

Rampton & Woodbeck Parish Council

125th Anniversary 1894 – 2019



To Note 125th Anniversary of the Parish Council

December 2019 marked the 125th Anniversary of the Parish Council which was founded on 17th December 1894 by the Local Govt Act. The first Chairman was Mark White (who resigned after just one meeting).

The first Council was made up of the following members:

1. Mark George White
2. George Wright Harrison, a 44-year-old Agricultural Labourer, who lived at Chapel Yard.
3. George Carey, a 39-year-old farmer who lived at Woodbeck Farm, which he sold to the Govt in 1912 for the building of Rampton Hospital.
4. Samuel Ledger Wiswoud, a 40-year-old farmer who lived on Torksey Street, who took over as Chairman at the 2nd meeting in Jan 1895.
5. John Henry Olivent, a 36-year-old butcher, shopkeeper and farmer, who lived on Laneham Street.
6. John Baker, a 60-year-old Farm Labourer of Laneham Street.
7. Robert William Mellors, a 31-year-old, Farmer of Laneham Street

The First Council Staff members were:

- Robert William Mellors, as Clerk (both Clerk and Cllr before it was made illegal to be both)
- William Cobb, a 71-year-old Farm Labourer, as Pinder (a parish employee who captured stray animals and impounded them in the Pinfold),
- Alfred Simpson a 63-year-old Farmer, as Surveyor of Highways, Roads & Drains (a Parish Employee who looked after the repair of the roads. The role was abolished in 1952 when County Councils took over the maintenance of the highways)
- Robert Mellors and William Dawson, a 53-year-old Farmer of Treswell Road, as 'Overseers of the Precept' whose role was to collect the precept monies to run the Council (before District Councils took over the Precept Collection in 1927).

Since 1894 we have had 25 Chairmen and 19 Clerks, with William Smart a Saddler & Harness maker of Laneham Street being the longest serving Chairman, 24 years between 1910 and 1936, and William Henry Wheat, a Market Gardener of Treswell Road, the longest serving Clerk, 25 years between 1909 and 1933. 20th Jun 1952 saw our first female Councillors, 57-year-old Florence Minnitt wife of Rampton Grocer & Sub-Postmaster, who lived to be 96, & Hilda Louisa Longden a 51-year-old wife of Rampton Hospital Fire instructor, who lived at 89 Woodbeck Estate. The longest serving Cllr was Jeff Rickells who joined the Council in May 1955 and retired in May 2015 after 60 years. The 1970's our first female clerk, Mrs Everett. The 1950's saw the installation of the Parish Seats around the Parish to commemorate the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, the building of the brick bus shelter in Rampton by the Parish Council (which was adopted by the County Council in 1991). 1980 saw the first playpark opening followed by the purchase of South Inge Yard as the land for what would become Pinder Park, the replacement of the original playground. 1995 saw the purchase of the Village Hall, 2002 the building and opening of the Parish Post Office, and most recently the purchase and installation of the Parish Defibrillators and flower tubs.

The Shop and Post Office Main Street.



Early
Late 1900's

Kitty, Ernest and Alfred Olivant
outside the Butchers shop.

Rampton & Woodbeck Memories

My War Years a Memory of Woodbeck, Cliff Charlesworth 2012

I was born in 1931 at Mount Vernon N.H in nearby East Retford. My father was a charge warden at Rampton State Institution. Woodbeck was the exclusive housing estate for staff working at the State Institution.

We were allocated a Staff House at number 44 Woodbeck.

I remember particularly the war years 1939-45 and as I found out later, we were on the direct bombing line for the German Bombers attacking the industrial cities of Sheffield and Coventry. As I found out later, they were directed by "beams" from Europe and flew directly over us at Woodbeck. As a boy I used to stand outside our back door watching the searchlights arc across the sky and hear and feel the blast of the AA guns opening up.

I am 81yrs old now but still remember those years and the blackout & rationing and the wailing of the sirens and crashing, vibration of the Ack - Ack guns.

Memories of living in Rampton from Marjory Highfield nee Ratcliffe of Hablesthorpe, 1992

"1927-39: I spent weekends and school holidays at Rampton with Granny Mellors at the cottage 'up the lane'. I enjoyed walks and picnics at the Trent, the road down there was very rough and full of ruts where the horse and carts had been. There's a spring down there for a cool drink.

I looked forward to garden fetes in Browns paddock. Mr Morrison would be at the gate to take our 6d entrance fee. Cricket matches in the park and tennis matches in Bob Mellors field.

Mothering Sunday saw us looking for violets and primroses in the hedge bottoms and going to church with granny Mellors. I spent a lot of time watching Marian Hoyland milk her cows, Torksey Street was famous for cow muck. Horses and carts were still in full use in the fields, Alfred Olivant would fetch a horse from Jim Hoyland to pull the meat cart for his deliveries and 'the hunt' would meet on the Green in winter.

Saturdays were the days for going to market at Retford with butter and eggs a day everyone seemed to look forward to, a ride on Brumpton's bus to the Buttermarket.

Winter brought the snow and ice, ponds were frozen over and out came the skates and we listened to stories of being able to skate from Rampton to Gainsborough.

Several characters stick in my mind. Wassey Bayes, he kept the churchyard cut in summer with a scythe and sickle. Charlie Simpson in his swallow tailcoat always worked with the threshing machine. An hour up at the blacksmiths was an education the smell shoeing horses and the clatter rimming cartwheels and hammers.

The roadmen kept the flagged footpaths clear of weeds and were busy with the scythes in summer. The Misses Wiswoud's were always busy at Church with the guild of St Mary, Canon Rushby Smith was the first vicar I could remember.

Riding in pony traps was another adventure with Grandad Champion or Jim Hoyland and their being umbrellas if it rained – off to shepherd their cattle at the Trent. Philip Minnitt from East Markham would come into the village with the accumulators for the wireless, before electricity came candles lit us to bed and we played endless games on the table by the light of a paraffin lamp.

We looked forward to the Chapel Anniversary with our new straw hats, a lovely tea and ride around the village on a farm dray. Miss Olivant would play the organ and Alfred would pump it.

3rd Sep 1939: The war came and things were different, we moved out of the town and settled at Rampton amongst our relations. The church bells were silent and the signposts came down, petrol was rationed for the few cars that there were in the village at that time.

Land had to be ploughed up and more food produced and so the tractors took over in the little fields the horse still had its little jobs to do around the farmyards leading off sugarbeet and stocks of corn. Big haystacks held a days threshing when the engine from Bensons rolled into the yard, there was hard work ahead and rats and mice. Coal had to be delivered to get the steam up and water carried to keep the big beast going.

The villagers were better off food wise than most town people, most farmers and smallholders had a pig to kill and eggs to collect, as much milk as could be drunk and the odd cockerel for Christmas.

Mr and Mrs Jessop were at the vicarage, they both worked very hard in the village. There were choir practice the church stalls were fill then with boys from Woodbeck. Hector Collinson and the Misses Baker, Charles Laughton came from Laneham sometimes three times on Sunday on his bike no matter what the weather to play the organ and Bessie West would sit behind the curtain pumping life into the thing.

Then there were the Whist Drives and Dances at the Hostel (Village Hall) and people arriving on bikes from all over the district, even the lads from Wigsley Aerodrome to dance to Arthur Leach and his band who also arrived on bikes with trailers behind, and very little light to show the way.

We had to keep fit, dancing classes, drama group, handicraft all at the Hostel, how we managed to finish our schooling I'll never know.

The war came to an end and Victory night saw us making sandwiches and having a party, the church bells rang out again and the village tried to get back to normal. Sadly, some of the lads did not come home but they are remembered name for name every Armistice Day, remembrance service in either the church or chapel.

Is the village of Rampton a better place to live in now? I don't know, but then we should look forward if only for the next generation. I shall always be grateful for the years spent there and hope to spend more happy hours amongst friends and relations.

I wish we could still go and buy Mr Crawfords crusty bread wrapped in tissue paper and choose 1d worth of sweets out of that row of jars!"

Growing up at Woodbeck

The estate was a brilliant place to live. I have so many fond memories of my childhood. When I was young, I wasn't keen of swimming but once I gained more confidence, it wasn't long before I started swimming lessons with Fred Curry, most of the children on the estate attended. I then went on to take part in swimming galas – always aiming to win!

One of my favourite times of the year was the annual sports day. I used to love dressing up in the fancy-dress parade and following the band down onto the sports field. Then entering all the races. After the races had finished all the children sat together and were given a bag with a picnic tea in it. In the evening we would go to the family disco.

Dresses & Matron!

I lived in the 'residence' at Woodbeck, when I started working at the hospital in 1964, I was 18. Fruit was put in your room weekly and the Deputy Matron checked on the state of your room and rang the ward if it was not up to standard. I had to ask permission from Matron to get married! And then ask to have permission to work under my married name. Dresses were measured and had to be 12" from the floor. I was always in trouble and had many new issues of dresses. I used to hide in the staff toilet when Matron did her daily rounds so she would not see me in my short dresses. The community at Woodbeck was very close and supportive. I made new friends back in 1964 and am still in contact with them now. It was our whole life. Work, recreation and everything in between.

Rampton Hospital has featured as a major part of my life & Woodbeck Estate

My parents came down from Scotland looking for better job prospects. My dad worked in the weaving industry and settled in Woodbeck, mainly because the house was supplied with the job. He worked in the Operations Dept in the weaving shop.

Our house was No45 Woodbeck and my elder brother was born there – It no longer exists. There is a carpark on the site now.

I remember the childrens' playground was created whilst we were living on the estate and I learnt to swim in the estate swimming pool – it was finally demolished in 1996 and no sign of it exists. On the opposite side of the road to where we lived the Hospital raised chickens – the land is now the site of the Staff Education Centre.

Every year the hospital held a Sports Day on the cricket field and there was always a fancy-dress parade – I well remember the year when there was an abundance of bunny girls aged 5 to 8.

It was a time when it was perfectly safe for 7yr olds to get on their bikes and disappear for a couple of hours without their parents worrying if they'd ever see them again. We were not allowed to play near the buildings now known as Fleming House and Tuke House as these were the nurse's residences. Every week we went to the pictures. We had to queue outside the door of main reception and wait to be escorted down to the Recreation Hall.

Outside working parties for patients assessed as well enough to work outside the secure area, were encouraged and was a goal of many to achieve. The parties included a pig farm where waste food or swill was fed to them, a poultry farm, and a vegetable garden on the site of the new Violence Reduction and Security Training Centre. Dustbin collection for the estate was done by the hospital dustcart and around six patients disappeared up garden paths giving first time party staff some anxiety until they returned with the dustbins shoulder high. There were no radios in those days, just a bunch of keys and a whistle. The 'internal concrete' working party would lay paths or garage bases for staff living on the estate for a small cost.

In 1969-70 a horse and cart collection for garden rubbish was used. An unescorted patient collected garden refuse from several locations on the estate. Housing two horses, the so-called 'horse field' was near the rear of Facilities down Cherry Tree Drive (an avenue of Cherry blossom trees) leading to the Sweet Briar and Moss Rose Villas. There used to be the 'tin chapel' a small corrugated building to the west of the Community Centre. This was the Catholic Chapel apparently used by Irish workers on site and for people of that faith living on the estate. It was later used as storage for the local Scout Group before finally being demolished. Over the years the sports facilities at Woodbeck included:

- Staff Club, Cricket Pitch, Putting Green, Bowling Green, Swimming Pool, Tennis Courts, Post Office & Shop, Cubs & Scouts

The Local Sports Clubs included:

- Football, Cricket, Hockey, Rugby, Bowls, Archery, Golf, Snooker & Darts

Rampton Remembered by Anne Downing, in 1986

I remember the house in Rampton, the Manor House, where I was born! Alas, I can see it no longer – like much of the Rampton of 1936, it is no more.

The Rampton of the late 1930's was a very different place to the Rampton of today. In those days some three hundred people lived in the village, today more than twice that number. It used to be both home and workplace; now few people work in the village. People travel to work; nearby Rampton Hospital and the three Trent side power stations; and further afield to Retford, Lincoln, Nottingham and even to London!

How times have changed. The village used to provide work for almost every family. The men mainly in agriculture on the eight farms, now there are only about two working on each. Apart from the permanent agricultural work, there were seasonal jobs for the women and children – we all remember 'potato picking' holidays.

All the farms had livestock and milking herds; today not one pint of milk is produced in the village. One farmer had a milk round, selling milk in the district from churns perched on boot lid of his car. Cream and skimmed milk could be bought from some of the other farms, even on a Sunday afternoon.

The village also had three poultry farms. One of which, Mill House – opposite the school – had a windmill, albeit derelict. Fruit and vegetables could be obtained from one of the four flourishing market gardens. Apart from eggs we can no longer buy Rampton produced fruit and vegetables.

As we have already seen, Rampton of the 1930's was almost self-sufficient. It did not stop with food production. It was possible to live a fulfilled and healthy life and never leave the village! Now we would find it almost impossible to live on what the village provided despite modern progress.

Today, in the 1980's, our every-day needs are catered for by our one village store, which is shop, newsagent, off-licence, filling station and garage. On the opposite side of the road is the Post Office. In the past they had choice of several shops and other businesses.

In what was the bustling part of the village, Laneham Street, was the Post Office and general stores. A few years earlier this had also been the village brewery. Opposite was the newsagents shop and at that time the newsagent was also the tailor. Next to the Post Office was one of the two butchers; one was Olivant's run by two sisters and two brothers – all unmarried. They sold meat around the district from a horse drawn wagon. After buying meat, one could pick up some milk next door at Cleveland Farm before going to the 'Royal Oak', one of the two pubs in the village. Suitably refreshed one could then cross the road to Mr Hornes butcher's shop for one of his famed sausages and pork pies. Now we are dependant on the mobile shops for our meat.

Grocery buying was not restricted to the village shop. There was a thriving 'Co-op' on the far side of the Green. Here one was able to buy almost anything in food or hardware items. For those who did not or were unable to visit the shop, orders were collected and later delivered by van. So busy was the store that it provided fulltime employment for several men and boys.

Should you wish to have fresh bread or teacakes, Crawfords bakery would provide them. This part of the village had a tantalising smell of baking bread hanging over it. Mr Crawford also provided the very necessary service of

recharging batteries, essential in those days if you had a 'wireless'. The Eyre Arms, our second public house was next to the bakery.

Other aspects of everyday life were taken care of by several more flourishing businesses. The cobbler mended shoes and nearby blacksmiths made and repaired all manner of metal goods, as well as shoeing horses used on the farms. There was a garage with petrol pumps near by the blacksmiths to cater for the few at that time who had a car or other motor transport. Broken cartwheels were mended at the wheelwright's shop and even up to the late 1950's his wheel template could be seen set into the pavement. Man's final journey was taken care of by one of the two joiners cum builders, one of which was the undertaker. Rampton also boasted of two haulage contractors.

The village was visited by two Doctors, one from Newton on Trent and one from North Leverton, a surgery was held three times a week in the newsagent's house. We also had our own resident midwife. Today we have to travel to North Leverton, Tuxford or Retford to see a doctor, and now that our local hospital has closed we are 15 miles from a hospital bed.

Our spiritual welfare has undergone change. We had our vicar resident in the lovely old vicarage. He was in charge only of Rampton and Laneham, not five parishes in his care like today. The church was full for two services each Sunday, complete with full choir and alter servers. The young people of the parish had a Sunday School, but they no longer today have a choir to join.

Rampton used to have a flourishing cricket, football and tennis club, all of which did well in local leagues. There was no better occupation in the summer afternoons than watching cricket in the park. The cricket pitch has been ploughed up, houses built on the tennis courts and the football pitch is no more!

The village hall, or the 'Hostel' as it was known was always a hive of activity. There were regular dances with 'live' bands, whist drives, and a gymnastics club. The ladies joined the Mother's Union and the WI. Of these only the Whist Drive and WI survive, however, new activities have overtaken our old villagers – they can go to the Evergreen Club or enjoy a weekly session of bingo.

Should the occasion of a trip outside the village arise, it was likely on public transport. Few people had their own cars. Lincolnshire Roadcar provided an infrequent daily service, but one could enjoy a visit to one of Retford's three cinemas in the evening and get a late bus back. On Saturday, market day, additional buses were operated by Brumpton's and Appleyard's.

Rampton like many rural communities has seen great changes; some for better; some for worse. Anne Downing.

Golden Memories of Rampton & Woodbeck – Joyce Young & Edwin Tindall

Two elder residents at Rampton born in the 1920's Joyce and Edwin were born and grew up in the village. Back then it was considerably smaller with 9 farms, of which Joyce's father, Mr Richmond owned Cleveland Farm.

The community was close knit and self-sufficient with two butcher's shops Olivant's and Quickfall's, Crawford's the bakery with his hot pies, crusty bread and cakes, two tailor shops and two pubs. Forge Cottage was the old Blacksmith's shop and just behind that was a little shop where a cobbler plied his trade twice weekly travelling from Tuxford by bike.

The Hollies was owned by Miss Hunt who supplied the village with newspapers, she rented a room in her house for a local GP to hold surgery twice a week. He came from Newton on Trent and left medicines with Miss Hunt for patients to collect.

It was farmer Richmond who had the milk round and also supplied Rampton Hospital. In the 1930's he was much in demand as he was the only person with a car in the area so he would be asked to help to round up escaped patients from the hospital! For which he would receive 10 shillings. Joyce was in charge of the milk round and made many friends and contacts during that time from Woodbeck and Rampton.

The bond that existed between Rampton and Woodbeck was very strong in the pre-WW2 years and lasting well into the early 1970's. Mr Joe Sharrock ran the Gymnasium Club at Woodbeck. Joyce recalled playing tennis for Rampton and Woodbeck in the Retford and Gainsborough League.

Rampton played cricket and football at Woodbeck and the dances that were held in the big barn on Greenside were a favourite venue for many a light-footed pair.

Edwin Tindall remembered his teens in WW2 when the blackout made of a game of 'fox and hounds' a winner for the fox who could never be traced in the dark. Mischief Night also found its advantages during that time.

He also recalled the Cricket Club and paying one shilling a year to Farmer Hill of Manor Farm for the use of his field. Members of the Cricket Club were very dedicated players and considered themselves extremely lucky to be part of Rampton team.

Edwin worked mainly for Charlie Robinson who owned a substantial farm, until his retirement.

On VE Day in 1945 a celebration was held on the large paddock in front of 'Southlands' which was then owned by Mr Brown, with everyone from Rampton and Woodbeck taking part.

Queen Elizabeth's Coronation in 1953 was celebrated in the field off Torksey Street opposite Mellors Farm.

The Guild of St Mary used to be ran by Miss May Wisewould who worked tirelessly with the young ladies under her tutorage, embroidering cloths for the Church and spending many hours at their good works. There used to be a large choir and a team of bell ringers.

An unknown partial diary excerpt found at Retford Library Local Studies, early 20th Century

"The four patients at Rampton State Institution, who escaped during the weekend while out with working parties, have not been found up to the time of writing.

People in the villages around Rampton, are so used to seeing men, women and young people working or walking along the roads with their nurses or wardens that they take little or no notice of them. It is not at all unusual for patients to slip away while they are working, but they are usually caught pretty quickly, and the police are not called upon to help until the Institutions search is fruitless.

Rampton is one of the largest institutions of its kind in England. It has accommodation for 1,200 patients, and at present there are 1,000 housed there; it is quite a little town itself and is reached by a double avenue with picturesque houses for the staff on either side. The institution covers more than 185 acres of land, and lies away from the main roads between Retford and the River Trent, there those who, because of misfortune, they are not lunatics but are mentally defective and are cared for and trained for useful work, they come from police courts, after they have been certified as unsuitable for ordinary prison treatment, and from homes and institutions all over the country who are unable to give them necessary treatment; about 95% of them work and walk freely about the institution, and in the grounds.

There is plenty of entertainment provided, in a hall which is also used for Devine Service and seats between 800-900. The workshops are hives if industry in the brush making department some, 10,000 are turned out each year, many of them being supplied to the Admiralty. Boots and shoes are made, from start to finish in addition to making their own clothes, a great deal of...." The excerpt ends here, only one page was located.

Mary Wells Remembers Rampton, written in 1992

I was born in Rampton in 1910 and apart from 10 years when I was away working, I have spent the rest of my life in the village. I was born where the paper shop is now. There were two cottages, the other one was occupied by a Mr Cave, who had a cycle shop, he also repaired the bikes and later on, he had a petrol pump installed. When he died, Mr Crawford 'the baker' bought the property.

My parents rent the orchard across the road, where two bungalows now stand, we kept some poultry, it was lovely to go across and get a fresh egg for your breakfast. In those days the village 'Green' was all orchards and gardens, except for a joiner's workshop where the last post office once stood, the only two houses were round the Green,

where now Mrs Keen lives. I don't know who lives in the other. Mr Dunlop, the school Master lived in one (after he came home from the war) until his house was built at the new school.

I lost my father in the 1st World War, and my mother lost the orchard over the road, over a dispute with the landowner, a Mr Richmond of Retford, who when sugar was rationed, he claimed the ration for fruit in the orchard, which also my mother was rightfully claiming. There was a court case which he lost, so he decided to sell the orchard and Mr Crawford 'the baker' bought it.

Mr Crawford kept pigs, poultry and bees in the orchard. When he died Mr Stockdale bought it, he built his house and carried on the joinery business until he retired. It has all recently been demolished. One bungalow now stands on the land and another soon to be built. Mr Morris's bungalow was built on the Vicarage Garden. Mr Crawford bought the rest of the garden to the next corner and built the pair of semi-detached homes for his workmen. Later on, the Council built two houses further round the Green. Sometime later, two other bungalows were built, which makes The Green now taken up with property.

I remember the village hall being the Village Church School. I didn't attend, but my sister did. I started at the new school. The old school was put up for sale, and Mr Smart 'The Sadler' bid for it on behalf of the church. It was later known as 'The Hostel'. Many happy times have been spent in it, whist drives and dances. Regularly, WI, Mothers Union, Choral Concerts, Young Farmers, Dancing Classes, Youth Club and parties of all kinds. Lots of alterations were done to it, for a long time it was lit by paraffin lamps, all the water was carried by bucket from the house which is now owned by the Farrahs, the heating was by two open fires and a set pot heated by coal was the only means of boiling water. Later the open fires were replaced by coal burning stoves. Then things improved when electricity came to the village in 1936. The stoves were taken out and electric heaters installed. By the way, the wage for the village hall caretaker in those primitive days was £6 a year. My mother did the job for 17 years. There was always an iron fence (with a privet hedge) around The Hostel yard, with a small gate and flagged foot path leading to the porch entrance. I don't know when that was removed, but probably when the Parish Council took over the hall.

When hall improvements were done in the 1960's, the kitchen was moved, the kitchen that is now was the ladies' cloakroom with an Elson Toilet at the end where the outside door is, the old kitchen was where the ladies' cloakroom is now with a set pot (copper) in the corner, where the toilet now is, which was coal burning. A window looked into the hall.

There was a stage at the bottom end, and an entrance door at the corner of the top end looking to the church, a path from the church led to that door. The coalhouse and toilet were in the enclosure where now stands the oil tank. I can't remember when water was laid on, but that made things easier. During Rev Gibson's reign as vicar, a lot of voluntary work was done in the early 1960's to improve. He got a band of workers together, they worked in the light summer evenings, the water toilets were installed. Every night I took them flasks of tea. The church ran the hall as long as they could for 10shillings an hour for bookings, but when the bookings dropped off, it got a liability for the church. So, the PCC decided to hand it over to the Parish Council to run.

Apart from the village hall as a recreation place, there was another, which was known as 'Wheat's Room', it had actually been a barn, and it was situated in the grounds of Mr Black's property, and Mr Gladwins, it was more popular than 'The Hostel', dancing classes were held every week, and that is where we learned to dance. Mr Jack Baker was the tutor. It was a better floor than The Hostel. The dancers came from miles around on their bikes, as far as Tuxford, Ragnall and Saxilby.

When I was a child, the Manor House was occupied by Sir Charles and Lady Ellis, they attended the church every week, and several of the staff were in the choir. The new pews, screen and pulpit were installed in Rev Morris's days. My whole life in the village has centred around the church. I was christened, confirmed, and married there. I was in the Sunday School and choir, a member of the St Mary's Guild, a member of the Mothers Union for which I received a certificate for 40 years' service. I have served on the PCC for nearly 50 years. I have been a churchwarden, a sidesman, a bell ringer, on the flower rota, a cleaner and helped in the churchyard.

I have seen many changes in the church, all new pews install, a new pulpit, the lovely screen was made by Bayes & Sons joiners in the village, the new lectern was given by the St Mary's Guild. The font lid which was made by the vicar and choir boys, the Rev Rushby-Smith. The Vicars I remember are:

- Rev Chadwick

- Rev Morris
- Rev Rushby-Smith
- Rev Jessop
- Rev Lesley
- Rev Lamour
- Rev Gibson
- Rev Halliday
- Dr Duckworth

Organists:

- Mr Danby from Retford
- Mr Oldfield from Dinnington
- Mr Mettam from Retford
- Mr Lane from Retford
- Mr Brooks from Elkesley
- Mr Lawton from Laneham
- Miss Fisher from Rampton
- Mrs Clark from Laneham

The new vestry was by Mr Wilson and the Children's Corner was done for a Sunday School and made in Rev Jessop's time, it used to be a doorway. Two stained glass windows and two roll of honours, the heating system changed from solid fuel to oil, the lighting from paraffin and the organ from hand pumping, all three to electricity. All much easier work. Mr Crawford had four church bells restored and the two new ones installed. The alter was brought forward in Rev Halliday's time. A fine red carpet is in place of coco matting. The bottom half being given by Mr C Robinson. I have known 9 vicars and 8 organists in my time, the longest serving vicar was Rev Gibson for 22 years. In 1991 a new roof was put on the church and a new ceiling, in 1992 the windows are being repaired. I hear we are to have a new vicar coming in July. So that will make vicar number 10.

A lot of work has been done in the churchyard, in Rev Gibson's day he had all the gravestones at the front of the church removed and put around the outside wall, so a mower could be used to keep the grass down, which looks very nice, in the spring it is covered in primroses, celandines, daisy's and cuckoo flowers, before we had a mower, it was cut with a scythe, which wasn't an easy job getting in between the stones. Two or three more trees have been planted, also a hedge of forsythia, which looks attractive when in full bloom, also in Rev Gibson's days, water was laid on to the church, and the churchyard for the benefit of the public when taking flowers to the graves.

A start has been made at the back of the church, to remove kerbstones, for easier mowing. In 1978 I started a churchyard fund to buy mowers, petrol etc. The money came from harvest dinners, which I organised and with the help of friends, were a great success. Frank Horne kindly gave the meat for the first two, and Rosemary Robinson for the next. Then the Parish Council started to give a grant every year, which is very good, seeing as the Church and Churchyard belong to the people. The Rev Gibson, Mr C Robinson and Mr E Stockdale used to mow the grass. Then in 1977 when Ted retired, he took over and with the help of Mr F Muggleton, they got it looking lovely. Mr B Black and helpers are now in charge. Mr Muggleton planted the rose trees in the corner by the porch in memory of his wife. Mr Littlejohn planted the hydrangeas in the other corner and Mr D Robinson planted the Spirea shrubs. The corner by the west door is now the garden of remembrance for the ashes of the cremated. The Church is 12th Century.

I would say Rampton was a very pretty and friendly village. Everyone knew everyone which is not so today and every family went to either the Church or the Chapel (which by the way has been closed down this year in 1992) owing to lack of support, they had a marvellous Choir, Sunday School, every Whit Sunday held their school anniversary and on the following day the children went around the village, perched on a horse drawn dray, complete with a piano, singing their songs from their anniversary, and that was followed by a tea in the chapel school room.

The church also was noted for its good choirs, both male and female. It got so large, more choir stalls had to be made, but alas there has been no choir for a few years now. So, the extra stalls have been removed. More on singing in the village, there was a choral society who used to give concerts in The Hostel.

When I said it was a pretty village, you can imagine it to be, when all the blossom was out in orchards on The Green and Torksey Street was the prettiest street with Lilacs and Laburnums either side from the Church to the bottom

farm. The Manor Drive was a picture with all the Rhododendrons and two horse chestnut trees. The Manor Grounds were immaculate, one of the highlights of the year was the church garden fete at The Manor every Whit Tuesday.

Another event was the cricket match every Whit Monday. The cricket pitch was in the park in front of The Manor house and was said to be the finest pitch in the country, matches were played every Saturday, and that is where we spent our Saturday afternoons, but alas, that has all gone, which is a shame. The park has been ploughed up, I could never understand why the men let the cricket pitch go.

Rampton also had tennis courts, the first ones were behind the Chapel which now has bungalows on. The second courts were in Mr J Mellors paddock. Someone else to go and watch, as in those days there was no telly. They also played football, but that is all gone.

Rampton was also a very industrious village and almost self-supporting. I would say the main industry was the bakery, it was situated on the pub carpark, it was attached to the Eyre Arms, Mr Crawford was the baker, he employed three men and two women. It was beautiful bread 4½p for a loaf and 2p for a cob, teacakes 1p each and his pastries and cakes were superb. I worked for him for a while when I was single, then again during the war when one of the men was called up. I loved the work, especially going out on the rounds. We did several surrounding villages, Mrs Crawford also ran a shop, and I loved to get in there and serve, everything came in bulk in those days, like sacks of sugar and flour. Boxes of dried fruit, rice, sago etc, and sweets in large glass jars. So, it all had to be weighed up, so when we weren't busy in the bakehouse, we would go in the shop and weigh up. All in blue paper bags, another job I enjoyed doing.

It was a sad day when Mr Crawford died, no one took over the bakery, so it was sold and pulled down, the end of an era to that lovely bread.

We had two butchers in the village, Olivant's was where Rae's live, and the other where Mr Horne lives, I also worked at Mr Horne's, we made sausages and pork pies, brawn and haslet. There again supplying the surrounding villages, his pork pies and sausages were almost world famous, they were so good. They trawled miles, that was another sad day when Mr Horne retired, and it was pulled down.

The old post office and shop was where Dawson's live and the paper shop was across the road where the Duckmanton's lived. Also, that used to be a Tailor's shop, there was a saddlery shop at the end of Laneham Street. There was a blacksmith and cobblers' shop where Mrs Fisher's bungalow stands.

There was another public house, 'The Royal Oak', which was where Mr Dodds lives. A co-op shop on Greenside, and another tailor and photographer where Mr Black lives. Bayes & Sons joinery firm was down Torksey Street next to the vicarage. You could buy coal in the village at one time. All the milk was bought at the local farms as was fresh butter, cream, cheese and eggs, and nearly all the farms have gone. The other joinery business was where the last post office was and extended to Mr Bramley's bungalow. The joiner was Mr Tindall & Son. Both joiners did funeral arrangement making the coffins and taking the dead to the church or chapel on the bier which used to stand in the church, but it is now gone.

Rampton has almost doubled in size, with the addition of the new estates, 'The Pastures', 'Greenside Avenue' and 'Orchard Drive' and 12 council houses.

There is a regular bus service to Retford now, whereas there was only a horse drawn carrier cart on a Saturday, or a trek across the fields by footpath to Cottam Station to catch a train to either Retford or Lincoln. The farmers went to Retford by pony and trap. The tractors and combine harvesters have replaced the horse and cards, reapers etc on the farms. Cars have taken over from the pony's and traps, most families have a car these days. The farmers used to walk the cattle on a Monday morning to the Cattle Market in Retford. One family used to walk to Retford pushing an old pram to do their shopping. I once walked with friends to Retford to the cinema, we took a short cut through Treswell and Grove park.

I was married to Ted on March 29th, 1937, by the Rev Rushby-Smith and started married life down Torksey Street in 'Threeway Cottage' which then, was three separate cottages, and had many happy years there. We moved up to Treswell Road in 1951 when the new council houses were built. I have two children, Michael and Judith, who are both married with a family. They were both brought up at the church, attending Sunday School, and both in the choir, Michael being the last server when he left the choir when he was 16, they were both christened and

confirmed in Rampton church and Judith was also married there by the Rev T Gibson in 1971. Michael was married in East Retford church in 1966. They both live locally so I see them regularly. I lost Ted on 22nd Oct 1991, and he is laid to rest in the churchyard which he looked after for so long. My mother made history in the village when she lived to 100 years old. She died in 1989. She achieved her goal, which was to receive a telegram from the Queen. I am hoping to do the same.

Mary E Wells, 4 Treswell Road, Rampton (1992)