

MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

ANNUAL BULLETIN

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MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP COMMITTEE 1993 /4

Mr. C. Turk - Honorary President
Mr. J. Cooper - Chairman
Mrs. S. Smith - Vice Chairman
Mr. L. Eden - Secretary
Mrs. D. Wall - Treasurer
Mrs. J. Grover
Mrs. B. Robson

PROGRAMME OF PAST EVENTS

1993 Nov. The Playnes and Longfords Mill - Mr. I. Mackintosh

1994 Jan. Gloucestershire Churches - Mr. G. Harvey

March The Leigh Family and the Woodchester Mansion

May Minchinhampton Church Organ - Mr. J. Portbury

July Visit to Tewkesbury Abbey

Sept. Exhibition - Minchinhampton The Last 100 Years

Centenary of the Parish Council
Mr. C. Turk & Mrs. S. Smith

A CRICKET CLUB AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY

DIANA WALL

In 1994 one of the recipients of money from the Minchinhampton Country Fayre was the Cricket Club Pavilion Fund. The M.C.C. (Minchinhampton, not Marylebone, Cricket Club) is long-established and the following is but a "snapshot in time of its history.

The poster, dated August 20th 1888, which is reproduced on the following page was found in the scrapbook of the Minchinhampton Improvement Association, in the Local History Collection. The Common was undoubtedly the scene of many local sporting events, and even when the Club was properly established, games would take place on the Camp Field, on the edge of the Great Park.

Play must have been sporadic in those days, for there is no record until 1896, when an item in the Parish Magazine for October reads, "*It is a matter of congratulation that Cricket has been again revived at Minchinhampton, and that considering that the game had somewhat fallen into disuse of late, the season has been very successful. Certainly few years, as far as the weather was concerned, could have been more favourable for the game, and, until September, the fixtures have almost all fallen upon fine days.*" The officers for that year read almost like a Who's Who of the town,

President: Rev. E. Bryans

Vice-Presidents

Mr. Baynes

Mr. Denne

Capt. Ricardo

Mr. E. Playne

Mr. F. Playne

Mr. Fowler

Captain: Mr. A. Jeffries

Vice Captain: Mr. W.J. Browning

Secretary: Mr. H.D. Newman

Mr. Brodie

Mr. Church

Mr. Pelham-Clinton

Mr. A. Playne

Rev. C. Hartley

Hon. H. A. Lawrence

Treasurer: Mr. Fowler

During the year the team played 18 matches, won 9. lost 8 and drew 1.

It appears that at the turn of the century that there was a division based on religious allegiance. The Cricket Club was made up of members from Holy Trinity, the Parish Church, whilst the Football Club was closely linked with the Baptist Chapel! The Parish Magazine continues to print match reports and the list of subscribers who keep the Club financially afloat. In 1899 income for the year was £14.12s.6d., of which 29 members paid a subscription of 1/- each. The expenses for the year make interesting reading:

	£	s.	d.
<i>Mr. J. Harman - Rent of Field</i>	5	0	0
<i>Mr. Butcher - Bats, balls etc.</i>	2	15	0
<i>Mr. L. Wood - Ditto</i>	1	1	2
<i>Practice bats</i>		15	0
<i>Brake to Kemble</i>		12	6
<i>Mr. Newman - Stringing bats</i>		5	3
<i>Mr. Elliott - Fixture Cards</i>		4	8
<i>Mr. Hillier - Lawn Mower repairs</i>		10	6
<i>Mr. Hillier - Pavilion repairs</i>		12	8
<i>Mr. Hillier - Pitch Repairs</i>		14	6
<i>Mr. Hillier - Pitch Keeping</i>		12	0
<i>Mr. Chew - Locks and keys</i>		2	4
<i>Mr. Bennett - Tea</i>		2	0
<i>Postage, whitening and oil</i>		9	5
<i>Balance in hand</i>		<u>15</u>	<u>6</u>
	14	12	6

The games at this time were very low-scoring, compared to the present. A narrow victory was scored over Salmon Springs, 24 v. 23. At home in 1899 103 runs were scored for 3 wickets, but the more usual totals were less than fifty. This can be attributed to the late start of the matches, and the playing conditions on the edge of the Common. There would be a mown strip (as the accounts indicate) but this would not have been rolled, and "bouncers" would catch many experienced batsmen unawares. Regular opponents were Horsley. Longfords Mill and Brimscombe.

The connections between the Playne family of Longford House and the Cricket

Club were strong. Not only were two matches played each season against the team from the Playne's Mill, but several members donated money to the funds, and took an active part in play. Mr. Harman, from whom the field was rented, was a personal friend of A.T. Playne.

Some novel ways were found of raising money. In 1904 a concert was held, "In order to replenish the impoverished exchequer of the Cricket Club, a concert was held in the Market House on the evening of Nov. 25th and a goodly audience enjoyed a long and diversified programme. Songs were contributed by Mr. A. G. Bennett, Rev. J. L. Stewart, Miss Bryans, Miss Lawrence and Mr. W. Jeffries, the last two being loudly encored. Miss Gladys Bryans played a violin solo and Mr. A. E. Selwyn sang two humorous songs in costume, which met with much favour, as did comic songs by Mr. F. Jones. Two mandoline solos were cleverly played by Mr. Blick and recitations - "The Groom's Story" and Anstey's "Costers Conversation" - were given with considerable dramatic power and sense of humour by Mr. L. E. Fawkes. The whistling solos of Mr. O. Chew were also highly applauded, and the Rector read "The Confession" from the Ingoldsby Legends, and, being encored, Hood's amusing little piece "Domestic asides". Mr. D. Apperley played a pianoforte solo with much executive skill, and also acted as general accompanist. The audience was extremely well behaved, and we noticed with pleasure an entire absence of gallery cat-calls and the objectionable noises which have sometimes spoilt the pleasure of our Market House Entertainments. The nett proceeds amounted to the satisfactory sum of £5. 1s. 7d." Thus it was reported in the Parish Magazine.

Only one photograph has come to light from this most interesting period. The print was donated to the Cricket Club some years ago by Mrs. S. Ridgway (née Newman) of Haresfield Beacon. Probably taken almost a century ago, it shows her father, Mr. S. J. Newman and also a Mr. Edward Hulbert, and a Mr. Jim Godsell. Sadly the sepia print is too faint to reproduce in the Bulletin, but it shows a marvellous line-up of players, the average age of whom must be well over thirty-five.

The attire of the gentlemen would cause the most interest on a present field of play. Although most are wearing white shirts, only a few have flannels. Everyone wears a tie (but this could be for the photographer's benefit) and the headgear ranges from cricket caps and straw boaters to what can best be described as a pith helmet! One gentleman in the back row (an official perhaps?)

is wearing full highland dress, with sporrán and beret.

CRICKET.

A MATCH WILL BE PLAYED

(Weather permitting)

ON THURSDAY NEXT,

AUGUST 20, 1868,

BETWEEN ELEVEN

Players of Nailsworth

AND ELEVEN OF

Minchinhampton,

ON

MINCHINHAMPTON COMMON,

NEAR THE WINDMILL.

Play to commence at Half-past FIVE p.m.

LEWIN, PRINTER, NAILSWORTH.

Hampton 86 - Nailsworth 26

Other names have been recorded for this period; A. Jeffries (the captain for several games) scored 37 on two occasions in 1899, H. Smith took four wickets in one over against Horsley, Wilkinson (no initial) took six wickets for 3 runs in a single innings defeat of Longfords team. As mentioned before; scores were low, so a two innings game seems to have taken place fairly often when the evenings were light. Most men could walk or cycle to their homes very easily. Cricket teas, or after-game drinks were yet to come.

Very little seems to have changed throughout the Edwardian periods in those peaceful (and fine?) summers before World War I. Whilst not winning any major trophies, or producing another W. G. Grace; the Minchinhampton Cricket Club appears to have flourished as so many in England at that time. No-one would have foreseen the upheavals and carnage of the French countryside in 1914. Perhaps Camp Field at Minchinhampton, as well as the playing fields of Eton, helped to mould that conflict.

MINCHINHAMPTON Girls Training Corps 615 SQUADRON 1944 — 1958

IRIS DYER

The girl Training Corps (G.T.C.) was a national organisation formed to give girls aged from 14 to 18 experience of what life was like in the Services.

Minchinhampton G.T.C. was started at the request of a group of teenage girls, the chief instigator being Poppy Ellins (later Cooke). She had originally belonged to the G. T. C. squadron based at Stroud High School, and the main reason for her request for a company to be started in Minchinhampton was due to the wartime travel problems. The last bus left Stroud at 8.55 p.m. so she had to leave school at 8.30 p.m. to walk into town, thus missing half the parade. Poppy and pals Mavis Humphries (Davies) Eileen Cleverley (Young, now living in Australia) and the late Stephanie Newman (Hudspith) approached several influential local people. These included Mrs. Fyffe of "Bowmans Green" on the Park. Mrs. Holt of "Windrush" and a Mrs. Brown who was connected with the Red Cross. This lady promised to contact a friend and seek her help, and eventually a letter was received from the Staff Commandant of Gloucestershire G.T.C., Lady DeClifford of Gloucester. asking Poppy to meet her at Moor Court Hotel to discuss starting a squadron at Minchinhampton.

When Poppy arrived at Moor Court, she was surprised to see that Lady DeClifford had contacted several other ladies from Minchinhampton, namely Miss Gladys Beale, Mrs Austin Richardson (Beaudesert School), Miss Faith Playne, Mrs. Reg Lee, Mrs. Endacott, Mrs. Pegg (Senior Postmistress), Mrs.

Dale Roberts, Dr. Grace Macrae, Mrs. Fyffe and others. Poppy was asked to explain why she thought a G.T.C. company was needed in Minchinhampton and this she did, explaining that as well as travelling problems, there was nothing for teenage girls to do as there were no Ranger Guides or anything similar, and also, as it was wartime, it was necessary to register at the age of eighteen to do either war work or join the Forces, so that the G.T.C. would be a good training ground for what life was like in the Services,

So it was agreed that a Squadron should be formed in Minchinhampton and the following ladies were elected:

Miss Gladys Beale	(Commandant)
Mrs. Austin Richardson	(Adjutant)
Miss Faith Playne	(Quartermaster)

and a committee of the aforementioned ladies from the town. The first parade was held in November 1944.

The uniform consisted of a navy blue forage cap with badge (free issue), white shirt, plain navy tie, navy skirt, light stockings or white ankle socks and a navy battle blouse which could be purchased from the Quartermaster; otherwise a short navy jacket was allowed. The Officers' badge was red/silver, Cadet Officers blue/silver and the Cadet badge was all silver.

Parades were held weekly in the Market House on Monday evenings from 7 — 9 p.m. and the cadets paid a small contribution towards refreshments and the use of the hall. Parade drill instruction was given regularly and other activities included aircraft recognition, with tuition by an R.A.F. Officer, first aid, keep fit, choral singing, verse speaking, public speaking and music and movement. Several certificates of merit were won at the Three Counties' competitions in these various sections.

After the end of the war, several trips were made to London. One of the first, on May 26th 1946 was attended by the patron, Princess Elizabeth, now the Queen, who cut the Birthday Celebration cake.

In 1947 three cadets, Joy Ellins (Tremelin), Iris Ellins (Dyer) and Sybil Excell (McNeill) were: planning to go to Holland and join other contingents for a holiday. Their medicals had been passed, but a severe outbreak of polio in England prevented foreign travel, so they were sent instead to B.T.C.

Headquarters in Holland Park for a week exploring the city. Two highlights from the week were a visit to the American musical 'Oklahoma' and the film 'The Best Years of our Lives'. They had preferential treatment when they went to see the film! That same morning, as the girls were exploring the area around the cinema they got into conversation with the doorman, who promised them good seats at the evening performance, and, true to his word, on their arrival he escorted them past the long queue waiting to go in and ushered them into front row seats - it was probably the uniform that did the trick! They enjoyed staying at the large house in Holland Park along with other cadets, and it seemed like a palace after the small cottages they lived in in Minchinhampton. They had the freedom of the house, including the luxury of the use of a grand piano. Sometimes they helped with the kitchen chores, or light cleaning duties in the dormitory or library, and they travelled everywhere by Underground - another novelty to country girls.

The following year 13 officers and cadets travelled to a rally at the Empire Pool, Wembley, along with companies from Tewkesbury, Cheltenham, Cirencester and Minsterworth. Because of the war hotel accommodation was still scarce, so they were allocated sleeping quarters in the deep air raid shelters, where they bedded down, officers included, in very spartan conditions! After a church parade at Southwark Cathedral, the Lord Mayor of London took the salute from the Mansion House, accompanied by Mrs. Clement Atlee and the Princess, Royal.

In May 1949 Minchinhampton qualified for the finals of a Midland Regional Festival, at Smethwick, gaining first place in emergency first aid, second in competitive games, third in squad drill and a fourth in keep fit. All this against teams from throughout the three counties! The following year Doreen Buckle (Pegg) represented Minchinhampton at the winter sports in Switzerland, returning in 1951 and also making similar trips to Norway.

In 1951 a "Golden Key" scheme was introduced which required cadets to raise £3 in aid of the Headquarters deficit. The way to raise the necessary funds was to do a 6d. a job scheme (similar to the Scouts' Bob-a-job) and the Minchinhampton efforts won them a Golden Pennant and a letter of congratulation, noting that the appeal had been so well supported that a reserve fund could be set up.

A National Church Parade took place in June 1951. The parade, on Horse Guards

Parade, was inspected by Lady Louis Mountbatten, who stopped to speak to cadet Sylvia Dyer (Phelps). As it was hot several cadets fainted from the heat and Lady Mountbatten was very concerned and apologised that the girls had had to stand so long. Included in the weekend was a visit to the Festival of Britain in Battersea Park. The organisers anticipated that the cost for each cadet, "*inclusive of two nights in the deep shelters, sightseeing and all meals should not exceed 25/6d.*"

Gloucestershire G.T.C. celebrated its tenth birthday in 1952, with competitions in which Minchinhampton gained two second places, for competitive games and singing. Their own birthday party took place in November 1954 in the Market House. Refreshments, including a birthday cake cut by Miss Beale, were provided by the committee. Games and competitions were enjoyed, a playlet was acted, and a colour film of a previous county event was shown. Guests included parents of the girls, County Commandant, Mrs. Robinson, and fourteen cadets from Minsterworth.

Cadets also took part in local Armistice Day parades and sometimes formed guards of honour at fellow cadets' weddings. Discipline and attention to smartness of uniform was strict, and being a member of the G.T.C. was quite a serious business, not to be taken lightly. Before a county church parade at Minsterworth they were instructed "*Socks will not be allowed. If weather permits cadets will parade in white shirts with sleeves rolled. Battle blouses and other articles to be left in the Memorial Hall. Tea will be in the hall after the parade has been dismissed.*" Promotion was gained by a number of cadets but this had to be earned and was not easily come by, and serious training courses for all ranks had to be attended and passed.

Poppy Ellins (Cooke) rose from senior N.C.O. to Lieutenant, and Doreen Buckle (Pegg) and Winnie Glassonbury (Price) became officers.

For this they had to go to Staffordshire, then Holland Park for a weekend where they were vetted the whole time by varying top officers and by the Director herself—a very nerve—wracking experience. The late Lurlene Hammond also became a cadet officer, wearing white flashes on caps and shoulders. N.C.O.s included Mavis Humphries (Davies), Barbara Cribley (Cribley), Beryl Cribley (Browning) and Jpyce md (Ellins). Two cadets later joined the forces Sybil Excell (McNeill) i~ the W.N.N.S. and Iris Young (Muir) W.A.A.F.S.

The G.T.C. continued for fourteen years with Miss Beale as Commandant for the whole of that time. In 1958 she felt it was time to resign, and a letter of deep appreciation was received from Miss K. Curlett, Chairman of the Girls Training Corps, expressing her sadness that "*Minchinhampton has closed after such a long and honourable existence*".

A reunion was held at Miss Beale's home, Little Court, Well Hill on June 5th 1992 when about thirty girls attended. A presentation was made to her in appreciation of her kindness to them all, and a celebration cake was ceremonially cut. Later an album of photographs was presented to Miss Beale. Many passed through the competent and active company that was Minchinhampton 615 Squadron during the fourteen years, and look back now with deep gratitude to Miss Beales devoted service to her 'girls'

DELUGE! The Nailsworth Cloudburst

In August 1931 a severe storm hit the Stroud district, causing widespread damage, especially to Nailsworth. The following account is taken from the "Stroud News" collected in a scrapbook at the time by Miss Eva Kirby.

"The storm was three—fold, commencing between 8 and 9 p.m. and continuing, with two brief intervals, until the early hours of the following morning. During the earlier period the darkening sky became tinged with a yellowish hue, and constantly diffused with flashes of vivid lightning., followed by crashes of heavy thunder. Torrential rain soon overcame the capacity of drains and culverts, and flooding occurred at practically every low lying spot. The surface of all the hill roads were washed away and huge piles of debris deposited in various places. The repairs will take months to complete, but the local Councils have done everything possible to deal with the emergency.

At Nailsworth the scene was indescribable The parts of the town most seriously affected were Market Street, the bottom of Fountain Street and in the vicinity of George Street. Water came pouring out from the banks of the

Common on the Watledge side of the town and walls and masonry were swept like matchwood before the torrent, George Street resembled a river with a depth of four or five feet of water and the homes in the vicinity were a pitiable sight; the downstairs rooms, in which furniture and other effects had been floating about, being full of mud and slush.

Earlier in the day Minchinhampton experienced another heavy storm in the course of which Woeful Dane Cottage was struck by lightning and damaged. The occupants fortunately escaped injury. . . . Dr. H. Mould of Stroud, who was visiting a patient in Woodchester, was unable to drive his car through the flood near the railway station, the water actually entering the car. He was obliged to spend the night in the village, and his car was rescued in the morning.

Mr. G.W. Fisher informs us that the rainfall measure at his rain—gauge at the Rectory Cottage, Minchinhampton, during the storm of Tuesday night, was 2.00 inches. This is the heaviest fall yet recorded in the Minchinhampton area. The road was badly cut up at the bottom of Well Hill and the cottage occupied by Mr. Excell was flooded. A heap of stones which had been washed down the street had to be cleared from the Cross.

The current of water flowing down Brimscombe Hill from the Common cut deep channels down the side of the main road and carried tons of the blue stones and sand upon a bank below. At Wallsquarry the flood entered the premises of Mr. A. Bateman, and rushing across the garden carried away rows of potatoes . . . and carrying a large quantity of stones and sand over his bed of onions. The rush of water down Burleigh Hill entered the kitchen, cellar and brewhouse of the Bell inn. Mr. George Davis walked home to Wallsquarry from Toadsmoor Mills at the height of the storm only to find the rain had entered his own kitchen.

Thankfully, although many people in Nailsworth had narrow escapes, there was no loss of life. A similar storm, just twenty—one years later, almost destroyed the North Devon village of Lynmouth and cost the lives of twenty—two people. In 1931 the "*Cloudburst havoc at Nailsworth*" was estimated to have caused damage in the region of £20,000. Some premises were never fully rebuilt, and the Mortimer Gardens now stand in their place.

DELUGE!

TUESDAY NIGHT'S TERRIFIC STORM

CLOUD BURST HAVOC AT NAILSWORTH.

House Struck by Lightning and Damaged by Floods.

NARROW ESCAPE OF RESIDENTS.

On Tuesday night the Stroud District was visited by a terrific thunderstorm unequalled in intensity for many years, and in all parts of the district, and particularly at Nailsworth, where a cloud burst occurred, very considerable damage was caused. At Nailsworth the almost incredible amount of 3.03 inches of rain was registered in the guage belonging to Mr. F. R. Rushton. As a result of floods, the experiences of many residents of that particular area were terrifying, one or two narrow escapes from death being reported, whilst the aggregate damage is colossal, totalling many thousands of pounds.

BEDRIDDEN WOMAN RESCUED.

A second rescue was that of Mrs. Walker, who is bedridden, and who is between 70 and 80 years of age. She occupies a down-stairs room in Brewery Lane. When the flood rose the water actually lapped over her bed, and Messrs. Newman and Ben Johnson, who live near, actually had to swim to her bed to effect a rescue and later effected a similar feat by saving Mrs. Creed and child.

The Nailsworth branch of the Cotswold Stores was badly damaged. Water rose to a height of four feet in the shop and much of the stock, including biscuit tins, etc., was floating about, whilst fittings etc. were damaged.

1931