

# CELEBRATIONS and OCCASIONS

The year is 1900 and it is the start of a new century. The record does not say how the people of East Bridgford celebrated this occasion. Almost certainly, if the subsequent early years of the century are any guide, there would have been ringing of the church bells and a New Year Tea. Perhaps not the high life by modern standards but life was different a hundred years ago; expectations were lower.



A hundred years later and another Millennium is celebrated. Perhaps with a backwards view to the restraint of the past, it is celebrated with dignity. A torchlight procession starting at two locations meets at the War Memorial where a short service, conducted by Canon Haydock, preceded fireworks and the church bells.

*Left: The processions meet by the War Memorial*

*Below: Canon Haydock conducts the Service*

Two occasions a century apart were celebrated by the inhabitants of East Bridgford by congregating together to enjoy one another's company.

The years in between brought many changes; two World Wars, a revolution in technology, improvements in transport and services. The people of East Bridgford rose to all the challenges and with humour and determination enjoyed themselves where possible and bearing the more difficult times with fortitude.



Our methods of celebrating have changed over time. Tea was once the great draw that brought people together with 'Teas' being the superior version where cakes and sandwiches were also provided. The Parish Tea was held every New Year until the sixties when the occasion was 'adopted' by the Tennis Club and became a fund raising dinner dance. Games and 'Entertainments' were on offer for an entry fee of 6d (2.5p) for tea & entertainment or 3d (1.25p) if the Tea was omitted. It is not until much later in the Century that the words 'coffee' or 'coffee morning' appear in the Parish magazine. Dances became more popular later in the century after street lighting made it possible to hold events on nights other than those with a full moon. Celebrating by ringing the Church bells is timeless.

**Primitive Methodist Chapel,**  
**EAST BRIDGFORD.**

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ON SUNDAY, APRIL 2nd, 1854,

THE

**A N N I V E R S A R Y**

Of the above Chapel will be celebrated, when

**Two Sermons**

Will be preached by

**THE REV. R. PARKS,**  
OF NOTTINGHAM:

That in the Afternoon, at Half-past Two, on—"The descent  
of the Mighty Angel."—Rev. x. 6-7.

That in the Evening, at Six, on—"The Opening of the Six  
Seals, and the Day of Wrath."—Rev. vi.

*Collections will be made in aid of the Chapel Funds.*

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ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, AT HALF-PAST FOUR,

**A T E A M E E T I N G**

Will be held in the Chapel, after which the  
above-named minister will deliver a

**LECTURE ON TEMPERANCE.**

Tickets for Tea, 9d. each.

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J. VICE, Printer, Nottingham.

Above: Even in the 19th century, teas were a popular entertainment. Here, Harry Stokes, the Miller, is invited to the anniversary of the Temperance Chapel (On College Street, now a private house).

The opportunities for a celebration in one form or another have been many and varied. This chapter looks not only at those celebrations but also at other events and occasions that have been noteworthy milestones in the life of the village. They are loosely grouped under the following headings :-

Celebrations, The Church, Disasters, Fund Raising, Social, and General Interest

*(Text in italics denotes a direct quotation from the source material; usually the Parish magazine of the time)*

## Celebrations

In 1900, there were three occasions for celebration.

- The relief of Mafeking on 19<sup>th</sup> May was celebrated with church bells and a church service on the following day.
- The harvest thanksgiving on 29<sup>th</sup> September which without modern machinery was an occasion for serious thanks in the Church.
- Queen Victoria's 81<sup>st</sup> birthday on the 24<sup>th</sup> August which was marked by speeches and instrumental music from the Misses Fox in the Temperance Hall (later to become the Village Hall).

The celebrants could not know, of course, that on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 1901 the Queen would die and that the Church bells, as so often through the Century, would be called into service; this time with a tolling and in the evening a muffled peal. A memorial service was held the following month.

In May 1901 the Boer War ended and a new flag was hoisted on the church flagpole. The coronation of Edward VII in August must have generated jollities but the record is silent about the details.

A little more information is available for the King's death in May 1910 when a service was held at 1.00 p.m.; the church was draped in black and the Dead March was played. There was also the inevitable muffled peal of bells.

The bells were not always used to mark sad occasions, sometimes they were used in their own right as an instrument. On 18<sup>th</sup> October 1910 the Long Eaton ringers rang *several changes of different methods*.

The death of the King meant that there was a new monarch to welcome and celebrate. George V was crowned on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1911. The village responded with enthusiasm. There were sports, an oak tree was planted on Kneeton Road by Miss Fox and *an anthem sung*. There was a pageant of historical characters by 120 performers wearing *picturesque costumes* which produced a *spectacular and instructive effect*. Perhaps best of all, there was a *Meat Tea for all aged over 14* in the Temperance Hall and all under 14 *were entertained at the rectory*.

A bonfire on Mill Field completed the day. The images below and on the next page show some of the characters and the pageant report.



Various Groups in procession



Saxon Group

Coronation Day, June 22nd, was announced by the Church bells ringing for the Celebration of Holy Communion at 7.30. At 11 a.m. a Special Service was held, as authorized by the Archbishops for use on this day. The words of the hymns used were written by Rev. H. Biddell, Vicar of S. Paul's, Nottingham.

At 12 o'clock, an Oak tree was planted in Kneeton road, under the superintendence of a Committee appointed for the purpose, the Rector, Mr. J. Wilkinson and Mr. Gower. Miss Fox performed the ceremony of the planting and the National Anthem was sung.

At 1.30, a Pageant Procession, in which about 120 performers took part, started from the grounds of the Hall and proceeded to the lawn of W. A. Hodges, Esq., J.P., where a grand parade before the Judges took place. The Rector gave a descriptive comment on each group as it drew up, pointing out the characters and subjects displayed, the local connection or tradition, and the historical bearing of each upon the great event commemorated by this day. The whole Pageant produced a spectacular and instructive effect of really remarkable excellence, with very great credit to its organizing committee, Mrs. Hill, Mrs. Milward, Miss Fox and Miss Clough. The very competent Judges pronounced their high estimation of the character of the whole display, and with difficulty where they considered all so good, gave the following award :—

1. Sir John Caltoft, the 14th Century Knight whose effigy is in East Bridgford Church ; 2. Pedlar woman ; 3. King Ethelbert and Queen Bertha. *Children*—Napoleon, National Anthem, Austria.

*Special Mention*—Saladin, Sairey Gamp, Hon. Mrs. Jamieson, Colonel Hacker, Thomas Swanwick, Royalist Trooper, Raisuli, St. George.

*Best Group*—Elizabeth Fry and prisoners in Newgate. Mention must also be made of the Oddfellows, who appeared in their robes of office of nearly a hundred years ago, and the newly formed local detachment of Territorials.



EAST BRIDGFORD PAGEANT.

The Saxon Group—King Ethelbert, Mr. Willisroft ; Queen Bertha, Miss Clegg ; Attendants, Misses Clegg ; Thane, Mr. F. Clegg ; St. Paulinus, Mr. D. Gower.

## Pageant Report

The Total Abstinence Society gave a social evening 11<sup>th</sup> of April 1911. It is not clear if the evening was classed as a celebration or not but it certainly would have been a sober event!

Birthdays have, of course, always been a cause for celebration. In January 1927, William Walker's was special. On the 8<sup>th</sup>, he celebrated his 105<sup>th</sup> birthday. Apparently he *was alert and his memory clear*. He had been baptised in East Bridgford in 1822.

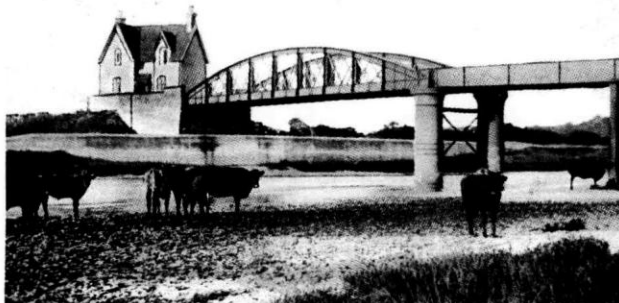
The very name of our village- East Bridgford- implies a crossing of the river. It is suggested the crossing was never a paved ford, as at crossing points elsewhere, but that it was a crossing usable when the level of the river was low. A ferry was used in later years.

A toll bridge was built to improve matters; the foundation stone being laid by Earl Manvers in 1873. The cost of the project was £7500. The route across the Trent involved going down Trent Lane, and across the bridge to Gunthorpe paying a toll of 1d (0.42p) to Mrs Holloway, the toll keeper. The abutments and toll house of the toll bridge still exist. This bridge served the community and more extensive travellers for 51 years.

Clearly, even in the 1920s, the traffic volume was becoming too much for the existing bridge and on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1924, Nottinghamshire County Council approved a scheme for a new bridge slightly further west than the old one. The cost of the replacement was estimated at £125000. Work started in 1925 and on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1927 the new bridge, complete with the new approaches and road, were opened by Edward, Prince of Wales.

Silver Jubilees were occasions for celebration. There has been Queen Elizabeth II's in 1977, of which more later, but 1935 was the Silver Jubilee of George V. His coronation had galvanised the village to all the events mentioned earlier but his Silver Jubilee was reason for the village to have a good time with floodlighting of the church *for a short time after dark*, a Church Communion and Service of Thanksgiving and another pageant. The following page shows two images from that day.

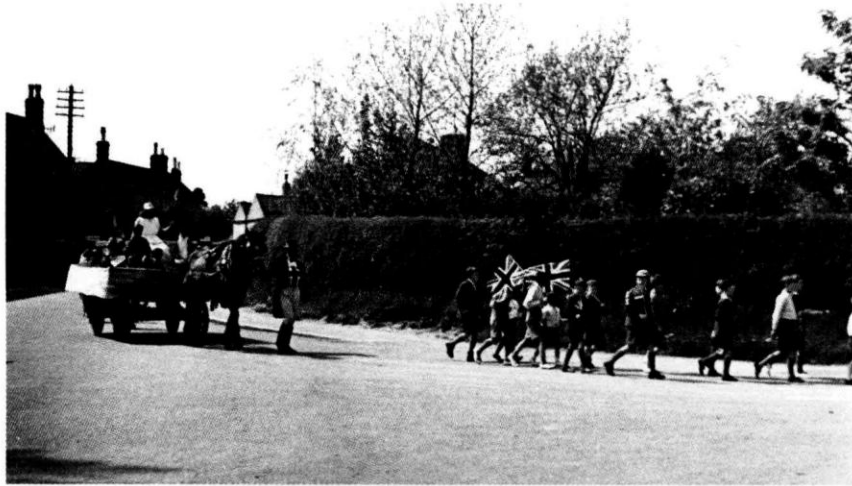
Gunthorpe Bridge, Notts.



Gunthorpe Toll Bridge & Toll House



Edward, Prince of Wales opening the new Gunthorpe Bridge



The Pageant celebrating George V's Silver Jubilee



Miss Gertrude Fox— President  
of EB WI

It is interesting that the Second World War produced almost no immediate reaction in the Parish Magazine records. There was a gradual increase in the items mentioned that were relevant to the War. In terms of pure celebration, there were few.

The W.I., inaugurated in East Bridgford in 1917, celebrated its Silver Jubilee on the 9<sup>th</sup> March 1943. By then, food was short and so the celebrants were asked to *bring a magazine or book for salvage and to bring their own food.*

The committee all contributed towards a cooperative birthday cake and a cut glass tumbler was presented to Miss Fox.

W.I. meetings have been cancelled for various reasons over the years but that scheduled for 8<sup>th</sup> May 1945 was cancelled for the most welcome of reasons; Victory in Europe Day. The residents of East Bridgford were out celebrating spontaneously in whatever way they saw fit. The celebrations continued for some time. It was not until September 1946 that the Comforts Committee (an organisation involved in fund raising for the benefit of active servicemen; sending food parcels and other 'comforts' to the men) held a welcome home supper for 72 service men from East Bridgford, Newton and Kneeton. Over the duration of the war the committee raised £604 15s 6d. It sent 151 parcels of comforts and 233 postal orders to service men. At the supper, each guest was given an envelope containing £2 5s 0d.

Post war, the first major event to be celebrated was the wedding of the Princess Elizabeth and Philip Mountbatten on the 20th November 1947. A peal of bells was rung timed to the moment the couple left Westminster Abbey. A telegram was sent to the couple "*On behalf of the Rector and Bell Ringers- Best Wishes*".



Above: Dr Geoffrey Brookes on his retirement

Dr. Brooks occupies a special niche in the affections of the village people. A vote of thanks letter was sent to him by the Parish Council when he returned from the War to convalesce having been badly wounded. Earlier, he had been injured when he flung himself across a wounded soldier to protect him from stampeding horses. For this act of bravery he was awarded the George Medal. He was also later awarded the Military Cross for extreme bravery and devotion to duty. Much later in 1990, a quarter peal of 'plain bob minor' was rung to celebrate his birthday.

Five years later in 1952, following the death of George VI, Princess Elizabeth became Queen Elizabeth II, the coronation taking place on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1953. The village decided to celebrate in style. A committee was formed and a letter sent to the Parish Council asking for support. Mr J Allwood (farmer) was also contacted to ask for transport support.

The centre piece of the festivities was a Coronation Pageant allowing the link with East Bridgford and the crowning of Elizabeth I to suggest the theme. The celebrations also included many other events. The programme overleaf shows the details.

# Coronation Celebrations

## EAST BRIDGFORD

### Sunday, May 31st.

Special Coronation Services in the Parish Church. United Service at 6.30 p.m. at which the Hallelujah Chorus will be sung.

### Monday, June 1st.

Children's Tea in the Village Hall at 4.30 p.m.  
Children's Sports on the Butt Field at 6 p.m. (*see special page*)

### Tuesday, June 2nd.

#### 8 a.m. Holy Communion.

After the Queen's Crowning a special Peal of Bells will be rung.

#### 2.30 p.m. Opening Ceremony at the Church Corner.

Procession of Decorated Prams and Vehicles onto the Butt Field, (judges, Mr. and Mrs. Sydney Robinson of the Nottingham Theatre Clubs) preceded by the Newark British Legion Band.

#### 3.15 p.m. (approx.) Planting of Commemoration Oak Tree by G. O. Brooks, Esq., G.M., M.C., M.B., B.Ch.

#### 3.30 p.m. Adult Sports (*see special page*)

Teas will be served in the Women's Institute Hut.

#### 5.30 p.m. The Pageant (*see special page*).

#### 7 p.m. (approx.) Comic Cricket Match.

#### 9 p.m. Whist Drive in King Edward Club.

#### 9.30 p.m. to 1 a.m.

Dancing to Wally Amos and his Band in the Village Hall.

### Saturday, June 6th.

Old Folk's Tea in the Village Hall 5-9 p.m.

### Sunday, June 7th.

Coronation Service at Kneeton at 6.30 p.m.

By Order of the Committee



Janet Morris as Queen Elizabeth I



The pageant 'Crowning'

Twenty five years pass and, as briefly mentioned earlier, we return now to the Queen's Silver Jubilee. A Village picnic was organised on Butt Close, with donkey rides, decorated bicycles, children's sports, cricket match, and open bowls tournament, Morris Dancers, a dance at the school, and a disco in the Village Hall. The day started *in driving rain* but the sun came out it time for the crowning of Delia Curtis as the 'Bridgford Queen'. This continued a long tradition such crownings. The 'Coronation' of the chosen local girl usually took place on May Day but on this occasion the tradition was borrowed to celebrate the Silver Jubilee.

Charles and Diana's ill fated wedding was celebrated in 1981 with 12260 changes of 'plain bob' being rung. There was a Croft Rise street party and an evening party in Fred and Jean Hunt's garden.

In 1984 Doris Hand was presented to the Queen at Southwell Minster when she received Maundy Money at the Maundy Thursday ceremony.

1986 saw the old custom of 'firing the bells' resurrected on bonfire night. This does not imply flames of any sort but means that all the bells are rung simultaneously.

The Village Hall, built in 1883 and originally called the Temperance Hall, celebrated its century in 1983. The name of the hall was changed to the present usage in 1936 and in 1939 it obtained charitable status. 1940 saw small front and rear extensions (surprising that work of this nature could be carried out in war time) and more extensive alterations took place in the seventies with toilets and a committee room being added. The 100 year anniversary was celebrated with a Tea Party on Feast Sunday with a small display of photographs and art. Two hundred people attended.



VE Day Street Party on Kneeton Road. The then District Councillor, John Higgs looks on.

19th July 1988. Once again the church bells rang out in celebration. This time for the four hundredth anniversary of the sighting of the armada. A beacon at Belvoir Castle gave the 'warning' as, no doubt, it did 400 years ago.

Golden Jubilees have, so far, not been mentioned. In 1995 there were two. VE day and VJ day.

- VE day was celebrated from the 5th to the 8th of May with a 1940s dance in the Village Hall on the 5th,
- A coffee morning in the Methodist Chapel with and exhibition of village memorabilia on the 6th,
- Church services on the 7th
- A street party followed by a bonfire on the Reindeer field on the 8th.

VJ day celebrations also continued over a number of days. A Village Hall dance on the 18th of August, a dinner in the W.I. hut on the 19th and, finally, a Church service on the 20th.

2002 was the year of Queen Elizabeth II's Golden Jubilee celebrations marked in the village by family picnics on Butt Close and with plans for an improvement scheme for the area where Haycroft Way opens onto Main Street .

Celebrating an even longer period of time, the Girl Guides held a 75th birthday party in the W.I. hut on the 21st February 1996.

Concluding this section of the chapter, Millennium Eve was marked, as already described, with a torchlight procession on 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 1999, bringing to a close 100 years of village celebrations.

## The Church

It was certainly an occasion worthy of note when the Reverend du Bouley Hill attended the Oberammergau Passion Play in 1910. Performed every ten years by the residents of Oberammergau, visiting this famous religious play must have been a serious undertaking in 1910.

On a more prosaic note, in April 1910, the Church Council agreed to stop the practice of *singers and ringers* going round the village for a Christmas Box. Up to then, it appears that this was their only source of 'income' for singing and ringing. It was agreed that in future the Churchwardens would pay them from a special fund collected on Feast Sunday.

In the early part of the century the structural state of the church gave cause for concern. After the completion of reconstruction, the Bishop of Southwell reopened the Church on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1914 . He thanked those engaged in the work and stated that *there has been no scamping or stint of pains* ("scamp"— to work in a perfunctory manner).

We have all experienced the chain letter or pyramid letter phenomenon at some time. Towards the end of the World War I a Red Cross Prayer Chain appeared which threatened *trouble* if the chain was broken. This was rightly condemned by the Rev. Du Bouley Hill.

The ringing of the church bells has already been mentioned several times in the 'Celebrations' section. They were fully tested in July 1919 when the Midland Counties Association of Change Ringers rang *5040 changes in several minor methods in 2 hrs 50 min*. This was the first time a complete peal had been successfully accomplished on the East Bridgford bells although several previous attempts had been made. To celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, a new Treble Bell (cast by John Taylor Ltd. of Loughborough, 26th September 2002) was added to the bell tower along with a second bell inscribed "*In Memoriam Leslie and Doris Hand*". This augmentation brought the number of bells in the tower to eight.

A familiar sight to us all is the memorial cross at the Church cross roads. This was erected after World War I and the construction itself almost caused injury. When trying to lift the 'cap stone' into place, the crane jib broke and fortunately, although badly bruised, the foreman suffered no serious injury.



The War Memorial depicted on a 1920's postcard shortly after it was dedicated

The stone was successfully hoisted into place on the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1920 and the cross was dedicated at the Feast service on 27<sup>th</sup> June 1920.

Another familiar sight, the tower weather vanes were installed in May 1966.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1969 the Rector and Mrs Johnson attended a Royal Garden Party. Our Rectors appear to be a much travelled, because this one had also been invited to the Tea Ceremony in the Royal Palace, Tokyo.

Events are not always happy in nature. In May 1970, lead was stolen from the Church roof. It is, however, satisfactory to note that the thieves were caught, tried and imprisoned.

It is impossible to have a section on the Church without mentioning that the present incumbent, Canon Alan Haydock, was inducted on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1980. Not long to go (at the time of writing—2003) to his own Silver Jubilee! At the time, of course Alan was not a Canon. This occurred six years later in April 1986 when he was installed as honorary Canon (Prebendary). In May of the same year Alan performed a wedding blessing for Ken Kercheval and his bride Ara. Ken was the actor who played the character Cliff Barnes in the U. S. TV soap, Dallas.

The floodlit church is a warming sight on a winters night but the practice only began in 1990 “to commemorate events and fundraise for the church”. The lights were first switched on to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Britain.

1995 saw TV crews in East Bridgford, filming an item for the programme ‘The Heart of the Country’. This involved filming a service in the Church. Apparently the congregation were very patient when they had to listen to the Sermon two or three times.

Of course, there is much more to say about the Church in East Bridgford and this is covered in another chapter.

## Disasters

It is inevitable that over the years, there have been occasions that are not happy; some of these can be described as inconveniences but, in the worst cases, disasters.

We do not seem to get much snow these days, perhaps due to global warming. Earlier in the twentieth century, however, the story was different. Snow caused problems on several occasions. In February 1900 the Trent flooded due to melting snow. In 1909 heavy snow followed by a thaw flooded the road to Gunthorpe Bridge for four days. This would have been Trent Lane; the modern road not having been built at that date. 1918 again suffered heavy snow, blocking roads. 1927 had snow storms over Christmas and, much later, 1960 had a wintry spell followed by floods. 1979 was the last time roads were blocked with three out of the four roads into the village being impassable.

Rain also causes flooding and in 1910 some roads were impassable. 1928 saw the Trent flooded which then froze hard allowing skating. The Shipstones of Kneeton House brought roast chicken and potatoes to the skaters.

The view from Gunthorpe over the weir towards East Bridgford during the 1995 flood.



Sometimes rain can be welcome, as on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1919 when rain fell for the first time after a three-month drought. However, on the 7<sup>th</sup> August 1922 a garden fete in Dr. Duff's garden was *entirely prevented* by a deluge of rain. Three inches of rain fell in twenty-four hours. The event was rearranged for the 10<sup>th</sup> when all went well. Thunderstorms can accompany rain. Mr Bright's house, Walnut Cottage and Richard Upton's house were struck on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 1923. It may be that a stack fire at Toll Bar Farm in which four stacks and two carts were destroyed was caused by a lighting strike but there is no recorded evidence.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1916 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Charles Ivan Carryer RFC (aged 19) landed his biplane on the fringes of the village. He was lost and wanted to ask directions to his home near Leicester. On taking off, he struck a rooftop and crashed. He was severely burnt and died later that night in the Nottingham Hospital. His father later contacted the village to thank those involved *for alleviating his son's suffering*.



Repairs on Trent Lane in 1988  
after a further collapse

One of the greatest disasters- a tragedy- occurred on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1922. Three children, Alice May and Walter Edwin Norman Fox and their cousin Joseph Gilbert were walking past the church wall when it collapsed without warning. The two Fox children were killed outright. Their cousin, suffering from severe internal injuries, was sent to the Nottingham Hospital where he eventually recovered. The church wall has been a long term problem. Part of it near the Lych Gate collapsed in May 1967, caused by heavy rain. Fortunately this time there were no injuries. Extensive rebuilding repairs have since rendered these walls safe.

There must have been a number of sports injuries over the years, but one report stood out in the Parish Magazine archives for its choice of words. In January 1949 Mr Kirkland left hospital following lengthy treatment for the loss of his right eye in a cricket accident (presumably lengthy given that the cricket season was long over (no pun intended)). He was reported to *be very comfortable with his new one*.

## Fund Raising

Fund raising is not a modern phenomenon. It has been going on in the village for nearly one hundred years and probably longer; the researches for this book did not extend beyond 1900.

Fund raising has taken many forms from Dickens readings (in aid of the Nurse Fund-1909) to a guest appearance of Jocky Wilson (in aid of the Ciara Hennessy fund-1995)

It would be tedious to list every money raising occasion from Dickens to Wilson. Suffice it to say that there have been:-

- Whist Drives in aid of the Nurse Fund, Troops, the Comforts Fund, a Fireman's son who lost a leg at work, the Red Cross, the Church Central Heating, the Village Hall (held in atrocious weather-1979- and raised £124.30) plus many more.
- Sales of Work, and their close cousin Bazaars are not so popular now as in the first half of the century. The W.I. were often, but not always, involved. The main benefactor of these activities appears to be the Church Restoration Fund (1911, 1912, 1913).
- Concerts, recitals and dramatic performances are all methods by which the population of East Bridgford has been parted from its cash for the good of one worthy cause or another. The Dickens reading has already been mentioned. Notable amongst this category is the dramatic performance by Captain Jeffcock and his bigaphone band (for boy scouts). Unfortunately, no explanation of a bigaphone band can be found.
- There have been auctions, both of goods and promises, jumble sales (by the hundred!), a drawing room meeting in East Bridgford Hall in aid of Church of England Waifs (1912), Lawn Tennis Tournaments *on various lawns*, fetes, summer suppers (at The Hill in aid of the Village Hall modernisation fund), coffee mornings, footpath walks (bi-annually in aid of the Lifeboat Association) Grand Socials (held in 1943 by Batchelor's Peas in aid of the Comforts Fund and featuring *the Good Old Batchelors Concert Party*) and Christmas Fairs. The first reference to a Christmas Fair, found, was 1937 which relates to it as *a success in spite of the inclement weather*. The fairs ran until 1998 when a Christmas Dance was held instead because *the Fair had been losing its appeal*. The dance featured a fish and chip supper *with balloons*.



Every 2 years in May the village walked for the RNLI. Some years it was hot & dry ...

- The Methodist Church also holds an annual Christmas Fair.
- It seems fair to say that dances and socials have been, by far, the most convivial way of gaining enjoyment whilst supporting needy causes. There have been hundreds. Space and the avoidance of boredom preclude a comprehensive list. Amongst the more notable occasions, however, are, Village Hall dances in 1940 in aid of the troops, Village Hall dances, also in 1940, *every Friday until further notice to pay off the village hall fund*, many other dances during the WW2 period, including a children's dance, in aid of the Comforts Fund, a Bell Ringers Ball in 1961, a Halloween Thrash, and, of course, the series of Masked/Midsummer Balls organised by Janice White. Originally designed to raise funds for the new sports pavilion in 1986, they also went on to support the Great Ormond Street Hospital (1988), Nottingham City Hospital Rainbow Appeal (1990, £1436) and Breast Cancer Research (1993, £2634). The latter was reported by those attending to be *the best ever*.



Janice White

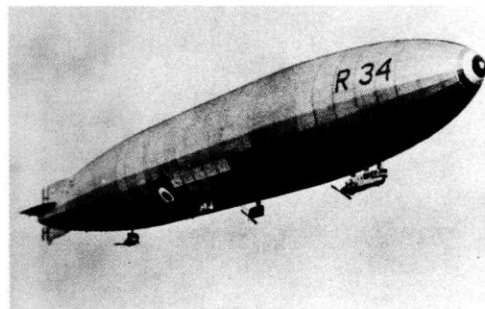


Midsummer Ball Revellers, including Garth Powell, and Richard Thomas, Head and deputy Head of St. Peters.

## General Interest

Over the century there have been occasions and happenings in, near, around, under and over East Bridgford that, whilst not fitting into the specific headings of celebrations or occasions, are nonetheless of interest. For example, in July of 1911, the Daily Mail Great Air Race passed over the village. One intrepid pilot was reported to be seen *to check his watch against the church clock*.

Also in the air, on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1919, the airship R34 passed over East Bridgford on its return from America. The outward trip had taken 108 hrs and the return 75; not much quicker than an ocean liner but the harbinger of things to come.



During 1923 Dr. Felix Oswald, singled handed, excavated the Margidunum site. Much later, in 1968, the site was again explored prior to the building of the new road island on the A46. Apparently at the time we were promised that the A46 would be 'dualled'. The upgrading of the A46 was still awaited over 30 years later.

On 29<sup>th</sup> September 1925, the new Gunthorpe lock was completed which, along with the others up and down the Trent, allowed barge navigation from Nottingham to the North Sea by 'Rhine Gauge' barges. Navigation of the Trent had been possible for smaller vessels for perhaps 200 years. It was opened on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 1925. It was this increase in capacity that allowed, for example, the increase in the timber industry in Nottingham. Vessels carrying Baltic timber could now reach the City wharves.

Our recent 2002 earthquake was not the first to be felt in the village. *Two distinct shocks* on the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1926 at 4 and 5 pm were felt over the midlands and southern England. One month later on the 6<sup>th</sup>, a brilliant meteor complete with *rumbling sound* was seen which disappeared over Yorkshire with an explosion.

There were two occasions of note in 1966 when the radio show 'Gardeners Question Time' visited and a nightingale was heard in the village. The two are not linked.

1981 saw St. Peter's headmaster, Garth Powell exchange position with the headmaster of a school in Peterborough, Ontario. The exchange lasted for six months and the Canadians, Heather and Guy Thomson, became firm friends with many of the villagers. In the same year, seventy Elm trees on Trent Lane were felled due to Dutch Elm disease.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> January 1983, Dr. Brooks presided over the Village Hall AGM for the forty seventh time. Remarkable!

In 1987, St. Peter's school entered the Cadbury National Exhibition of Children's Art with a piece entitled 'Our Village Show'; made up of pottery figures made by the children of the school. In the event, the entry was 'highly commended' and the school received the Frank Tuckett Trophy and £70 for use in art education in the school.



Kenneth Baker, Minister of Education with two award winners and the winning work entitled "Our Village Show".

John Brydon, Clive Press and Richard Black drove a 1912 Lancia Simplex in the 1990 Paris to Peking Rally. Mr Brydon's wife and children took the easier route, flying out to Peking to meet the intrepid drivers on their arrival.

The Widdison family have long been associated with East Bridgford. In 1992, Cecil Widdison was honoured and thanked by the village for his long and tireless work for the Horticultural Society. In particular his involvement with the annual Horticultural Show. Cecil was involved with show up to 2000 in various capacities, including Secretary and Show Consultant, for over 40 years. In 1995 Bill Widdison retired from his position of Village Hall caretaker. He was presented with an antique fireside table in thanks for his sterling work since 1959.



Dr. Stuart Fraser with Cecil Widdison at the presentation in 1992

An historical exhibition was held in the Church in 1971. This included a short history of the Brunt Grammar School, robes and regalia of the Order of the Garter (by permission of Her Majesty the Queen), replicas of the Crown Jewels (by H. Samuel), Uniforms of Yeomen Warders of the Tower of London, floral decorations, refreshments, stalls showing wine making and rural crafts, and *Tableux Vivants in period costume by scholars of Samuel Brunts School to illustrate the connection of Brunts with East Bridgford*. The exhibition was visited by many from outside the village including children for whom it was their first visit to the countryside.

In 1981 a hot air balloon rally was held at the farm on Kirk Hill. There were forty nine balloons including one from the USA.

On the 1st September 1987, Tedious died (a cat belonging to Debbie Hindle of Tea Pot Row). To many, this will mean nothing. To those that knew this cat of character, it was a sad day.

The new play equipment in Butts Field, including the skateboard ramp was opened by Kenneth Clarke QC MP on 19th September 1997. The equipment was financed by a Sport for All Foundation donation plus help from St. Peter's School, East Bridgford Parish Council and Radcliffe on Trent Lions.

## Social Occasions

The word social here means occasions that have affected the village social structure rather than dances and get-togethers. For example, in 1909 the school was closed to allow the pupils to help with the potato lifting. This was not an isolated closure. The pupils were expected to help with the harvest and the school had to accommodate this expectation. Sometimes, as in August 1942, only the senior children stayed away from school to help. Farming was not the only cause of school closure. Disease was a much more serious matter then than now. In 1912, 1914 and 1916 the school was closed due to outbreaks of measles. In 1913 closure was due to Scarletina.

The health of the school population was being addressed when in July 1938, the new flushing WCs were opened. The new *sanitary accommodation* was officially opened by Mrs Greenwood at a party in Dr Taylor's garden. She said that "*since the apparatus in question had been invented in Queen Elizabeth I reign, she was surprised it had taken so long*" (to install).

Despite having less time to appreciate the aesthetics of life in times gone by, the people of East Bridgford, apparently, have long been aware of the charm of the village. In 1910 telegraph wires and poles were moved "*because they were spoiling a picturesque part of the village*"; specifically, in Trent Lane.

1914 saw the first bus service to Nottingham. The service, provided by Messrs Attfield and Bullers, "*was a covered motor to Nottingham on market days for 1/6 (7.5p)*".

The Summertime Act was first enacted on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1916. The reporter in the Parish Magazine stated that this was "*yet another change after the recent alteration of time to nationwide GMT owing to the extension of the railways over England*". England had, of course, adopted nationwide GMT to facilitate the running of the railways. The sun is overhead in the village eight minutes after GMT and the further you go east or west from the Greenwich meridian, the greater the time difference. This made the running and timing of the railways very difficult. Hence the change.

In addition to the World War in 1917 there was also a war on rats and sparrows, long considered pests in the Country environment. The bounties paid were 2d per rats tail, 1/2d for an old sparrows head and 3d (1.25p) per dozen (12) young sparrows. Also in 1917, travelling health vans visited the village to dispense advice on fruit bottling and drying, war time cookery, allotment gardening, insect pests and health in the home. The advice was free.

The fruit crop in the following year was a partial failure and so there was a national collection of blackberries. 3d per lb was paid but unauthorised pickers were not allowed; authorisation had to be sought from the head teacher.

The Second War also resulted in social changes with fire watching, dig for victory (the Youth Movement started a dig for victory club and took over neglected allotments for the purpose). The main crop was potatoes. The population was encouraged to salvage as much as possible. They were asked to save paper, rubber, rags, metals, bones and kitchen waste. Some vegetables were like gold dust. At one dance which included a sale of produce, the onions were deemed too valuable and scarce to be sold. They were raffled!

In 1987, the foundation stone for the new W.I. hut was laid. A canister containing records, maps and a chart of donations was buried under it.

In the following year, the tender for the new Sports Pavilion was approved by the Parish Council. The new building was opened, preceded by much fund raising, by the Mayor of Rushcliffe on 26th June 1989.

## And Finally

The village Feast and the Flower Show are covered elsewhere in this book. It is interesting, however, to see these occasions through the eyes of a youth in about 1930. Mr. Walter Fernley moved into the village as a boy of 12 in 1928. He remembers the village Feast from those days:-



The village fair in the 1920s

*"The village Feast was the highlight of the year for the children, there was a fair in Butt Field with Roundabouts, Cakewalk, Swing Boats, and various Side Shows. These started up on Feast Saturday in the evening, also on Feast Monday and Tuesday evenings. Tuesday afternoon was for the Flower Show, which was held at different sites over the years. At the time I am thinking of it was held in the grounds of the Old Hall. There were several large marquees and sideshows of different kinds. The Marquees were for the exhibits in the numerous classes of the show, which had been judged in the morning and the prizes and cups allocated.*

*The show began with the Boys Brigade band leading the children's Fancy Dress parade around the village and into the Flower Show site. There the costumes were judged and the prizes awarded. There was an arena where various bands and display teams performed and we walked round the tents to look at the exhibits on display. There were a large number of vegetables, flowers and pot plants on exhibition; all magnificent for the time of the year; the late frost period was not yet over.*

*Ashley's Roundabouts and Cakewalk were towed to Butt Field by large steam driven traction engines a few days before the Feast started. We used to run to the field at dinner and school closing time to see if anything had arrived, or was arriving. Sometimes we were lucky enough to see the traction engines towing the trailers into the field and parking them where they would be needed on the nights. The fair came for many years and we struck up a friendly relationship with the show ladies and gentlemen. The sideshows were composed of coconut shies, hoopla, darts, shooting and others I cannot remember. There were prizes to be won, usually coconuts, glass vases and dishes, also toys. These prizes were known to us as "Feasters", I remember being warned off the dartboard because we were winning too many. I think I still have a few of them amongst our possessions.*

*They were really busy evenings with rides on the horses and cakewalk to the tunes from the mighty organ. There was only one ride I could not stomach (literally) and that was the swing boats. I had seasickness in later years and it was the same sensation. The music was turned off at 11 pm and the site was vacated at midnight.*

*Feast Monday was the day for the cricket match of the year. It was an all day game between the village team and Dr. G. Brookes' selected eleven."*

Wonderful memories from an (almost) life long village resident of a Feast and a Show, in some respects not too different from today, whilst in others, much more of a celebrated occasion.

There are many more items that could have been included in this chapter. This is an active village. However, another villager who has lived in East Bridgford all his life, also in his eighties, said that, to him, the greatest occasion of all, and worthy of great celebration, was the coming of piped water. No more filling buckets from wells and cisterns!

This section cannot close without mention of an occasion, without which this and its sister publication "Images of East Bridgford" would not exist. On the 25<sup>th</sup> May 1999, a group of like minded villagers met in what became the inaugural meeting of the East Bridgford History Group.