

CLUBS AND SOCIETIES

Memoirs of some of the Social Organisations in the village

Tape 1 -

Cubs, Scouts, Guides and Brownies (Mrs Poupart) Scoutmaster (Mr Poupart) provided uniforms out of his own pocket. Taught boys how to pack parcels, mend shoes and boxing to settle disputes.

Tape 2 -

Roke Brass Band - Edward Justins played in this.

Tape 3 -

WI folded some years ago, also Mothers Union. My mother played cricket for a woman's team in the field by the Shepherds Hut.

Tape 5 -

Youth Club - Ran the village youth club. It was attended by children from 12 + but he was flexible about the age limit. They played a lot of rounders and travelled about the area playing matches and competitions. They won the Coca-Cola Championships one year and also the District Cup sponsored by the Henley Standard. The celebrations afterwards were held in the upstairs room of the Greyhound pub. The youth club also had outings.

Tape 6 -

Womens Fellowship – Marjorie Miners was a member of the WI and also the Womens Fellowship which was much enjoyed.

Tape 8 -

Boys Club - run for young men to age 30'ish. Shooting Range with sandbags and targets, very popular.

Tape 9 -

Horticultural Society - was in existence. WI became the Womens Fellowship.

Tape 10 -

Brownies, Guides and Rangers. Amy Reeves played the piano for these organisation. Miss Quinn, Edie Burgess and Mrs Bennett were the Guiders. Mrs Eaglebot helped with the Guides – the family lived in the house Lady Hambleton subsequently lived in. A nice family – Hill House.

W.I. The Reading Room was often used by the W.I. in the 1940's – thinks the W.I. was one of the original ones in the country. Run by Miss Quinn of the Manor.

Tape 11 -

Rifle Range was there during the first war. Ewelme had a golf course.

Tape 14 -

The Ewelme Society - was established because of concern for the safety of the village. The B4009 went right through the village and cars would be nose to tail. Margaret Ritchie a well known singer, who was retired and lived in the music house and her sister Mrs Berry Willie lived in the cottage in the garden, Barrie, Prof Hare, Fred Greenway, and John Bell who lived opposite High House, got together to try and divert the road. Barbara Buchan who lived in the White House was killed near Hampden Way. Her death led to more pressure from Lady Macclesfield who was a Councillor and as a result the B4009 was diverted. The Ewelme Society started in 1969 and continued and the membership expanded.

Tape 15 -

Boys Club - There was a Boys Club which is now defunct. Probably due to the impact of TV. Lady Hambleton and I were on the committee. Very well supported then. LEA gave money and trained youth leaders. I used to take them canoeing in Henley but they had to pass a swimming test. Overall membership of about 30. Bill Standbridge and his son ran it. Lady Hambleton would have committee meetings at the Old Rectory, the butler would serve us sherry. Lady Hambleton's main interest was in the young.

Nolay Twinning – started in 1990 – Jenny Seveaux (daughter of Robbie Clive) was doing a project on European women and wanted Ewelme women's attitude to European women and being in Europe. Suggested if we twinned they may have interest. Decided the twin must be pretty, historical and have wine. Jenny Seveaux knew Minister of Culture in Paris and came up with Nolay. We sent circulars to every house (220 houses then) a good response, majority in favour, arranged a meeting, formed a committee. Still has good support. Primary schools are now being encouraged to have connections with Europe – so we are streets ahead by 5 years.

Tape 16 -

Guides - Was a Guide for years. Miss Burgess ran the Guides and Mrs Poupart the Scouts and Cubs. There was nothing else to do except belong to these things. For Armistice Day they would always march from the War Memorial (opposite High House) to the church.

Young Men's Club used to meet at the Rifle Range. Billiards and the like. Has been used as a youth club in recent years but nothing serious.

Horticultural Society – has a certificate her father won in the early 1930's. Gardening very popular allotments well used. Everyone had a garden patch. Her mother never bought vegetables. Most kept a few chickens too. Her father kept a few hives. They caught rabbits.

Tape 17 -

Youth Club run by Bill Standbridge. Had a connection with the church because we used to have the meetings of the committee in school and the Rector, Rev May would chair the meeting and we talked about what was going on and what would go on with the youngsters. I don't know what the connection with the church was but I took over the chairmanship of the Youth Club when Rev May resigned. They were still meeting in the Old Rifle Range which was getting dilapidated. Had a coffee bar and they sold refreshments. Played rounders tournaments, had billiards and table tennis, darts and other sorts of games. Age group went up to about 14 and we split it into two groups, one up to 7 yrs old and then the older ones. Now two nights were needed. Mrs Smith and Mrs Jones took the younger ones. Then the village hall was so dangerous for any large numbers that the decision to build the new hall came and the Youth Club under Mr Standbridge finished and a new one started in the new village hall with Mr Geoff Hutchins. That was in early 1980s. It finished when he went to the Honey Factory in Wallingford.

Womens Fellowship took over from the Mothers Union in 1970. 14th November 1986 Womens Fellowship closed. Met in the village hall first Wednesday of the month – had about 40 members. Had a committee outings and speakers, more a church thing. Started by Rector's wife Mrs May.

Tape 20 -

Womens Fellowship - Attended the Womens Fellowship where they had a talk and social time. Rector's wife and Barbara Rowse featured. Coming into the village as a working woman at a time when it was reasonably unusual to work fulltime. Got complaints that she was 'never here' people wondered where she was because she was never there but she had an active social life outside the village.

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Tape 22 -

The Choral Society was begun by Sir Claude Severne, who lived at the Old Rectory. Joined when about 13. Was in it for about 2 years before going away. Went on for several years, until Sir Claude Severne died. He had a good paunch.

There were coal and clothing clubs.

A Library - was held in the Reading Room, books changed every so often from Oxford.

British Legion - flourished. Her mother was an active member of the WI.

Tape 24 -

Scouts and Guides - Mrs Poupart was also the Girl Guide mistress and her husband took the cubs and scouts. Took children to Town Park and to plays, never asked for any monies from anyone. They donated out of their own pockets. Each year she gave the boys a jersey. One year Mr Poupart bought the boys axes so they could practise woodcraft. The children respected Mr Poupart. He used to deliver groceries on a bicycle and when the boys saw him approaching, they would line up and each give a Scout salute as he passed hoping to get him off balance. He would attempt to salute each boy, and although often wobbled, never actually fell off. He also bought a Bell tent so the boys could camp out.

Boys Club - Old Reading Room - Had the Boys Club next to it. Two buildings came to the village via a Mr Shunck (a naturalised German) one was the Reading Room and the other was the Boys Club.

Rifle Range - Ewelme had one of the most successful Shooting Ranges - just prior to the War the guns were taken from the club and held at Watlington Police Station. When the Rifle Club tried to start up again after the War they applied for the rifles but there was no sign of them. During the war the range was taken over by the 4th and 6th Royal Berkshire Regiment and it was used for target practise. Had railway sleepers at the far end and targets erected in front. That is how it remained until the Ewelme Boys wanted it back and it was cleared out after the Army had finished with it and re-established as a Boys Club.

Tape 26 -

Youth Club - In the early 80s boys went on Friday evenings - held in the Rifle range run by Ron Stanbridge. Games, music, disco, nothing very structured - but popular. Ron organised parties in the flint barn and fire works parties on the common. The Scouts and Cubs were held in Benson at this time but there was still a rivalry between the villages and they tended not to mix.

The Ewelme Players - Lydia became involved in several productions - very hard work but the pantomimes were popular. Mostly older people involved. Children more interested in TV and the latest fads of electronic games.

Neighbourhood Watch - There was little or no crime in the village until the early 90s when car theft started. The Bensons had several cars stolen and wrecked. One red MG shown on TV being joy-ridden around Blackbird Leys in Oxford. There was an attempted raid on the post office which was fortunately abandoned, but Stan was attacked on another occasion. John Burbidge and Lydia organised a village meeting with the police. Very well attended. Result was the dividing up of the village into sections under a co-ordinator. Virtually every resident keen to take part and volunteers for to be co-ordinators filled positions in a week. Ewelme has an excellent reputation and is asked to do new things first. The questionnaire about policing was sent to the houses and the Ringmaster system of alerting potential trouble

Tape 28 -

Brownies - The girls went to RAF camp for Brownies for a short time but it was a problem getting a pass card and stand in a queue at the Main Guardroom, so they seldom went. They went to Badminton Club run by Caroline Shearer and Elli Hughes, but basically it fizzled out for kids anyway. Adults continued. Vaguely remember a Youth Club although it did not feature for him.

Tape 29 -

Didn't go to RAF camp often. Did Cubs there for a while. It was open then. But when the security clamped down it was difficult to get onto the Camp. Didn't go to cinema on camp. Only swimming a couple of times through Cubs.

Benson Area Play Scheme during summer holidays - which was organised games and entertainment's, day trips, adventure playground. Ages mainly most of school years. Older children shunned it seen as a kids thing.

Tape 30 -

Cubs - Joined the Cubs for a little while but for some reason didn't continue. Mr Poupart ran the Cubs and Scouts and provided through that medium the cricket stumps and bat - he helped the boys like that.

Tape 34 -

Scouts - Mr Poupart was Scoutmaster and he had a grey or fawn Austin 7 which was parked at the side of his house for the duration of the war.

Tape 35 -

Scouts - Mr Poupart ran the Scouts and every year took the boys to Wallingford for a picture show and to their house to tea. They walked in and back and this way they saw all the film. If they went on the bus it was unusual to see the end of any film.

Cinema - there used to be a picture show in Benson at the old village hall every week. Tommy Bennett used to play the piano to accompany it. We walked down.

Whist Drives - There used to be a village Whist Drive once a week in the Reading Room.

The Reading Room used to be the village hall, for whist drives, dances and social evenings. Even wedding receptions - we had 110 people all seated in there for a wedding reception.

I remember the show Wings for Victory - I remember Sqdn Ldr Hussey giving an Antarctic lecture too.

Tape 41 -

Cubs and Scouts - Bertie Poupart - I was in his Cubs and Scouts. They bought wholesale sweets. She was a Miss Morley. Bertie a shorthand typist and also an organist. Poupart's had a Jam Factory in Twickenham T J Poupart of Twickenham. One of the Poupart family came and bought a business here. Bertie was the son. Had wooden climbing equipment for Scouts to exercise on in their garden. Untidy garden. One was rotten and I ended up in the nettles.

The Men's Club - open most nights at the Old Rifle Range which belonged to Mr Schunk a German naturalised British, who lived in The Mill House. Billiards and darts had a coke stove and had old bus seats for seating. Open from approx. 7-10 pm, but not Sundays. Doesn't remember shooting range in his time. Ewelme Men's Club on the front outside.

File 57 -

There were six children in our family. The Youth Club was up at the school, and I remembered that the only record which they had at the Youth Club was Heartbreak Hotel by Elvis Presley on a breakable 78 R.P.M record, and that we played it on a windup gramophone!

George Cannon's notes written addendum

The Women's Institute was in existence from before 1952 but faded away in 1967 and was never reformed.

The Mothers' Union had always been active in the village until 1970 when it was disbanded and a Churchwomen's Fellowship was formed in conjunction with Britwell Salome. This has continued and has been well supported by many women of all ages.

Youth Club - There has always been a Youth Club of some sort, with short breaks, but it always comes back again. Cricket and Football Clubs have existed too, with variations in strength, but their numbers have always been keen.

The Elm Club - A club for the over 60s was started in 1958 by Mrs. Noel Smith, who used to live in 'Hill House'. The club, known as The Elm Club, has continued ever since and is now run by Mrs. Catherine Hare of 'Saffron House'. The club members are a small and happy group who enjoy meeting together every month for talks, outings or games.

The Ewelme Society was formed in about 1970 [actually 1968] and was affiliated to the Chiltern Society. It has done a very great service in opening the many footpaths which radiate from the village into the surrounding areas. The Society also provides a very good watchdog service on the appearance of the village, helping greatly to preserve its beauty.

In the early years of this period, ballroom dancing classes were held in the Youth Club Hall and were well attended and much enjoyed.

Scouts - Cubs troops were in existence until the early 1950s. The Scouts in Ewelme appear to have flourished greatly in the time of Mr Poupart, assisted by his wife. They owned the shop at the bottom of Burrows Hill on the site of a large cottage now called The Old Pottery. The Scouts have declined over the years and are now non-existent in the village (1995). The Brownies and Guides continued to function in the village and were still in existence in the 1970s under the guidance of Mrs. Vowles, Mrs Eustace and others. There were at least two Guiders qualified as Queen's Guides.

Brownies continued until much later - the last leader being Mrs Parry (Jill) who, even after moving to Benson, continued to work with the girls up to the late 1980s. There came some integration with groups at Royal Air Force Benson but there are no active Guide/Scout groups in Ewelme though there are Brownies from Ewelme attending groups in Benson Village. (In Benson Primary School). Brownies and Guides however have been in continuous existence for the past twenty-five years and have had many keen and devoted leaders.

A Playschool was formed in the early 1970s and has gone from strength to strength, providing a valuable service for mothers, and for children and for children under five years old. The Playgroup still meets and currently is so successful that it has some extra sessions in the afternoons. Since the building of the new Village Hall it is the Playgroup which is the main user and from which the V.H. Committee receives its regular and steady income. The Playgroup has ties with the Primary School in Ewelme - to which many Playgroup children go when they are old enough. It will be interesting to see what effects; the proposed new Nursery Voucher Scheme will have for 4 yr old children.

Memoir 60 -

There were some London Evacuees [from St Saviours in Paddington in 1939 but did not stay long as Ewelme was considered unsafe for the children!] who came, there were two brothers who were members of a children's club. Oh horror! It was called the Coons Club but it was an innocent bit of fun. After joining you had to get 4 others to join and then got a badge sign up some more and receive another different badge. Most of the children in the village joined.

In the village hall regular Whist Drives were held. (From memory this used to be played in a wood cladded building on the same side as the garage, further into the village). It was a game I quickly learned and I used to ride on the back of Mrs Kings bicycle to them where I was allowed to play with the adults. (I can't remember any other children playing). Since then however I've never played the game. There were the usual notice boards outside and Mrs King used to lean her bicycle against it. (Didn't need to chain it up either).

File 72 -

Belonged to Cub Scouts at RAF Benson. At fourteen I was old enough to join the Ewelme youth club. Table tennis, snooker and music, a Mrs Hill? from High House ran the club with help from Tony Cherry and Rose if I remember correctly. I wasn't allowed to stay till the end, it was a 9.00pm curfew for me to start with. At sixteen, the youth club at RAF Benson and the 'Barracuda' youth club in Wallingford were the places to be. Eighteen and the local pubs beckoned, I played in dart teams for the Skinny Dog (the Greyhound) and the London Road Inn. The Shepherds Hut was only visited on away matches, for obvious reasons! The Ewelme

youth club was held in the old Rifle Range, it still had the sand bank at the end of the building, which would have been the backstop for the bullets fired during practice for the Home Guard.