffe Borough Council.

In 1993 the new courts opened and an "everyone welcome" membership policy was introduced with discounted membership for family members. This has proved to be a great suc-

cess and with membership at times topping 200 the Tennis Club appears to be here to stay!

In 2000 the Club, already affiliated to the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), had a men's team, 3 ladies teams and 2 junior teams playing in local leagues. There was a need for 3 courts for matches and it is interesting to note that before the third court was constructed at the end of the millennium use was made of the court at the Old Hall, this being the site of one of the original Tennis Club courts in 1923.



The new courts in 2001 during the LTA 'Play Tennis' promotional event

Tennis has never been so popular and available in the village and with over 70 juniors involved in LTA coaching programmes there seems no reason why the Club should not go from strength to strength. It is pleasing to record that the old grass courts have been refurbished but as always there is still more work to be done on the pavilion at the millennium – it appears it has always been thus!

Bowls Club.

The Club was formed following a Public meeting held in the Village Hall on 16 December 1970. The first Committee elected comprised: -

Chairman	Mr D R Garland
Secretary	Mr A Lodder
Treasurer	Mr F Sumner
Committee	Messrs J Bingham, V Manchester, L Crampton R W Marshall, F Hunt and L Wallis

There was considerable support for the Club from the outset, particularly from those who wished to extend their sporting lives having been active participants in the Cricket, Football and Tennis Clubs in earlier years. Membership has varied between 40 and 60 with an age range of players from teens to 80's.

The Club first had to find a suitable site to create a bowling green. Several sites were investigated but the only one available was that of the present green. This, however was not without its problems as the land was owned by the County Council and had been earmarked as the site for the building of a new school as an extension to St. Peters. In consequence the Council could only grant a three-year lease but it was discovered that grants towards the cost of building the green would only be available if a 20 year lease was held. In spite of these

difficulties the Club decided to build its own green and with volunteer labour and at the cost of only £500 had a fine green in place by the summer of 1972. In 1973 a small wooden pavilion was purchased for £250 and the first competitive league matches were played.

Further improvements were made possible when the County Council abandoned the plans for the school and sold the whole field to the Parish Council for £14,000. With a 20 year lease and with interest free loans from three members and the Parish Council significant improvements were undertaken to raise the green and its surrounds to English Bowls Association standards. The green is now considered to be one of the finest in Nottinghamshire.

The Club celebrated its silver jubilee in 1997 at the annual President's Day' with founding member Fred Hunt as President.

The Club is now very active taking part, in 2000, in five different league competitions throughout the summer. Individual members have won various league competitions: singles, pairs and triples and three players have represented the County. A notable achievement occurred in 1998 when the Club won both the League of County Bowls Clubs Division 1 and the Trent Valley League. In 2000 the Club was runner up in the LCBC Knock-Out Cup.



The improved green and the new pavilion

Indoor (Short Mat) Bowls Club.

In 1989 three members of the outdoor Bowls Club investigated the feasibility of establishing a local indoor bowls facility aimed at providing entertainment and some exercise during the winter months for the more elderly members of the village. The Village Hall proved to be a suitable venue and with the loan of a mat from Nottinghamshire County Council Leisure Services the Club was founded on 17th November 1989.

The three initiators, Margaret Cupit, Eric Selby and Eva Selby were joined by other founder members; Eric Leedham, Jack Symons, John Wynne, Nina Widdison, Bill Widdison, Arthur Thornton, Ethel Thornton, Rosemary Leedham, Wilf Clarke, Jean Clarke, Len Lacey, May Widdison and John Birks. In 2001 four of the founders are still playing, namely Eric Selby, Ethel Thornton, Eric Leedham and May Widdison.

In 1990 two new carpets and accessories were purchased with the help of a 50% grant from the Leisure Services and with grants of £50 from the Parish Council and £150 from BP Rural Community Fund (Southwell). A joining fee of £5 was payable and 50p (+10p for tea and biscuits) per two-hour session was charged. The extra charge for tea and biscuits was dropped in 1993 but the charge per session was increased to 75p in 1999.

Today the membership numbers remain around 16/20 and the Monday and Friday afternoon sessions, running from October to April, are enjoyable social and sporting occasions. Gordon Brown presented a Cup in 1991 in memory of Nina Widdison and this is played for in an annual Knock-Out competition at the end of each season.

Badminton Club.

Originally formed in the late 1950's the Club has had a series of slumps in interest followed by a number of revivals. Membership numbers were originally about 12/15 rising to 30 or more in the 1980's then dwindling to fewer than 10 at the end of the Century.

The Village Hall has been the home of the Club with the court just fitting into the available space and the room causing no height problems, a common problem for some Clubs.

Whilst the main purpose of the Club has been to provide exercise through social badminton the Club has over the years competed in local leagues with some success. The men's team achieved Division 1 status in 1999 in the Newark Badminton League.

Today the emphasis has returned to social badminton of a good standard.

King Edward Club.

One of the oldest social organisations in the village, the King Edward Club was established in 1902, the year King Edward VII was crowned.

The original premises consisted of a wooden hut presented to the Club by Mr William Francis Fox of The Hall. Mr Fox bought the hut from the Clough family who ran a School in Walnut Tree Lane and had used the hut as a classroom.

The Misses Fox presented the Club with a fine Victorian billiards table, which remained in use until the early 1990's when a table with a faster playing surface was purchased to conform with modern requirements for snooker. The original table is now in private ownership in the village.

The present fine brick built premises were acquired in 1980; the money for which was raised by Dr Geoffrey Brooks.

The original aim of the Club was to provide "*men and lads over 16*" with facilities for a Social Club. In addition to billiards, card and board games and newspapers were available. Membership of the Club was a sought after privilege and in the days



The King Edward Club has a fine competitive record. This shield was won for 3 consecutive years (1964-7) .

when few indoor facilities were available it is not difficult to see what a boon it must have been to the village.

The Club has minute books from 1922 onwards and they make fascinating reading. Well known village names recur time and time again and are a testimony to the voluntary work performed for the benefit of the Club. It is not felt appropriate to name them for fear of unintended omissions but the name of Les Hand must be an exception. Over many years he combined the duties of janitor, treasurer, secretary, cleaner, fire lighter and other responsibilities too numerous to mention. The Club would probably not have survived without him and his death resulted in significant changes in the organisation of the Club.

Today membership remains at around thirty and with the Club celebrating its centenary in 2002 it is hoped to raise the profile of the Club and encourage more support.

Bridge Club.

One of the most recently formed Clubs in the village, the Bridge Club was founded in September 2000. The Club developed from a successful bridge class organised by John Chater.

The aim of the Club is to allow members to play and improve their skills at duplicate bridge in a friendly and comfortable environment. The Club meets on Wednesday nights in the W. I. Hut and numbers vary from 16 to 32. Regular tuition is available and members are encouraged to borrow books and computer programs to help them improve their skills.

The Club is affiliated to the English Bridge Union and enters a team in the "Teams of Eight League" for Nottinghamshire clubs.

Members value the friendliness of the Club and are keen to avoid the development of an over-competitive atmosphere.

Mothers Union.

The Mothers Union is now a worldwide organisation that was started by Mary Sumner, the wife of the Rector of Old Alresford, Hampshire in 1876. Mrs Sumner wished to create an organisation that would enable mothers to fulfil their responsibility for the material and spiritual well-being of their children. The East Bridgford branch was formed in December 1901 by the Rector, Rev. Arthur Du Boulay Hill, and the first seven members were Mrs Du Boulay Hill, Mrs Beaumont, Mrs Goldston, Mrs Heslop, Mrs Lowe, Mrs Turner and Mrs Weatherall.

The aim of the Mothers Union is "*the advancement of the Christian religion in the sphere of married and family life*". Membership is "*open to all who have been baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity*"

The Branch holds monthly afternoon meetings that start with a short service normally followed by a speaker. Each year there are one or more outings organised. An annual Evening

Service is held in St. Peter's Church at which new members are enrolled. The Branch has a banner that is kept in the Church; a new banner was made and dedicated in April 1993.

Over the century the Branch has met at a variety of venues including the old Rectory, the Methodist Sunday School on Main Street, the old Cricket Pavilion and the W.I. Hut on Butt Close.

In the 1940's and 1950's many young wives of RAF Newton personnel were members as were mothers who worshipped at the Methodist Chapel. However as more wives engaged in careers the membership now is mainly comprised of senior residents. Membership numbers reached a maximum of about 50 and now number about 35. The two longest serving members have been Doris Hand and Jessie Shepherd.

The Branch Leader is known as the "Enrolling Member" and can only serve for a maximum of 6 years. In the first half of the century Mrs Du Boulay Hill, Mrs Claye, Mrs Beaumont, Mrs King (wife of the Rector Rev. R.W. King), and Mrs Hunt (mother of Fred Hunt and Hilda Pearce) were the Enrolling Members. In the last 50 years the position has been held by Mrs McLean (wife of the Rector Rev. G.R.D. McLean), Doris Turner, Betty Lawson, Hilda Pearce, Margaret Bontoft, Janet Morris, Marion Wheeler and Joyce Dyke.

Women's Institute.

East Bridgford Women's Institute began during the First World War when, in 1917, the Revd Du Boulay Hill chaired an exploratory meeting in the Schoolroom. The Hon Mrs Handford, who had recently set up a group at Southwell, explained the ideals and practical workings of the Women's Institute. The thirty-five ladies present wished for further consideration and, although no resolution was passed a temporary committee was formed. The committee arranged a "Specimen Institute Meeting" for Tuesday 23rd October 1917 at 2.30pm.

At the meeting there was a demonstration of how to wash woollens, a discussion on how to remove stains and an exhibition of things of interest brought from the Front. Mrs Swanwick supplied the entertainment with her gramophone. Those present declared themselves willing to start a Women's Institute in East Bridgford and office bearers were elected. Mrs Arthur Mason became the first President with Mrs Du Boulay Hill, Mrs Cartwright and Miss Smedley as Vice-Presidents, Miss Fox as Secretary and Miss Swanwick as Treasurer.

Meetings were held in the King Edward Club and the minutes of these first meetings, written in Miss Gertrude Fox's hand make interesting reading. The philosophy of these founding members was that, through education, women could learn to play their part in forging a better future. In their homes they would be more capable of feeding and caring for their families, and in the community they would have greater confidence to express their views and to work together to get things done. The W.I. national motto was then and is still today "*For Home and Country.*" Mrs Clowes told the first meeting in December 1917 that instead of everyone trying to do their own bit, there was now "*the added power of union*" which would benefit both the country and each individual.

Many of the lectures and discussion topics reflected the needs of a country at war and the importance of producing foodstuffs by making best use of what was available. There was a lecture on poultry keeping and another on the co-operative bottling and drying of fruit and vegetables. The committee suggested recipes for wartime Christmas dinners and the finished dishes were exhibited and sold during the evening – the minutes record that these were “*most varied and tempting and all bought up by the end.*” There were home-made solutions to various problems – powdered borax sprinkled on rubbish heaps to prevent flies’ eggs from hatching; information on how to make a linseed poultice; information on how to treat chilblains with sphagnol (peat moss) ointment; suggestions on the best use of scraps of material and wool and a chance to sample “*coffee*” made from dried and grated parsnips!

There was usually some form of entertainment such as recitations and singing – at one meeting, though, members were invited to bring cockerels to be judged. Miss Fox recorded that there were only five fowls and “*there was no entertainment except the chorus of cockerels*”. Members were asked to bring their own cup, saucer and sugar for refreshments – coffee was at first bought from the funds but later everyone was asked to bring a spoonful of tea and as these meetings were held at 2.30 pm, co-operative refreshments of bread and butter and cakes were enjoyed.

The first community effort of the W.I. was the setting up of a soup kitchen. Starting with a loan of £2.11s. for materials, soup was made every week in a large copper in the Village Hall kitchen. Over a period of three months 2314 pints of soup were sold at 1d per pint and the loan was repaid leaving a profit of £2.13s after the deduction of all expenses.

At about the same time, following a talk from Miss Eddison of Epperstone on “Profitable Rabbit Keeping” one of the members, Mrs Field, was inspired and set up a rabbit club in the village. A committee, including Nurse Pike, a well-known member of the community, established the Patriotic Rabbit Club. The aim was to provide a cheap source of food with a sideline in the curing and dressing of rabbit skins. There were strict rules for the handing over of rabbits at six or seven weeks old to the Secretary by the breeders for the sum of 1/-. “Rearers” then fattened the rabbits up until twelve to fourteen weeks old when they should be killed and either kept for home consumption or sold again to the Secretary for 1/-. Club rabbits had to be fed on waste food - “*no rabbit may be given oats in any circumstance*” – and must not be kept after they were fit for killing. Clearly patriotic rabbits!

In 1919 Miss Gertrude Fox devised a game of whist to be played by four players to the usual rules but in place of playing cards fifty-three ladies dress up as the cards, including a Joker. This is known as “Living Whist” and has been played several times over the decades, but until a recent performance at the Village Show in 2002 (to celebrate the Queen’s Golden Jubilee) had not been performed since 1987 at Rufford. Assembling so many people for rehearsals and the actual performance is a major organisational challenge. It is remarkable that the original costumes from 1919 are still available to be used.

Miss Fox also bought for the W.I. a First World War ex-army hut. The hut was placed on a plot of land in a corner of Butt Close. The land used was first leased at a peppercorn rent

from Dr Owen Taylor of The Manor but later gifted by him to the W.I. The 22nd meeting of the W.I. was held there on Wednesday 8th October 1919 and the Hut quickly became the focal point for a growing number of activities. There was no sanitation or running water in the Hut until 1962; prior to this water had to be carried from homes in Cuttle Hill or Main Street. Mrs Annie Blagg, caretaker from 1928 for many years, scrubbed the wooden floor from end to end. Following an approach to the Parish Council by Mrs Lucia Mellors, the first lamp-post was erected outside the Hut and was known as "Lucia's light". Heating came from a stove fuelled by coke provided by E Hunt & Sons for 15/- per half ton.

During the Second World War members were again determined to do as much as they could to help the national effort. They worked with a will to bottle and can fruit; they knitted socks to be included in parcels sent to village boys in the Services and pullovers for the Navy; they grew potatoes and vegetables on the W.I. allotment; they gathered nettles and dried them in the rafters of the Hut to meet a national request for dried herbs and, yes, they made jam.....! A fruit preserving centre was set up in the Village Hall and using sugar made available by the Government for the preserving of the fruit crop they made 475 lbs. (215.5 kilos) of jam in 1940.

The 'old Hut' became a welcoming venue for more than just W.I. meetings, Brownies, Guides, Keep Fit, Playgroup, Whist Drives, coffee mornings and children's parties. The Luncheon Club, founded in 1973, met there one day a week (and another at the Methodist Chapel) to serve lunches to the over 60's. 'Child Welfare' took place every second Thursday when the babies were weighed and mothers collected dried milk and concentrated orange juice.

By the mid-1980's the members realised that there was a limit to the repairing and patching up that could be done to the old building. A decision had to be made about the future – should the Hut be demolished and meetings held elsewhere or should the possibility of a new building be investigated? This was not an easy decision and in many ways the first option would have been the easier but the spirit of those pioneering ladies of 1917 must have been in-



The Women's Institute 'Jubilee' committee in the late 1960s with the original hut behind.

spirational and the members voted to begin the mammoth task of fundraising. An ad hoc committee supervised the planning and the fundraising and with the support of husbands, families and the village community, around £1000 per month was raised. The final sum of £30,000 was eventually raised. The splendid new "Community Hall" was designed to be user friendly and to provide flexible accommodation for meetings and other events. W.I.

National Chairman, Mrs Irene Salter, opened the building on what was, sadly, her last official function. The building went on to win awards for both design and for efficiency of operation. The new building soon reverted to being called "the Hut" but it is now a term of affection rather than in any way an accurate description of the building.

Much has changed since 1917 and the W.I. has endeavoured to change with the times whilst at the same time trying to remain true to the philosophy of the founding members. The membership currently stands at about 65/70 and the W.I. of today provides a wide range of opportunities and activities both locally and nationally. Through the forward thinking of some remarkable ladies during the Second World War a W.I. college, Denman College in Oxfordshire, was established to provide residential courses for members on a vast range of subjects. Members are encouraged to have informed opinions on issues and causes and to debate these at Annual Meetings before lobbying the Government of the day to take action.

The Women's Institute is proud to be a strand in the complex weave that makes up our village life and history. It has celebrated many milestones in its lifetime; often marking them by providing something for the community – either useful, such as the climbing frame for the children's playground marking the W.I.'s 50th Anniversary in 1967 or the seat in Butt Close marking the 70th Anniversary in 1997 – or decorative, such as the Weathervane on Cuttle Hill marking the 80th Anniversary.

Women's Institute Choir

The W.I. Choir, formed in 1966, was a direct development out of the earlier East Bridgford Choral Society which ran from 1950 to 1966. The Choral Society was created as a result of an Evening Institute class in Choral Singing held in St. Peter's School led first by Mrs Chloe Beaumont and later by Joe Mann.

The Choral Society gave two performances each year as well as organising carol singing each Christmas in the village and in Kneeton and Shelford. Joe Mann was a Gilbert and Sullivan enthusiast but as the number of male singers dwindled it was difficult to sustain these productions; his last production was HMS Pinafore. Shortly afterwards he left Nottingham and David Atkins took over as conductor.

The Choral Society continued under David's leadership and performed "A Statue for the Mayor", "West Side Story" and "Salad Days" in the School Hall, and in St. Peter's Church gave notable performances of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" and Benjamin Britten's "A Ceremony of Carols". In September 1966 the last two men in the Choral Society, Charlie and Henry Dunsmore, decided not to rejoin and the Society took the decision to reform as a Ladies Choir.

David Atkins as conductor and Cicely Atkins as accompanist, were persuaded to form a Ladies Choir affiliated to East Bridgford Women's Institute. From the outset the Choir has taken part in many W.I. Music Festivals, W.I. County Celebrations and Carol Concerts at Southwell Minster and Worksop Priory. The Choir has performed at W.I. meetings around

the Vale of Belvoir and they were invited to take part in the 60th Jubilee Celebrations in 1977 at the Palace Theatre in Newark. Other memorable occasions were singing with the Newstead Colliery Welfare Band in 1992 at Hucknall Parish Church; representing the County at Regional W.I. Music Festivals in 1990 and again in 1999 at Benn Hall in Rugby and also taking part in the celebrations marking the 50th Anniversary of VE day and of the Millennium.

The range of choral music performed by the Choir has been extensive ranging from music of the 1920's; wartime songs; hymns and songs representing 2000 years of worship through to specially commissioned choral works. The latter has included "The Brilliant and the Dark" by Ursula Vaughn Williams and Malcolm Williamson, and "Early One Morning" by Anthony Hopkins.

Every year since 1966 the Choir has maintained the tradition and formed the nucleus of a mixed group of carol singers who have performed around the village at Christmas. For many years the hospitality of Mrs Jay and her late husband Captain Alan Jay rounded off an enjoyable, if at times cold evening, raising money for charitable causes.

Today the present choir numbers are declining and an influx of new members is required if the tradition of the singing of choral music in the village is to be maintained.

Drama Group

The Group was established in the mid 70's after Trevor Sansom, a potter who ran a craft shop in Main Street, put a card in his window asking if anyone was interested in forming a Drama Group in East Bridgford. Dick and Molly Wood, Tony Beresford and Janet Morris responded and became founding members. They were soon followed by John and Jean Preston, Mike Nicholls, Brenda Taylor, Jackie Fleming and Peter Aldenton.

The aim of the Group, as stated in their constitution, is *"to perform plays and encourage members in their appreciation of all aspects of Drama"*. Membership has at times been as high as 40 but currently is around 20. The Group has always been well supported by friends and helpers who assist with essential supporting tasks such as set designing and building, serving coffee etc.

In the early years two plays were produced each year but for many years now three plays have been staged in February/March, May/June and in November to generally packed houses. Over 70 plays have been produced in the Village Hall with only the Chester Miracle Play being performed elsewhere; in St. Peter's Church at Christmas 1979. The first play produced was "White Liars" and only



'Who killed Santa Claus' from 1985.

one play has been staged twice. J.B. Priestley's "When We Are Married" (November 1984 and May 2001).

The youngest person to have performed with the Group was the 11 month old Daniel Clarke playing the part of the baby Jesus, whilst the eldest was Alfred Clamp who played his fiddle in "The Happy Apple" in 1983 when he was 96 years old. The only live animal ever to have performed was "Tedious", Debbie Hindle's cat, who starred as "Pyewackett" in "Bell, Book and Candle" in 1982.

The Group has organised a number of charity events, raising considerable sums for local charities – this took the form of revues with sketches, songs and readings on an appropriate theme. Other activities have included the provision and 'manning' of Santa's Grotto at the Village Hall Christmas Fair and the Group has provided many stunning entries in the Fancy Dress Parade at the Village Flower Show.

Although the Group has not entered Drama competitions since 1996, during the 1980's and 1990's the Group had many successes in the Annual Play of the Year competition run by the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Drama Association. Awards in every category have been achieved over the years including: - Best Presentation, Best Producer, Best Actor and Actress, Best Newcomer, Best All Round Play, Best Programme, Best Front of House, and Best Design and Costume. These successes would not have been achieved without a real team effort on the part of everyone involved in each production. There are many whose contribution should probably have been mentioned but space precludes naming everyone and it would be invidious to name some and exclude others. The Village has been very fortunate over the past 25+ years to be regularly entertained by a Drama Group of such a high standard. In 1988 a judge said of the Group *"a group which, over the past few years has established itself as one of the best in the County"*.

Ladies Lifeboat Guild.

It may seem unlikely that a thriving network of Royal National Lifeboat Institute branches and guilds should exist in rural Nottinghamshire. However our landlocked County has a long history of raising funds to support the men who risk their own safety to save the lives of others at sea. Four lifeboats have been funded by the City and County of Nottingham – the "Robin Hood of Nottingham" in 1867, the "City of Nottingham" in 1930, the "Nottinghamshire" in 1982 and the "Pride of Sherwood" in 1999.

The history of the East Bridgford Ladies Lifeboat Guild is more recent than our County's long association, having been set up in 1970 at the suggestion of Captain Alan Jay who was then Chairman of the Nottingham Branch of the RNLI. The first meeting was held on 17th March 1970 under the direction of Mr Thirwell of the RNLI Area Office who outlined the aim of the group – to raise as much money as possible for the RNLI, a charity which depends wholly on public support. Those present were Marjorie Cox, Jessie Field Richards, Felicity Jay, Dorothy Latty, Iris Lester, Mally Lewis, Marjorie Pesketh and Norah Ward. Mally Lewis was elected Treasurer and Dorothy Latty as Secretary. The following month

Felicity Jay agreed to accept the office of Chairman of the group, an office she has held with great distinction until very recently. The committee was delighted to accept the help and support of husbands, families and friends, and their first project was a Beethoven concert organised by Peter Ward and Arthur Latty. Programmes were sold at 2/- to include coffee, and a profit of £26.17s. 6d. was made.

In the years that followed, musical evenings played a major part in fundraising efforts and became a much-enjoyed element of the East Bridgford social scene. Other activities included flag days, a sale of second hand books and souvenir sales at various functions. In Gunthorpe and in Car Colston, Marjorie Cox and Joan Raspin did sterling work with house-to-house collections, both ladies notching up ever-increasing amounts year by year. In 1983 Andrew Foss and Adrian Hall, both aged 12, set up a drawn outline of a Brede class lifeboat outside Mr Fox's newsagents shop and asked everyone who passed to place a coin somewhere on the boat. The boys were there for most of the day and their shape was completely covered in coins, raising an amazing £43. Local pubs and shops agreed to have lifeboat boxes on their counters and this provided a regular and important source of income. Indeed, it still does today and the landlord of the Royal Oak at Car Colston has given a very 21st century twist to this traditional way of contributing by asking those receiving calls on mobile phones to put at least 10p in the box!

In 1971, as part of a national effort by the RNLI, the Guild organised a sponsored walk and raised £468 – the minutes record this was “*much to our surprise*”! Starting at the Latty's home on Kneeton Road that first walk across the Fosse and through some of the villages in the Vale may have been intended as a “one off” but it has become a biennial fixture in the calendar and people have responded generously ever since. Sadly in 1982 both Arthur and Dorothy Latty died within months of each other and the Guild lost two of its most enthusiastic members. However, Felicity Jay and Yvonne Binney worked on tirelessly and inspired others to do likewise in turning “The Walk” into what is both a most enjoyable occasion and an excellent money-spinner. Felicity and Yvonne supported by a small committee of Marjorie Cox, Jessie Field Richards and Iris Lester then charmed and persuaded support from everyone they came into contact with, rallying the community behind them!

The Walk has evolved over the years into a 15 mile route starting and finishing at the Village Hall and includes a crossing of the River Trent at Hazelford using boats provided by the Nottingham Sea Cadets and by Russell Hunt. The generosity of local shops and supermarkets enable free refreshments to be given to walkers at The Boot and Shoe at Flintham and at Hazelford. Marshals oversee the Fosse crossings, man checkpoints and drive cars patrolling the route to rescue those who find



15 miles a bit far to go! Lessons are learned over the years and all was “ticking over nicely” until April 2000 when the Trent became dangerously high and with only a week to go the decision had to be made to abandon the river crossing. Bill and Rita Case went out every evening in pouring rain to work out an alternative route, which proved a great success. The Walk that year raised a record £7,500. The money that year went to the Mablethorpe Lifeboat Station – so those visiting our nearest coastline can view with pride a vital resource they helped to fund.

In 2002 the Guild is still attracting many willing supporters – many people have done every walk since 1971 and new walkers come forward for each walk. Four of the original Committee members are still “on board” (Felicity Jay, Jessie Field Richardson, Iris Lester and Marjorie Cox). New Committee members are comforted to know that if they get out of their depth there are experienced hands there to throw them a lifeline!



British Legion parade to celebrate the 50th anniversary of VE day in 1995

Royal British Legion.

The British Legion (as it was initially named) was founded in 1921, three years after the end of the First World War. The aim was to honour the memory of those British and Empire personnel who had served in the 1914-18 conflict, particularly those who had given their lives. In addition the aim was to provide practical help and companionship to ex-Service people and their dependants.

There were 130 who served in the navy and army from East Bridgford parish

and the Memorial Cross erected in June 1920 records the names of 22 who gave their lives in the First World War. The East Bridgford and District Branch of the British Legion was formed in 1922 and founding members included Clarence Widdison, Ces Pickford, Joe Cox, Ernest Simms, Tom Higgs and Les Shipman.

Membership soon rose to about 50 and regular meetings were held in the Royal Oak. Later the meetings transferred to an ex-army hut located in College Street. During the hard times of the 1920s and 30s the Branch organised the free issue of nourishing soup to the hungry and needy. About this time it is reported that the Branch Treasurer did a moonlight flit as he had been milking the Branch funds!

The end of the Second World War created a new influx of ex-service men and women and Branch membership eventually reached about 150. On 10th September 1971 the Legion was honoured by being awarded the “Royal” prefix, thus becoming the Royal British Legion.

After the Second World War for many years the Branch was ably led by Dr Brookes, as its President, and by Captain (RN) Jay and Captain Marshall.

Sadly, for a variety of reasons, the East Bridgford and District Branch of the Royal British Legion was formally disbanded on 26 October 1996 but many members have transferred to other Branches in the area, thus carrying on their own and East Bridgford's association with the Royal British Legion.

Women's Section East Bridgford Royal British Legion.

On 15th July 2001 a special service was held in St. Peter's Church commemorating the 70th year of the Women's Section of the East Bridgford Branch of the Royal British Legion. The following is an extract from an account written by Mrs Mary Peatfield about the early years of the Branch: -

"My mother (Priscilla Spinks – a W.W.1 widow) had joined the City of Nottingham R. B.L.W.S. when there were only 30 members in the County.

East Bridgford already had a British Legion branch but no Women's Section. Several wives and daughters of East Bridgford ex-servicemen were interested and H.Q. asked mother and the friends she had in Elston to join East Bridgford to get a branch started.

A committee was formed of the new East Bridgford branch and if I can remember rightly, Mrs Simpson from the Royal Oak was Chairman, Mrs Cornell was Treasurer and I think it was Mrs Johnson who was Secretary.

We had 'socials' and the Elston folk and children came on the bus. During the war travelling was difficult and most folk were doing war work. Red Cross, W.I., W.V.S. and such like. We still paid our British Legion Women's Section subs and were still members. Mrs Jackson collected them and sent them to H.Q. and they were always paid promptly! Mrs Jackson was a dear soul and worked hard to keep us together – I joined about 1934 (aged 16). We worked hard for the Poppy Appeal – the Elston, Syerston, Sibthorpe, East Stoke and Shelton collectors all worked with the East Bridgford branch. Mr Cecil Pickford brought the collecting tins to mother when he came with the meat and she organised this area and returned the tins etc. with Mr Pickford after the Poppy-ride".

Organising and selling poppies door to door has always been one of the main activities of the Women's Section and over the years many thousands of pounds have been given by the Branch to the British Legion Poppy Appeal Fund. The Branch has been notable for the large number of organisers and collectors who have devoted their time and energy for year after year to this worthy cause. In 2001 presentations were made to Branch members at the Nottinghamshire County Conference as follows: - Mrs M. Peatfield 70 years, Mrs M. Marks 70 years, Mrs Marion Willis 50 years, Mrs P. Pinkerton 50 years, Mrs Felicity Jay MBE President 50 years, and Mrs L. Brennan 40 years. Many others have served the Branch for over 20 years.

The Branch Minutes also record all the other fund raising activities of the Women's Section including innumerable coffee mornings, Fur and Feather Bingo drives, Christmas card sell-

ing, arranging stalls at fetes, fairs and other events, and lots of other 'one off' fund raising activities.

However, the activity most frequently mentioned is the annual dinner/luncheon held in the Village Hall. Indeed there is probably a unique record in the back of the Minute Book recording year by year the amounts of food, drink etc. ordered for these meals which have catered for nearly 100 people. A small extract for 1970, when 85 were expected to attend, gives some of the flavour: - 12lbs of Ham (Hensons), 16lbs of Pressed Beef (Pickfords, sliced at Hensons), 18lbs of Sausages (16 to 1lb.), 4lbs of Butter, 6 pkts of Cream Crackers, 18doz. Bread Rolls (Tip Top Bakery, Bingham), 14 pints Milk (Rolly Ellis), 4lbs Cheddar and 4lbs Stilton (Porters, Newark) and so it goes on through numerous tins of fruit, salad stuffs, and potatoes etc. etc. In 1976 there is even an inventory of all the pots, pans, kettles, crockery and cutlery held by the Village Hall!

One can only conclude that this is a remarkable organisation of dedicated and exceptional women who for over 70 years have truly lived up to their motto "*Service not Self*"

Luncheon Club.

The Luncheon Club was founded in 1973 with the object of providing a weekly lunch for the over 60's and at the same time giving people the opportunity to meet others in a convivial sociable atmosphere.

The Club was formed following the suggestion of Cicely Atkins who had picked up on the concept of Luncheon Clubs whilst helping deliver 'Meals on Wheels' in Bingham. For many years the Club operated from the W.I. Hut on Tuesdays under the auspices of the WRVS. Later the Methodist Chapel offered its facilities for Friday lunchtime and the Club was thus able to meet twice weekly. Recently the Club has held both the Tuesday and Friday meetings in the Chapel, which is more convenient for access.

Originally the food came from Cotgrave Colliery, then from St. Peter's School and currently is supplied by Social Services at Lenton. Early in 2000, following changes in Luncheon Club funding arrangements, the link with the WRVS ended and now the Club receives a grant from the County Council. Meals are served by a rota of volunteers and whilst some have come and gone over the years there have been some who have been involved for many years.

The Club has run outings in the summer in most years and a highlight for many is the special Christmas lunch held in December. The commitment and dedication of Cicely Atkins is deserving of special mention as she has and still is very involved nearly 30 years after the founding of the Club.

Friendship Club.

The Friendship Club was formed, under the Chairmanship of Mrs Betty Russell, in 1966 with the aim of providing an informal social gathering for senior citizens once a fortnight.

Members enjoy Bingo, Whist, Dominoes and Cribbage with a cup of tea and biscuits served mid-afternoon.

Membership is open to all senior citizens and at times the numbers attending have exceeded 50. Members have also enjoyed many outings to places of interest these either being free or at significantly reduced rates. A highlight of the year has always been the Christmas Party or Luncheon.

The Club has been well served with a succession of Chairmen/Organisers: - Betty Russell served until 1979, then Margaret Hobbs and Judy Spendlow to 1989, followed by Barbara Mallet and Maureen Cottee to 1995. Wilf Clark then took over until 1998 with the baton passing to Janet Richardson in that year.

Care Group.

The concept of a Care Group in the village was the outcome of interdenominational discussions held in Lent 1995, which asked the question "Does the Church do enough to support and help the village community?"

Following the inaugural meeting on 17th April 1996 a Constitution was drawn up which defines the Group's objectives: "*to provide a range of voluntary services not otherwise covered by other agencies or organisations to people who live in the parish of East Bridgford or who are registered with the East Bridgford Medical Centre*".

The Group was established with the support and help of the Nottinghamshire Rural Community Council and the Village Care Project. The first 16 volunteers were quickly providing transport to hospitals, befriending residents in the local Nursing Home, collecting pensions and generally working closely with the Medical Centre to give help where it is needed. More recently the Group has raised money in a variety of ways to buy a wheelchair and other equipment for the use of the Medical Centre. On average some 6/7 people each week are assisted with their transport needs.

Today there are around 30 volunteers whose efforts are co-ordinated by Alison Powell with the support of Secretary, Rita Case, Treasurer, Cate Golightly, Chairperson, Kath Ashton and Committee Members Doreen Corcoran and Dorothy Millichamp. The village is privileged to have such a fine group of volunteers and organisers available to provide help and support when it is most needed.

Horticultural Society.

Founded in 1864 "*to promote Cottage Gardening and Floriculture*", the Horticultural Society is one of the oldest village organisations. The structure of the Society is unusual in that all residents of the village are deemed to be "members", and its main purpose is to organise an Annual Show. The intention was that all adults in the village would either give a donation/subscription in advance of the Show or pay an entrance fee to the Show ground. Until

1973 a list of individual subscribers and their donations was included in the Show Schedule. The Society holds financial records going back to 1868. A brief perusal reveals Show expenditure in 1900 at £30, in 1939 at £53/10/0, in 1970 at £510 whilst in 1995 it had risen to £4,028.

The formation of the Society saw the re-introduction of the ancient custom of an Annual Feast Day coincident with St. Peter's Feast at the end of June. Originally the right to hold a 3-day fair in the village was granted to the Lord of the Manor in 1337. The Horticultural Society held the Show on the Tuesday of Feast Week until 1939 but thereafter it has been held on Saturday. The show has been held each year since 1864 with the only breaks being in the war years of 1916/18 and 1940/1948.

The venue for the Show before 1939 was traditionally in a pasture field lent for the occasion by the owner or tenant. The names of Messrs Turner, Pickford, Allwood and Bullers appear in the records. Between 1949 and 1966 the grounds of The Old Hall were used with the concurrence of the then owners Mr C. Farmer and later Mr R. Waring. From 1967 to 2000 the field behind the Reindeer Inn was used with the exception of 1996 when the grounds of The Manor were used in conjunction with a street market.

The format of the Show has gradually evolved over the years but the sight of tents and marquees for the exhibits of produce and home craft, the sound of a Brass Band or Carnival Band, side-shows and competitions would all be familiar to generations of villagers attending the event. At various times a wide range of activities have taken place with sports events held between 1913 and 1936, dances of every kind and Fancy Dress competitions. The Parade through the village was introduced in 1949, steam engines, vintage cars, lorries and tractors first appeared in the 1970's, tug-of-war contests were a keenly contested highlight and in 1977 the W.I. demonstrated their unique "Living Whist".

From the outset the horticultural exhibits have been a cornerstone of the Show. Until 1939 there were three Sections exclusively for East Bridgford residents: -

- For gentlemen, professional gardeners and farmers.
- For tradesmen and cottagers
- For labourers.

Since 1939 the Sections have been re-titled with "gentlemen" "cottagers" and "labourers" becoming "professional businessmen", "retired persons" and "self-employed" and the number of Sections subsequently reduced to two. The significance of the different Sections was reflected in the "subscriptions" required for unlimited entries, for example: -

Sections	A	B	C	
1919-39	4/-	3/-	2/-	(i.e. 20p 15p 10p)
1949- 66	10/-	7/6	5/-	(i.e. 50p 37p 25p)

Thereafter the subscription for entries was the same for each section.



Regular features of the show included a fancy dress parade, led by a 'Marching Band' and including a traction engine. On the showground was a large marquee with a wonderful display of entries in fruit, vegetable & flower competitions, and a show ring used for all sorts of displays and competitions.

In 1967 the aim of the Society was changed to "*to promote Home Gardening and Floriculture*". Further changes have resulted in entries being accepted from residents of surrounding villages with Newton joining the Society in 1949, Kneeton in 1956, Car Colston and Screveton in 1959, RAF Newton in 1968 and Shelford in 1979.

In 1920 a W.I. Section, (renamed "Homecraft" in 1959), was introduced being open to members of the W.I. and East Bridgford residents. Initially there were 20 classes including eggs, butter, cheese and homemade sweets but in 1953 these classes were rearranged into four Sections – Floral arrangements/decorations; Eggs; Cookery and Preserved / Bottled fruit. In 1959 the Egg Section was replaced by a Section for children under 16 and in 1968 the classes in the Section were divided by age group. Subsequently other Sections were introduced to the Show schedule – Handicraft in 1969, Painting in 1973, Wine 1975 and Photography in 1982. As in the Horticultural Section residents of surrounding villages were invited to participate in the Homecraft Section; Newton and Kneeton in 1953 and Car Colston and Screveton in 1959.

In 1924 a Section for Rabbits was introduced but this ceased after 1926. Between 1924 and 1927 there was a Section for Poultry under the direction of the Notts Poultry Club. There were some 16 different classes with some "open to all England". The Nottingham Journal

for 29 June 1927 records the "Red Island Rhode (cock)" Open Class result as follows: - 1st G. Walstill (Durham) 2nd W. Hopewell (Birmingham) and 3rd Mrs H.E. Branston (Balderton). An amazing image of Poultry being transported from all over the country to appear in the East Bridgford Show!

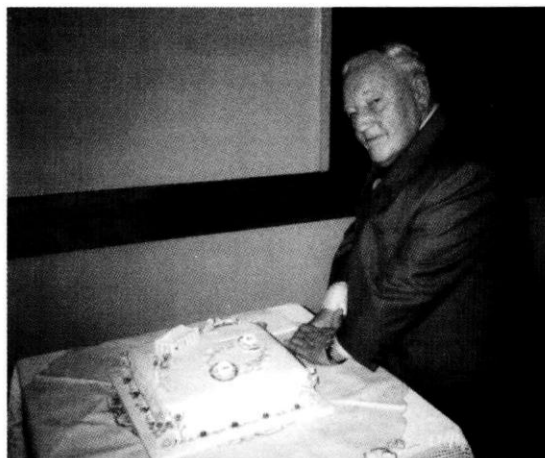
Like many village organisations the Horticultural Society has held its Coffee Mornings, Cheese and Wine evenings and between 1970 and 1999 organised the village Harvest Supper. In 1966 the BBC Gardeners Question Time programme was recorded in the village.

Over the century the Society has attracted some of the most energetic and committed members of the community to serve on its committee and as executive officers of the organisation. There are many who have served the Society in a variety of capacities for long periods of years showing great dedication in providing the village with one of 'the highlights of the village year' - The Annual Show. In the first quarter of the century the Rector, Rev Arthur du Boulay Hill was President/Chairman from 1900 - 1926 and the Headmaster, Henry Goldston was Secretary from 1898 - 1922.

During the latter part of the century six residents served as Executive members of the Committee for more than 30 years: -

Cecil Widdison	1952 - 1992	Joint Secretary
Anthony H F Jones	1954 - 1989	Treasurer
Marjorie Chapman	1955 - 1991	Homecraft Secretary
J Stuart Fraser	1965 - 2000	President/Chairman
E Graham Lomax	1970 - 2000	Chairman/Secretary
Jean Hunt	1970 - 2000	Homecraft Secretary.

Especial mention should be made of the long and notable contribution of Cecil Widdison to the Horticultural Society. He was a particularly passionate advocate of the Show and of its importance as a means for bringing the community together. For 40 years he had responsibility for publicity and public relations as well as booking 'displays' for the Show. His particular favourites were Carnival Bands, Steam Engines and Vintage Vehicles. He became '*Mr Village Show*' as he led the Show Parade through the village with the bands playing, the children in fancy dress, vintage cars in danger



of overheating and the steam engine rumbling majestically behind him. In 1992 he formally retired as Joint Show Secretary and a party was held to celebrate his services to the Society. However, he quickly established a position as Show Consultant and in his own distinctive style occupied that role to the end of the century.

Throughout the past 140 years the Society Committee has sought, in spite of the vagaries of the weather, to break even year on year. Whenever a surplus has accumulated this has been donated to worthy village causes. Clearly it is the interests of all villagers (as members of the Horticultural Society) to ensure, by their support, that this historic Society continues to thrive in the 21st Century.

Garden Club.

The Garden Club was the idea of David and June Peto and established in February 1994 with the support of Hilary Lee and Ian Seel. The aims of the Club are to stimulate interest in gardening, arrange visits to gardens and other places of horticultural interest and to provide a forum for the exchange of information and ideas on gardening.

Membership has been between 70 and 90 and talks on a wide variety of topics ranging from 'gardens through the seasons', to specific subjects like 'clematis', 'old fashioned roses' and 'organic gardening' have formed the subjects of the winter season of talks. Visits have ranged far and wide in the summer months including to the Cambridge University Botanical Garden, Harlow Carr Botanical Garden near Harrogate and to the Dorothy Clive Garden near Nantwich in Cheshire. The Club has organised a Flower and Vegetable Show in the autumn and occasional plant sales.

Playgroup / Pre-School.

There has been a nursery school in East Bridgford for over 40 years; thus indicating that good quality nursery education is not a recent feature in our village. A small playgroup was established by Mrs Sandelwich in her home in Orchard Close in the 1960's and was assisted by Mrs Thornton of Straws Lane. In the late 1960's a playgroup met at "Strathmore" on Kneeton Road, the home of Mrs Margaret Burney; Mrs Shirley Cox assisted her.

This informal group became a community playgroup run by a committee of mothers in 1972, with Shirley Cox as the Supervisor. The group moved to the W.I. Hut and subsequently its name was formally changed from East Bridgford Playgroup to East Bridgford Pre-school on 3rd February 1997.

Pre-school continues to meet in the W.I. Hut and now runs 5 morning and 2 afternoon sessions with over 50 children attending each week. The aim is to provide learning



The playgroup 'at work' in the old WI Hut in 1986

through play for children to smooth their transition to the foundation year at school. In some respects little has changed over the past 20 years as children still enjoy a wide range of play activities, outings to places of interest in the village, visits from the emergency services and other professionals and, of course, Father Christmas at the annual Christmas party. However, Pre-school has moved with the times and the staff and committee now have to cope with the ever increasing demands made on providers of nursery education. There are regular inspections by Ofsted and by Social Services and the group is pleased to be able to offer places to children with special needs.

The ongoing success of Pre-school rests firmly on the shoulders of the Supervisor and this post has been held admirably over the years by Diane Little, Ann Moore, Deborah Davies, Kay Rhoades, Amanda Marson, Angela Harrison and Rose Graham. Following 18 months of hard work, in particular by Amanda Marson, Leslie Cree (Chairperson) and Leonie Fox (Secretary), accreditation to the Pre-school Learning Alliance was achieved in January 1998. East Bridgford Pre-school was the first group in Nottinghamshire to achieve this award for quality education and was re-accredited in November 2001.

Beyond its undoubted educational value the Pre-school is of considerable social value to young mothers and other carers and has become a village institution to be treasured.

Boys Brigade.

R.H. Swain J.P. who lived at The Manor founded the 24th Nottingham East Bridgford Company of the Boys Brigade in 1921. The first members were enrolled in 1922 and G.B. Goodson was in charge. In 1926 the juniors (Boys Life Brigade) were merged with the seniors. At the age of 17 members became officers of the Brigade. Initially the Company met in the Temperance Hall but in 1934 the organisation purchased the Primitive Methodist Chapel on College Street and from 1935 to 1966 held their meetings there. The pews were removed from the Chapel in 1934 to provide a more useful area for the Company.

In 1927 the Brigade formed the guard of honour to HRH The Prince of Wales at the opening of the new Gunthorpe Bridge. From the 1930s onwards the East Bridgford Brigade Band of buglers and drummers led many parades through the village. These included British Legion annual parades to the War Memorial on Remembrance Day and on Feast Sunday and on other special occasions such as the Silver Jubilee of King George V and the Coronation of King George VI.

Edward Bullers (the village carrier) became Captain of the Brigade and was the senior officer until the Brigade disbanded in 1966. From a membership high of 41 members the numbers had fallen to 20 and because the ageing Captain was unable to find anyone to succeed him in the post the Brigade ceased to function.

The Charity Commissioners on behalf of the Boys Brigade, in 1984, eventually sold the Primitive Methodist Chapel and it has subsequently been converted into a private house.

Girl Guides.

The 1st East Bridgford Guide Company was registered on 24th February 1924 and has continued to provide girls with opportunities for personal and social development ever since. The Company was founded by the Misses Mason, that is Irene, Madge and Sylvia who as members of the Women's Institute enlisted the support of that organisation. The W.I. Minute Book records they provided the money to buy the material to make the first uniforms.

Irene Mason became the first Guide Captain and was succeeded by her sister Madge who was Captain for many years. Sylvia Mason started the Brownie Guides for the younger children. The Company met in the W.I. Hut and there were members from East Bridgford, Newton and Shelford. About 1935 the meeting place moved to the Vicarage Room in Shelford and Joyce Roadley of Yew Tree Farm, Newton became Captain. The meeting place has subsequently moved at various times between the two villages.



East Bridgford Guides on their 60th anniversary

The Company prospered with membership numbers peaking at 36 but usually the numbers have been around the 20/24 mark. The Nottinghamshire County Cup was won in 1956, the Divisional Shield in 1967 and a number of Guides were awarded the Queen's Guide Award. The Company has marked its foundation with special celebrations held in 1961 (40 years), 1971 (50 years), 1981 (60 years), 1991 (70 years) and in 2001 (80 years). At the 70-year celebrations in 1991 it was notable that the Company had only had four Guide Captains in all that period.

Much of the credit for the prolonged success of the Guides must be given to Mrs Betty Cheetham under whose enthusiastic and skilful stewardship the Company prospered for over 45 years. In 1937 the nine years old Betty Rick (later Cheetham) joined the Company and remained in the Company for the following 54 years until 1991. She provided inspirational leadership to generations of Guides taking them to Camp every year for 27 consecutive years. Her services to the community were recognised on 1st January 2000 when she was most deservedly awarded the MBE.

Boy Scouts.

The 1st Shelford & East Bridgford Scout Group began in Shelford Village Hall on 12th September 1967 when Eric and Betty Cheetham formed a Cub Scout Pack. Initially there were 12 members but this soon increased and Betty Connolly and Jane Baguley joined the original leadership team.

The Scout Troop started in October 1969, holding their meetings in the old Methodist Sunday School building next to the Village Hall in East Bridgford, under the leadership of Derek Devonport and Eric Cheetham. In 1970 the meeting place moved to Shelford where they met until 1998 when the Group moved into the old building behind East Bridgford Village Hall that had formerly been occupied by the Youth Club.

The present Group Scout leader, Steve Cumberland, was delighted that the Group was able to return to East Bridgford and the opportunity was taken to start up a Beaver Scout Troop for 6 –8 year olds under the leadership of Nick Jackson. The Scout Leaders were Neil Walton and Francis Meylan. The latter joined the scouting movement as a Cub at age 8 and has remained a member of the different Sections of the Group ever since. For some years there was a thriving Venture Scout unit but it lost so many members at age 18 that it had to close. Recently, however, the Group is going from strength to strength with 24 Beavers (plus a waiting list), 30 Scouts (which includes girls) and some Explorer Scouts (who are today's Venture Scouts).

The Group takes members from not only East Bridgford and Shelford but also from Gunthorpe, Newton and Car Colston.

Over the years members of the Group have enjoyed all the usual scouting activities, camping, hikes, sport, competitions of all kinds and working for all the various badges awarded for acquiring new skills and competencies. The value of membership to the individual is in the friendship and the fellowship that scouting brings and in



The Cub Scouts at their anniversary in 1990

the service to the community that is fostered. The community has benefited from the Group's activities in many varied ways whether it be through delivering cards at Christmas, doing 'Bob a Job', providing entertainment and helping organise the Christmas Party for Senior Citizens, building bonfires for November 5th, in collecting and running innumerable jumble sales and in many other 'good deeds'.

Youth Club (and Spider Club).

In the 1960's a Youth Club used the Village Hall on one evening per week under the leadership of Frank Smith and then John Blatherwick. It appears there were few resources then available but much good work was done to organise activities for the young people of the village at a time when the older people appeared to have little sympathy for the developing needs of 'modern' teenagers.

The Club continued in a small way during the 1970's until the Village Hall Committee and the King Edward Club reviewed and subsequently upgraded their accommodation. When the new building for the King Edward Club was completed in 1980 the Youth Club moved into their old premises. Considerable refurbishment was undertaken with Adrian Hare, Anthony Foster, Simon Cox, Lindsay and Stephanie Hare, Tracey Crossland, Alison Curtis, Glen Willis and Nigel Smith making valuable contributions.

A committee of adults was formed under the Chairman Andrew James and included Peter and Cate Golightly, Mavis Pacey and Jean Willis. A Youth Leader was appointed, Peter Pacey, and with funding available from the County Council the Club operated two nights a week and a 'younger childrens' club, the Spider Club, was open on Friday evenings.

The Club, however, ceased to operate in 1995/6 due to the withdrawal of support from the County Council and eventually the premises became the home of the Scouts and Guides.

Mens Society.

In 1982, following the first Covenant Funding Campaign for St. Peter's Church some of the men involved decided they would like in some way to continue the comradeship they had built up during the successful campaign. Eleven of them met and formed the Men's Society.

From the outset it was decided that the meetings would be held on the 3rd Tuesday each month in the Village Hall Committee Room and that meetings would take place with no formal business, no officers, no subscription and no Annual General Meeting. The programme would comprise speakers at the winter meetings and in the summer there would be visits to places of interest. All men in the village are invited to attend and the ladies are invited on the summer visits.

The first organiser was Canon Alan Haydock and the first meeting was held on 21st September 1982 being a talk by Alvin Parry on "Ground Water Suffices" as part of a series of talks on the theme of the River Trent. The second organiser, Tony Ford, took over in January 1990 and he continues to arrange an interesting and stimulating programme.

Attendance at the meetings has varied over the years but about 20 is the norm; although the highest attendance was 39, in February 1998, for a talk by Adrian Henstock, the County Archivist, on the East Bridgford Maps of 1612 and 1614. A small charge is made at each meeting and this has risen from 30p to £1. The Society is grateful for the support of St. Peter's Church and for the contributions from the Methodist Chapel Waste Paper Fund.

In 1992 the Society celebrated its 10th Anniversary with supper and entertainment by Bob Flower in the W.I. Hut and the 15th Anniversary with a Cheese evening in the Village Hall.

Workers' Educational Association.

The inaugural meeting of the East Bridgford Branch of the WEA was held on 5th March 1975 with Tony Gaskell appointed Chairman, Connie Hampson, Secretary and Carol Godber as Treasurer. The aim of the WEA is to promote high quality learning opportunities for

adults based on democratic principles in its organisation and practice. The focus is within communities, and on the need to support and sustain the WEA's social purpose.

The first of many courses started in April 1975 and was on "The History of Porcelain and Pottery". Over the past 26 years the range of subjects studied has been extensive including Archaeology, Astronomy, China since the Revolution, Countryside studies, Geology, Local, National and World-wide History, Music, Literature, Computer Awareness (1984!) and many more subjects.

In the 1970's the Branch spent much time and effort in the organisation of a crèche for students but in the 1980's this was no longer an issue as the age profile of the students changed in an upward direction. This age profile is now reflected in the very popular classes held in the mornings in the village.

A highlight of the Branch was the publication in 1985 of a book entitled "Life and Landscape in East Bridgford 1600 – 1900". This excellent book was the result of work undertaken by the 25 members of the Local History classes tutored by John Samuels who edited the publication.

The Branch was lead from the early 1980's until 2001 by the inestimable Arthur Curtis for whom learning and the discovery of new knowledge was a real joy. The popularity of the courses run over the years has been a reflection of the thought and consultation that has taken place between the small committee and the prospective students each year.

History Group.

It is perhaps fitting that we finish this chapter with a brief reference to the formation of one of the newest Groups in the village. In the summer of 1999 a Local History Group was proposed for the purpose of producing a history of East Bridgford covering the 20th century.

By the time the Group was formally constituted in February 2000 the enormity of the original task was then appreciated. It was decided that to mark the millennium the publication of a book of photographs by the end of the year 2000 was a possibility. A team comprising Dot Crawford, Tony Ford, John Fox, Isabel Francis, Nigel Lawrence, Graham Lomax, Alison and Garth Powell, Tim Rogers and Bill Whitaker set to work acquiring photographs, capturing them on a computer archive, preparing and finally publishing the book "Images of East Bridgford – The Twentieth Century in Photographs". With the benefit of a grant from the Millennium Festival Awards for All Scheme a free copy was issued to every household in the village in December 2000.

The book now before you is the outcome of the motivating force behind the formation of our Group in 1999. However the History Group has developed a much wider remit and has a full programme of activities relating not only to our village but also to the wider historical perspective which influences our lives and the community in which we live.