

DEDDINGTON WOMEN'S INSTITUTE 1925–2007

'The foundations of national glory are set in the homes of the people'
(King George V).

So proclaims one of the homilies preceding the monthly meeting plan of the newly founded Deddington Women's Institute. Founded at the end of 1925, affiliated to the Oxfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes, it was felt to be the first social meeting place for all women in Deddington, Clifton and Hempton. It has kept its object 'For Home and Country' sacrosanct from those early days to the present. Dedicated members of our present day Institute spent hours researching and compiling a most interesting collection of programmes, snippets of minutes and photographs to fill a historic scrapbook, the cover of which boldly displays in green and white the logo of the National Federation. All this work was done in celebration of their 80th anniversary in 2005.

The local Institute's first President from 1926 to 1929 was Mrs Muriel Jones. She was the daughter of Mary Vane Turner, who won joint second place in a village history competition set by the Oxfordshire WI Federation. She published her entry *The Story of Deddington* in 1933 and dedicated it to her daughter (a copy is held in our Library). Turning the pages of the massive Deddington WI scrapbook we find a list of 27 serving Presidents from 1926 to 2007. Miss Loveday set a record seven years of keeping the chair warm from 1937 to 1944. Not listed there are the Hon Treasurers and Secretaries, who are in the collection of well-preserved yearly programmes. These were professionally printed on thin cardboard, decorated with logo, date, year and the name of President, Hon Treasurer and Secretary, whose responsibility it was to set up a programme from month to month. The sturdiness of these early programmes suggest that they could be hung at the beginning of each year in the meeting place for all members to peruse.

Subjects presented varied then, as now, from serious educational to home-grown entertainment, the crafts, singing and dancing, not forgetting cookery and gardening. Summer meetings, in those early years, were held in a member's garden – if wet, in the British Legion Club on the first Tuesday of the month at 2.30. Traditionally Jerusalem was, and still is, sung at the opening of each meeting, except for that refreshing incident, carefully minuted in February 1945 when 'in the absence of Miss Weaver, resident WI accompanist, Mrs Tucker accompanied a hearty singing of "God Save the King" as she considered the piano unworthy of Jerusalem!'

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'I admit women are foolish, but they were made to match men'
(Homily atop WI meeting programme 10 October 1939)

We are now entering the WWII years. A resumé preceding the minutes of those years states:

'Several items present the mood of these war years but throughout a sense of education, generosity to good causes and much needed light entertainment prevailed.' By 1941 coupon free wool was obtainable only by those whose friends or relatives serving in the Forces. Members of Deddington and North Aston WI gathered 131lbs of rose hips for syrup production and, more ominously, by October 1941, following a request from their HQ, they were bid to take it in turn to listen in at wireless broadcasts every Monday evening! Cloak and dagger stuff, I wondered. Not at all, the subject was all about the importance of government plans for post-war years.

Although Mrs Stanley was the first on listening duty, we hear nothing more of these plans until Deddington supported a proposition to be aired at the annual meeting at the Royal Albert Hall in 1942 'that homes for the aged should be built after the war', to which Deddington members added the rider 'that the Public Assistance Institution might be improved'. By 1943 our ladies agreed wholeheartedly with government advice to feed their families on an increased potato diet to save flour for bread, but refused stubbornly to follow their own HQ's advice not to send funds on request by charities but concentrate on financial aid for their own Institute.

Minutes for the duration of the war record funds being sent to organisations in support of prisoners of war, the forces in foreign lands, displaced people on the continent and many local charities. They knitted, made slippers, baked meat pies for agricultural workers, collected horse chestnuts (for what is not explained*) and, curiously, were allocated pink wool to knit garments for babies in occupied Europe. No mention of blue for boys! The terrible destruction by a flying bomb of Poplar in the East End of London in spring 1945 moved members to collect surplus household goods to send to the stricken community.

Generally, minutes of weekly meetings now express a looking forward to more peaceful times with just one sour note. Fund raising by multiplying a shilling by skill seemed a great idea until one member scandalised the meeting by asking if she might bet with it. Celebrations for Victory Day Europe meant that the first monthly meeting was postponed for one week. On 20 August, having at long last managed to get a petrol allocation for a visit to Stratford, 33 members and friends found shops and tearooms closed in celebration of Victory over Japan. No one was downhearted. The minutes of the day proclaim: 'It was an enjoyable day ending with the play "Much Ado About Nothing" in the Memorial Theatre'.

* WI President Beryl Suckling reports that horse-chestnuts collected, presumably at the government's request, by villagers during WWII, were used for the production of glucose.

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Before we move into the late 1940s and 50s in the history gleaned from their great scrapbook, we ought to make room for a few photographs dating back to the 1930s, in the hope that they awake some memories in a few of our senior citizens.



The earliest photos, still in the possession of Daphne Canning, depict her mother-in-law Doris with her baby Beryl. Members and guests attending the WI Fête 1936 have just voted

little Beryl 'First Prize Baby' and what a charming picture she and her mother make. I wonder if Ron, little Beryl's brother, is one of the few brave boys in the crowd of smart ladies quietly enjoying his sister's triumph?

Sadly, there is no mention in the minutes of the year 1936 of this particular event. We would all love to know in whose garden it was held and, of course, if anybody recognises and can name one or more in the happy crowd.

There are three more well-preserved pictures in the scrapbook, presenting the WI at play in various outdoor productions. One, named 'The Pied Piper cast', one probably a pageant, and the other (I have to guess) could be a production of 'Robin Hood'.



I have consulted experts on heraldry who believe the standards and pennants in this photograph were made up for the occasion. But what was that occasion? Does anybody out there remember or was told by his/her Granny what this jolly group celebrated in the mid-1930s?

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Excerpts from the Minutes, December 1945: 'Ballot papers for the new Committee were filled in by members and the Ballot Box sent by courier to Mrs French and Mrs Stanley, who kindly consented to act as tellers. The Secretary then read a short account of the doings during the year and the Treasurer gave us an annual financial statement. £10.10s had been made by 1/- trading scheme. The President then made some Presidential [*sic*] remarks asking clemency for the shortcomings of those of the Committee new to the burdens of office, and thanking the many who have helped to give the Institute a happy year'.

Excerpts from the Minutes January 1946: 'Two point of interest arose during the discussion. The first was the decision to get a large cake made towards the refreshments, using part of the second generous parcel from Australia, the rest to be used as prizes. The second point was the official attitude of the Institute as to children at meetings. Children under school age may always be brought to meetings with their mothers or other responsible people who would not otherwise be able to come, it being understood that if for any reason their presence is disturbing the meeting, the said responsible person will control or remove them ... '.

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There was change in the air, and like most conservative (with a small c) organisations, resentment to change took its time to be conquered. Discussions on whether to move meetings from afternoon to evening occupied members, was tried out one summer season and towards the end of the decade defeated by two votes! Membership stood at a healthy 60 and expected to increase. This formidable force of women must have had quite a strong influence on village matters. They pestered the Parish Council to supply rubbish bins, boldly wrote to Chesham & Brackley Brewery Ltd when the sobriquet 'Dirty Drunken Deddington' became rather too actual in one of the pubs.

The death of King George VI in February 1952 plunged the nation into deep mourning leaving WIs uncertain about the propriety of holding their meeting that month. The Committee decided in favour of carrying on as usual. In the previous year, 1951, members dressed up to run their stall at the grand Blenheim Pageant. The glamorous Grannies were obviously a great hit and gladly gave permission to have their photographs taken by Blinkhorns of Banbury and printed in Home & County (the WI magazine). Strangely, a gramophone (record player and wireless) bought, with all members' agreement, in January 1951 was sold again in 1955 and the reason why is not mentioned in the Minutes! I just hope they were able to make a small profit.

Various crafts flourished throughout the decade. Quilting, basketry and patchwork classes were held, Mrs Howse passed her A test for knitting and three members entered work for the Oxfordshire Exhibition in April 1959. It never ceases to amaze me how cleverly a kaleidoscope of crafts, the never missed opportunities to help others at home or abroad, and the gift of fun and fellowship was exploited by our Deddington members of yesteryear. I must finish the 1950s with the shortest, and to my mind most startling, entry in the Minute book:

'November 1953. The winner of the Potato Growing Competition was Mrs Brent with 7lbs 14 oz for *one* potato'. Is this really possible? No doubt readers will let me know!

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The 1960s



Photographs of themselves were presented to founder members Miss Weaver and Miss Smith by the two youngest members Miss Joan Wynne and Miss Sue Boone

The photograph of the year must be that of the Misses Weaver and Smith, honoured guests at the local party in celebration of the National Federation WI Golden Jubilee in June 1965. Although it is not mentioned in the minutes, 1965 must also have been the 40th anniversary of the local branch. Dear Miss Lilian Weaver and Miss Smith are both still fondly remembered today by at least two generations of Deddingtonians. They were founder members of Deddington WI way back in 1925 and over many years nurtured the love of music amongst the young and not so young. Miss Weaver became the WI's resident accompanist without scruples about what was demanded of her. Her repertoire ranged from the most solemn to

operatic, country folk music and dance music. On the occasion of the Jubilee Party, she and Miss Smith were presented with photographs of themselves by the two youngest members of the Institute.

According to the minutes, the 1960s found our members in topping party mood. This is just one sample of highly complex catering. 'At the November monthly meeting the Institute (probably the Committee) was asked if £12 may be drawn from funds to cover the cost of the party. £3 must be allowed for the entertainment leaving £9 for catering. Members were divided up into catering groups as follows: *Starters* – Hempton side of Deddington. *Main Course* – Clifton. *Desserts* – Clifton village and *Coffee & Wine* – Hempton village. Each group is to be given a limited amount of cash. 35/- for starters, £3 for main course, 35/- for desserts and £3 for wine & coffee ... If there are 4 to 5 members who would prefer to do games instead of refreshments they may volunteer their services. Members on the Hempton side of Deddington should go to the Holly Tree Club to set out the tables as they are doing starters...'

These arrangements may sound complicated to the lay reader but to a member of any WI they are crystal clear, practical, thrifty and very sociable. In June 1965 members were delighted to receive a challenge to a rounders match from Bodicote WI. There were volunteers aplenty putting down their names for the game, but when it came to a few team practices beforehand they found it impossible to get everybody together at the same time. The game had to be cancelled.

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1960 Onwards - The Intrepid Travellers

We've read how difficult it was in the 1940s, shortly after the end of the Second World War, to hire a coach with sufficient petrol for an outing. All this had changed by the 1950s when our village ladies again fitted educational and enjoyable outings into their yearly programme. A souvenir photo taken on 27 June 1962 shows them at Josiah Wedgwood & Sons' factory in Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent. If you look carefully you'll recognise Mr Kerridge, second row from the top, who no doubt drove his precious load of more than 25 ladies safely to Staffordshire and back. How convenient to have a much loved local



Back row: Mrs Sermon, Mrs Green, Ben Kerridge, ?, Mrs Holloway, Mrs Gregory, ?, Mrs Phillips, Mrs Tooth, Mrs Hartwell, Mrs French, Mrs Lake, ?, Nurse Fox, Mrs Malcher, Miss Churchill, Mrs Vincent, ?, Mrs Homans, Miss Yerbury, Mrs Burton, Mrs Mathias, Mrs Skidmore, ?, ?, Mrs Clarke, Mrs Callow, ?, Mrs Lines, Mrs Powell

man as a guide and participant! The visit merits this short, down-to-earth comment in the Minutes: 'Everyone agreed that the outing had been most enjoyable but were glad that the Wedgwood factory offered the use of their canteen to members as the food at Stoke-on-Trent was disappointing!'

London beckoned in April 1968 and the Palace of Westminster in particular, where Neil Marten MP took time off to take his smartly dressed constituents on a guided tour, described in the Minutes as the 'highlight of the outing'.

Throughout the 1970s, outings continued to play an important part in WI planning and, in the 1980s,

photographs abound of a group of local members invading the Continent. And why not? The WI is keeping a keen eye on matters to do with the Common Market. We see them on a trip to Holland and, later in May 1984, as reported by Mrs Ivings 'on a most enjoyable trip to the ancient cities of Aachen and Trier followed by a short hop into the Mosel Valley including some

generous wine tasting'. Not yet at journey's end, the group pushed south to Strasbourg where no doubt the European Court of Justice might have attracted their curiosity, although no mention is made of it in the re-telling of their adventures at a meeting after their return. A year later, our experts on travel enjoy the sights of 'gai Paris' including the Palace of Versailles. Never a dull moment in this branch of the WI, there are some more surprises in store in next month's issue.

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Congratulations are overdue to the research team who gathered together old Minute Books, photos and official notices to choose suitable items for entry in two interesting tomes, which now present a wonderful record of Deddington village life as seen through the eyes of Institute members.



In front of me lies a self-explanatory supplement, added in recent times, depicting the Jubilee Seat probably sat upon by most of us who visit the Holly Tree garden. The following comment is added to the picture: 'Reading through the Minutes for 1969-70 we discovered the Deddington WI discussed and made a gesture for Jubilee Year. This was to commemorate 50 years of the

Oxfordshire Federation of Women's Institutes. We found the seat in the garden of the Holly Tree Club, close against the clubroom where we meet. None of the original photographs mentioned in the following Minutes have, as yet, been found. This picture shows the seat now, looking rather worn. It is our intention to revive it!'

In May 1969 the following suggestions to commemorate Jubilee Year were discussed: (1) a tree in each of the three villages [Hempton, Clifton and Deddington], (2) a teak seat for the Holly Tree Club garden, (3) crocuses planted on part of the village green, (4) waste-bins on strategic parts of the village to coincide with the NFWI's anti-litter month of July. A vote at the May meeting decided on a teak seat. July 69: After studying prices it was agreed that a 5ft seat at the cost of 13gns would be the best buy and it was proposed that the seat should be presented at the September meeting.

April 1970 meeting: 'The President welcomed Mrs Collin and Mrs Lewis and with very appropriate words presented the seat to the Holly Tree Club (then just a club for senior citizens, of which Mrs Collin was Hon. President). Both Mrs Collin and Mrs Lewis thanked WI members warmly. Mrs Collin said she hoped that everyone would use the seat, not just the people belonging to the Club. Photos were then taken by Mr Garrett' (I well remember a photo of this event hanging in the clubroom).

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In amongst the Institute's *Book of Memories* nestles a beautifully printed home-bound tale, written in 1993 and submitted to the judges of that year's writers' competition run by the Oxfordshire Federation of WIs. I could find no mention of a possible prize received by the author but think that her recollections of the 1940s are of interest to us all.

A Reminiscent Walk around Deddington in the 1940s

Daphne Harper

Let us start at the top end of the village outside the Holcombe Hotel (previously Bolton's the Butchers). We walk down this side of the main road to just opposite Hudson Street where Compton's, fruiterer and fishmonger, offer their wares. A few doors down is the Congregational Church next to the garage run by Mr Horace Tibbetts who is also the village blacksmith and shoes many local horses at the rear of his premises. (In later years the garage was taken over by Mr and Mrs Len Plumbe who did servicing on local cars as well as selling petrol and paraffin.)

Further down the road we reach Park Farm run by Mr John Bletsoe. He trains horses for steeplechasing and flat racing, polo ponies and hunters. He also keeps ponies to give riding lessons to children and young people. Mr Stockford was head groom for many years, assisted by his son Dick and others, including at one time my father. Next door to Mr Bletsoe's farm is the Manor House, owned by Mr Roberts. This house has an interesting history, having its own ice house and dovecote. The grounds are used annually for the Conservative Party fête.

We now reach Mrs Hore's farm. She sells milk and butter. Some people collect their milk (available twice daily) to enjoy a chat with Elsie Hore, others have their milk delivered by wooden truck. (This business was later taken over by Elsie's niece, Mrs Ivy Rainbow.) Let us cross the main road and make our way back to the Stile where Mr Course the Baker has his shop and ovens. He very kindly allows villagers to bring their Sunday roasts to be cooked in his oven! Mr Course bakes good cottage loaves and stocks Oliver & Gurden's cakes made in Oxford, a great favourite with young and old.

The next instalment of Daphne's reminiscences will follow in the February 2009 issue. Daphne has lived all her life in Deddington. She was born in a cottage off St Thomas' Street which, together with another three or four, was demolished years ago. Two of these cottages faced the street just above Satin Lane, the others were built on ground now known as the Allotments. I wonder if a kind reader, in possession of a photograph of this long forgotten village quarter, would let us copy it to enhance Daphne's trip down memory lane in the next issue?

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Continuing Daphne Harper's walk through the village remembering sights, places and people in the 1940s, she is now walking north on New Street, having passed Mr Course's Bakery. 'We now come to Miss Ruth Fowler's shop. She is a very good cook and sells high quality confectionery, biscuits, and my favourite, delicious cream horns! Miss Fowler owns the original recipe for Deddington Pudding Pie. (DH fears she may have taken this to her grave.) Further north is the Crown & Tuns pub run by Mr and Mrs Savage and a few steps further Mr Runicle sells anything from nails to saucepans and paraffin lamps in his ironmonger's shop. Fast approaching the entrance to Hudson Street, we pass Mr and Mrs Stockdale's chemist shop next to the Volunteer pub run by Mrs Jenner with her son Frank and his wife. On the bend into Hudson Street stands the house and business of Mr Sanders, colloquially known as 'Fudgy'. He sells a wonderful selection of sweets temptingly on offer from glass bowls, and for the weekend reader he sells the Sunday papers.

Crossing Hudson Street, we come to Holliday's garage and shop with bikes, bike accessories, car tyres, petrol and paraffin on sale. Now, keep walking

north and you will reach Lewis's high class grocer shop where Mrs Lewis senior, clothed in a long black dress and white pinafore, sells her wares helped by her son and his wife. Before we reach the Magistrates' Court (now the Library) where Mr Douglas Hopcraft, a local builder, is a Magistrate, we pass Mr Goundry's wireless, accumulator and battery shop next to the British Legion and then, walking quickly past the Magistrates' Court with its two fearsome cells, we turn west into Horsefair where beckons The King's Arms run by Mr and Mrs Stanley Hall. (Mr and Mrs Hall's son Robin was killed in Malaya whilst on National Service.) Mr Hall also sells petrol, runs a local bus service with his well-beloved, if not too comfortable, buses with wooden seating!



Local Defence Force (LDF 'Look, Duck and Flee!') in the Market Place; photo lent by the late Ernie Taylor in 1998

In the yard behind The King's Arms the all-important local fire engine is parked ready for off when the fire alarm's wail has summoned the crew to man it. Turning into Market Square, keeping to the right, we pass Miss French's sweet shop (now Red Lion Cottage) and, next door, the Red Lion run by Mr and Mrs James Green. We now stop awhile at The Bakehouse owned first by the Dodwells and later by Mr and Mrs Bernard Wallin, their sons Lawrence and John and their wives. They cook

a very good batch loaf and their specialities are: on Mondays lardy cake, on Wednesdays jam doughnuts, and on Fridays dough cakes, and they also cook Sunday roasts for their esteemed customers.'

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Daphne has just whetted our appetite with the aroma of excellent baking issuing from Wallin's bakery and now strides on, probably munching a freshly baked doughnut.

'Next door to Wallin's is the Hayward's fruit, fish and general grocery shop. Jim and Lily Hayward began the business, their son Walter drives into the outlying villages with goods in his mobile van, and daughters Doreen and Peggy help in the shop. Further along, still on the west side of Market Square is a veritable 'Aladdin's Cave' run by Harry Wells, colloquially known as 'Ticky' Wells (because he offered goods 'on tick'). In his empire you can buy anything from a pin to a suite of furniture, from a carton of elastic to tweed suits. His wife Ruth helps in the shop supported by employed staff. Ticky Wells drives his own van delivering goods into the rest of Oxfordshire and also into Warwickshire, Northamptonshire and as far as Gloucestershire.

Two doors south of 'Aladdin's Cave' we take another rest, and maybe a welcome drink in the Unicorn Hotel run by Mr & Mrs Bill Saunders and daughter Freda. We press on, past Mr & Mrs Charles and Gertie West's general Haberdashers and cross over into Chapel Square where Arthur Canning sells candles, nightlights etc. and paraffin, a truly combustible sounding mixture!

There are three more shops in Chapel Square. The first belongs to Miss Sermon who makes wooden toys, paints and displays them for sale to the delight of many young customers. The second, across the road, is a Butcher's shop, owned by Mr & Mrs Sandy Hopcroft, who employ an excellent local butcher, Mr Jack Melcher. On Wednesdays Mrs Hopcroft always makes faggots, large trays full of them, turning faggot & pea lunches into a Wednesday village tradition. (At some time Reg Powell, their nephew joined them, eventually

took over and moved into larger premises in Market Place at the end of Hudson Street.) The third shop in Chapel Square is yet another Grocers owned by Mr & Mrs Weaver and their son Bert.'



Daphne, probably reflecting at the time of writing on the proliferation of Deddington shops, pauses here in her remembrance to remind us that, without the then obligatory Government Ration Books, only a few goods could be bought, but remembers gratefully that Deddington traders shared out their wares fairly.

No picture of Daphne's cottage of birth in St Thomas' Street (now demolished) has been found, leaving me to include a picture of other cottages, lower down the street, taken quite a few decades before Daphne's birth!

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Concluding Daphne Harper's 'Reminiscent Walk' around 1940s Deddington: 'In Chapel Square, of course, stands the Wesleyan Chapel and nearby is Johnson's Timber Yard that, just recently, had a bad fire. Also in the vicinity are the businesses of two coal merchants and hauliers, Mr Jack Callow in Philcote Street and Mr Fred Deeley in Castle Street. Returning into Market Place we pass 'Nurse's Cottage', the home for many years of the District Nurse. I remember Nurse Keyes and Nurse Fox, maybe on the way to visit a patient at home, maybe deliver a baby, their little black bag close at hand! Three doors up from 'Nurse's Cottage' are the Co-op Stores managed by Mr Francis George since 1920, helped by his wife for many years. After Francis George's retirement the stores had two managers in five years before I took over for the following 23 years! Further along to the north is SS Peter and Paul, the parish church, where members of my family sing in the choir, others ring the bells. Further north is the historic Castle House but we stay in Market Place to look in on Mr and Mrs Robert Tucker in Tucker's Stores. Their main brand of tinned goods is Epicure and they stock Fuller's cakes and chocolate and sell 'ironmongery' and garden requirements. Round the corner, north of Tuckers Stores, is the Post Office for many years owned by the Bolton family who run the postal department and sell newspapers and stationery.

It seems incredible that Deddington has so many shops, all of which make a living for their owners and give employment to local people. We have now completed our memory walk but must not forget the Home Guard and Wireless Communications Dept in Hempton Road, manned by Mr Jack Morris who donated two bells to SS Peter and Paul tower named after his children, Jack and Jill. Apart from the Youth Club, football teams Deddington Town and Reserves, the Bowls Club founded in the early 1900s, there is the Air Training Corps and a Morris dancing team, and did you know Deddington once had 14 public houses?'



Market Place in wartime, with white wings and running boards on the car and white flashes on the pavement edges to guide in the blackout

Thank you Daphne for putting your memories to paper for inclusion in the now historic Deddington Women's Institute Scrapbook and allowing us to print an edited version in *Deddington News*. Reproduced here is a very precious photograph lent by Colin Robinson.

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In September 1976 the first number of *Deddington News* was printed and distributed to every household in Deddington, Hempton and Clifton. Soon it proved itself the most informative news magazine in that locality where amongst many other items of interest we were all able to follow the reportage of the Deddington WI's monthly meetings. These regular updates may have changed some of our views that WI's sole interests are those of cake- and jam-making, knitting and sewing. Local, countrywide and global politics are just as likely under discussion and WI members' suggestions are now discussed in our worldly power houses. That said, refreshments or teas during meetings remain a lively subject of debate deserving, particularly during WWII rationing and after, a special mention in our local branch Memorial Book.

Just imagine the shocked silence that must have followed when, at a meeting in April 1941, the question was raised as to whether refreshments should be discontinued during monthly meetings for the duration of rationing and the visible relief when the members voted that tea only should be provided. In April 1942, with nothing much of interest to discuss, the important question of teas was raised again at a meeting and the resolution taken that each member would be asked to provide a small quantity of the makings, such as one teaspoon full per monthly meeting! Luckily by May 1949 the worst of rationing was over and the serving of refreshments was itemised carefully. (1) Each member should buy a ticket on arrival at the meeting and give it up at tea-time in exchange for a cup of tea and a bun. (2) Members should remain seated while tea and buns were handed round by the Committee members and the appointed tea hostesses would be responsible for preparing the tea. (3) Mrs Wallin should be asked to deliver the buns to the Hall or Mrs Gardner should collect them as she offered to do. (4) The most obvious person to take the money at the door should be the Treasurer.

In March 1971 a price review with regard to the new currency occupies another special place in the minutes. The serving of sandwiches (with tea) would be continued at the new price of 2p per item and members who provided refreshments would each receive 30p (6s in old currency). To close, let me include this most deserved entry in the Minutes of March 1983: 'During the evening a Wedgwood cup, saucer and plate were presented to Mrs Shrewsbury in appreciation of her serving teas and refreshments at meetings over the past 40 years with only occasional breaks!'

2008-09

The complete collection of Ruth Johnson's writings, which originally appeared in Deddington News between 1990 and 2010, can be found [here](#)