

---

# *Lillington Local History Society*

---



Our eighth on-line newsletter: July 2021



## **Lillington School 1951**

The children celebrate the Festival of Britain.

- Were you there?
- Can you identify the teacher (?) on the left?

**The Festival of Britain** opened on the South Bank of the Thames in London on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1951. The aim was to promote the feeling of recovery some six years after the end of the Second World War. Celebrations were organised all over the country.

## MOVING TO THE NEW LILLINGTON SCHOOL IN 1982



Emily Wills is second from the left, with her hair tied back.

Were you there too?

What can you remember?

## WALKING TO LEAMINGTON IN THE RAIN

When I was a young mum, many moons ago, I'd walk into Leamington past the Midland Oak. I'd have baby Richard tucked up inside his pram and my toddler sitting on top of the canvas cover.

One day as we passed the Midland Oak, on the way to town, the heavens opened and Stephen sitting on top became pretty wet, in fact he was effectively sitting in a puddle. I had to go into Leamington, so we carried on, as soon as we reached the Parade I went into Marks and Spencers, pram and all.



I purchased some kiddies' trousers, luckily the budget stretched that far, (no credit card in those days,) and hiding behind a clothes rack proceeded to change his very wet trews. He protesting as the clothes were difficult to remove being so wet.

Once changed and this time sitting inside the pram, not on top, we continued our shop. Luckily the return journey was far less eventful as it had stopped raining.

No catching the bus in those days, prams were far too big to go in not like the modern buggy prams of today. I used to walk into Leamington at least twice a week with my pram and later pushchair, Happy Days!

*Barbara Blackwell*

## ON YOUR BIKE

For many years, in addition to his 'day job' as a skilled engineer at a local specialist repair works, Terry Gardner was a Special Constable. When the call went out for volunteers to do ROSPA Cycling Awareness Courses with school children, Terry and his "Specials" colleagues put their names forward and attended a series of lectures at Warwick Police Station. Mr Murphy, ROSPA's Road Safety Organiser organised and led the training. (Some civilian teams also carried out the training.)

The next step was to provide courses at local schools, - Milverton, Cashmore, St Bede's, Brookhurst and Telford, many of them in the afternoon after school. At Telford School, the course took place on five Saturday mornings between 10th June and 8<sup>th</sup> July 1972, between 10am-12noon. The sixth session was held just before the summer holidays, on the 15<sup>th</sup> July, so making sure that children were going to be safe out on their bikes with their friends.

The first session, held in one of the portakabins, began with an introduction to the course and what was expected of the cyclist, then out on the playground, the bicycle was examined to check whether it was roadworthy. Any faults were noted on a label tied to the handlebars. A really unroadworthy cycle was put to one side, not to be used, and having asked permission, the student used another child's bike for the rest of the session.

As part of the course, the children were given instruction on the Highway Code, with a lot of emphasis on riding the bicycle safely. An obstacle course was set up on the playground to make sure that the children could control the bicycle and balance correctly, look to the rear over their shoulder, give correct hand-signals and do an emergency stop. - Quite a lot to master in five sessions, especially for those who hadn't had a bike very long.

The test was taken on nearby roads, and the volunteers had to make sure that traffic was not going too fast. Our uniform came in very handy at this point! The adults were positioned on different parts of the route with a clipboard, and as each child, wearing a number - a bit like athletics or cross-country- came by, the results were logged on a test sheet against that number. The sheets were then collected and marked by someone from the Road Safety Organiser's office.  
*Terry Gardner*



Left, Ron Bryan,  
Safety Organiser; Right,  
Tom Williams, Chair, Safety  
Committee;  
Rear of Photo: Specials Glyn  
Gardner, Terry Gardner,  
Tony Gulliman, Penry  
Williams & Ron Faith;  
(Cycling Instructors &  
Examiners)

Rear of Photo: Specials Glyn Gardner, Terry Gardner, Tony Gulliman, Penry Williams & Ron Faith;  
(Cycling Instructors & Examiners), Centre of photo: Councillor Tom Nicholson, Mayor of Leamington.  
Photo courtesy of the Courier Press, Telford School, 31/1/1973

## ROAD NAMES SOUTH OF THE CUBBINGTON ROAD



**Newnham Road** , which dates from about 1964, may be named after Newnham, a small hamlet in Aston Cantlow, with a canal nearby. There are also villages with this name in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hampshire and Gloucestershire.

**Bentley Close and Cosford Close** (dated 1958 and 1959) are roads leading off Newnham Road. There is a small village in Shropshire called Cosford, which is home to RAF personnel who work at RAF Cosford. There is a possibility that Bentley Close is named after Bentley near Nuneaton in North Warwickshire.



The western part of **Valley Road** dates from around 1950, following the Bins Brook, a mainly culverted watercourse that runs south into Leamington. When the new houses were built, the road was greatly extended to the east towards Parklands Avenue, to include **Aintree Drive, Redcar Close, Sandown Close, Ascot Ride** and **Kempton Close**, dated in the early 1970s and 1980s. These roads were named after racecourses to recognise the use of land at Stud Farm including the training of racehorses.



Many of the homes in **Aintree Drive** and **Sandown Close** are known as 'The French Houses' They were built by the Groupe Maison Familale, a Coventry based sub division of a large French Company based in northern France

**Wallsgrove Close**, which dates from 1989 was named after William Wallsgrove, Mayor in 1948-9. It is to be found off Valley Road and runs behind the Crown Way shops.

**Crown Way** was named in 1954, and linked to the Coronation in 1953 of Elizabeth, after the death of her father, George VI in 1952. **Walnut Drive**, dated 1989 is to be found at the rear of Tescos, formerly The Walnut Tree pub and the site of Village Farm.

**Pound Lane** which existed before 1730, was the location of "The Pound" for Lillington where stray animals were impounded awaiting collection. Nearly every village had its pound for stray cattle, pigs, geese etc., to be kept till the owner paid the fine due.

Although the actual origin of the name of **Gresham Avenue** (dated 1936) is unknown, it is perhaps related to a place name in Norfolk, southwest of Cromer. Another possible link is to Sir John Gresham who worked for Henry VIII and married Elizabeth Grenfell in 1553.

**Buckley Road**, (1945), was named for W H Buckley, manager of the waterworks in Campion Terrace. It started as a site of prefabricated homes in WW2, built to address the need for a huge shortfall in post-war housing stock.

**Heemstede Lane**, dated in 1987, was named after a twin town in the Netherlands, and although the link has lapsed, Heemstede remains an official link town with Leamington Spa.

**Berenska Drive**, leading off Heemstede Lane was named around 1986 after Jan Berenska , who led the musical group called "The Royal Spa Quartet" about 1941. Jan Berenska and his orchestra was one of the most popular of that era, broadcasting live from the Pump Rooms every Sunday afternoon.

## HOW WE ATE: “BEFORE THE WAR” .. “DURING THE WAR” .. “AFTER THE WAR”

My childhood seemed to be dominated by these three phrases!

My parents had married very young in the early 1930s, so by the time the WW2 broke out they were bringing up my two brothers Terry and Carl. I've talked to them about meals from that time and asked for their memories. Terry remembers the poverty which surrounded them in his early years. They were living with one of their Grandmas, a widow with very little earning power, who had spent most of her life living 'hand to mouth'. She and my mother would visit the market late in the evening to buy meat and vegetables because everything at that late hour was sold very cheaply. Meals were made from sheep's heads, scrag end of mutton, chitterlings, sweetbreads and bags of bones! The latter were boiled until the meat fell off the bones when a good stock had been made. By adding some vegetables to the meat and putting it into a pie, a few pennyworth would go a long way.

My parents had barely 'found their feet' and had bought their first house in 1939, when war broke out. Carl remembers 'brands' becoming more dominant such as Stork margarine, Kraft cheese slices and tubs of Quorn custard powder. Once the war took hold these brands were no longer in their original state as they were now sold in plain wrappers and in much smaller quantities to comply with government rationing regulations.



My father volunteered to join the Royal Marines in early 1940 as the black-out meant his wages in the Printing company he worked for would be severely cut. So, the task of feeding two growing boys fell to my mother. Ever resourceful, she took their 'sweet rations' as sugar, to make jams and jellies. She dug up part of the garden and in 1940 they were able to have lots of vegetables. In winter 1941, unwrapping, a now ripened, green tomato was a real tea-time treat!

When cows broke into her garden plot in 1942, she lost heart and moved with my two brothers to Broughty Ferry in Scotland to be nearer my father. Food was easier to come by in Scotland than in the Midlands. Scots were allowed a weekly ration of tea breads! Soft fruit and vegetable grew well on the Scottish East coast and fish was plentiful, unlike the long queues needed to get any in Leicester.

Terry helped out when they returned in 1944 as he was one of the lads who used to pick potatoes and was allowed to carry home as much as he could carry. As a big lad, he always made that sure he carried a large bag! My two brothers were entertained by studying 'amazing' pictures in mother's pre-War cookbook, asking if people really had been able to eat such tasty food! Rationing was still in full swing when I arrived in 1947 and only ceased completely in 1954. When I was a little girl aged about 6, I was regularly sent shopping to the Co-op, Divi number 43583, with the money wrapped in the shopping list!



Sweet foods and puddings seemed to dominate the list! The boiled Spotted Dick, Jam Roly-poly, Boiled Whites with Golden syrup or stewed fruit could be boiled in the copper on Monday when hot water was needed for the tub and puncher. If we had tea at my Aunty's, pig's trotters and potted meat in oblong cardboard boxes with scalloped edges dominated. Then there were pickles, cooked beetroot in vinegar, and onion rings and cucumber sitting in a glass dish on the thrall. Fresh fruit and vegetables were only ever available 'in season'.

Real whole eggs became more available as people started to keep chickens again but finding enough food for them was always a problem. A friend of mine, now in her late 80s, used to

help her Aunt and Uncle in North Warwickshire by 'gleaning' the fields to gather up spilt grain following the harvest, in exchange for a 'real' egg!

Much had changed since my parents had been young, having been brought up in an era where you took your own jug to buy beer, vinegar or milk. The milk was ladled into your jug from a churn standing on a hand-cart. Most food was made at home from basic ingredients and nothing was ever wasted. As people used to say, the only part of a pig that wasn't used was the Squeak!

*Dearne Jackson*

### **Stoneleigh Herb Pudding**

Not a pudding as we know it! Taken from Old Midlands Recipes by Catherine Rothwell this old recipe from Stoneleigh village was both filling and economical. It could be eaten hot as a main course, or cold, to be eaten at work, even in the fields. As usual, these old recipes don't specify temperature!

**Ingredients.** Herbs: 2 handfuls of parsley leaves, 1 handful of mustard & cress, 1 handful of spinach, 2 small lettuce hearts & a few chopped chives.

#### **For the batter.**

1oz (25g) of flour  
1 pint (550ml) of thin cream  
2 beaten eggs

#### **For the Good Pastry.**

Plain or self-raising flour (unspecified quantity)  
Lard or butter or a mix (unspecified quantity)

#### **Method.**

Wash & boil the greenstuffs together for 3 minutes. Drain, season and mash well. Put in a casserole dish. Make the batter and stir it into the herbs. Finally cover with a 'good pastry'. How to make 'good pastry', or which sort of pastry to use, is not stipulated but as long as you feel it is 'good' it will be fine. Bake in a slow oven for one hour. This is described as being like a 'slow cooked omelette'. The quick omelettes we normally make were invented by a French woman who ran a hostelry and was asked to make something to eat at very short notice!

*Dearne Jackson*



The banner features a light green background. On the left, the text reads "In the Centre of England" in a small font, followed by "Discover Lillington History" in a large, bold, dark green font. Below this, "Lillington Local History Society" is written in a smaller font. At the bottom left, the website URL "lillingtonhistory.org" is displayed. In the center, there is a search bar with the placeholder text "Search this site:" and a green "search" button. On the right side of the banner, there is a photograph of a large, leafy tree in a park-like setting.

This Newsletter is published by the Lillington Local History Society, c/o Lillington Free Church, Cubbington Road, Leamington Spa, CV32 7AL The views expressed in the Newsletter are personal to the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Society.