



blidworthhistory@virginmedia.com

January 2021 News Sheet

At this time, when we are unable to meet up, we are putting information on our Website and Facebook page. They have both been updated regularly. If anyone would like to ask for some specific information you can contact us (safely) by email at the above address.

But for those members who do not have access to technology we've put together a News Sheet. This will be issued into our community, as safely as we can. See a copy – pass it on SAFELY! If you would like one emailing let us know at above address.



Happy New Year to you all!

In 45 B.C., **New Year's Day** is celebrated on **January 1** for the first time in history as the Julian calendar takes effect.

Soon after becoming Roman dictator, Julius Caesar decided that the traditional Roman calendar was in dire need of reform. **From 1st January 1622**, the Catholic Church adopted this day as the beginning of the new year.

On the **2nd January 1727**, **James Wolfe**, **British general** who played a major part in the fight for Canada, was born and on the **3rd January 1924**; Howard Carter discovered the tomb of **Tutankhamun** in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt.

Extract from Sam Clarke's diary written in the early 19th century:

"Brimstone & treacle was duly administered to us every morning in the spring, castor oil was a potent remedy for a cough. I remember once had to take soot mixed with water for pleurisy because, forsooth John Wesley had prescribed it.

The annual pig killing took place a week before Christmas, ours would be about 24 or 25 stones, a great iron pot or cauldron would be fixed up over the fire for the scalding water (we had no copper then) the butchering process being over & the pig hung up, guesses were made by the sages as to its weight, if the head weighed 25 lbs the total weight of the pig would be 25 stones, 1 lb to the stone. The butcher would come the next morning to "cut it up", the result would be flitches, hams, spare ribs, fat for lard & a lot of trimmings there with the liver were made up into "fries" and taken out by us to a number of people especially widows who were extremely grateful, because meat was denied them by reason of their meagre income 2/6d a week & a baker's loaf. (Parish pay)

We had plenty of pork to last us some weeks, without buying butcher's meat "A feast of fat things", spare rib for Xmas dinner, what can you have better? With its usual, sage & onions & apple sauce, followed by plum pudding & mince pies. Scraps resultant of lard, pork pies, and souse or brown were still waiting to be consumed, & how they were enjoyed! The flitches, hams, chives were covered with salt & a little saltpetre & left for 3 weeks, left to drain then hung in the Royal Academy of home "pictures" indeed "on the line". Alas! That such scenes as these were not more common today".

Our battle continues with Covid19 and our community is continuing the fight Together just as the villagers did in the past.

Sam Clarke wrote about the help via *sick clubs* that used to exist before a Dr or the NHS was set up:

"The sick societies were a great asset to the village in times of sickness and bereavement but they were economically unsound, as the members grew older, the drain upon the funds was greater than income as a great number of the younger members had left the village to take up work elsewhere, and partly due to agricultural depression, numbers dwindled till something had to be done, the land had to be mortgaged, finally what little cash was left was divided among the few remaining members. One club still remains 1929".

An article by our chairman, Alan Higgins:

Blidworth before the NHS.

During the 18th century, several public houses in Blidworth formed themselves into clubs or friendly societies. These clubs, more commonly referred to as "Sick Clubs" were extremely well organised and kept strict financial record books that showed their particular society to be a financial and social success.

Members paid regular contributions into a fund and the aim of the Society was to provide sick pay and funeral benefit.

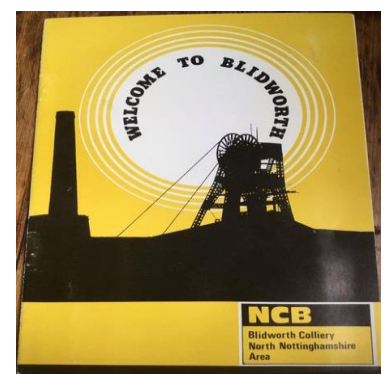
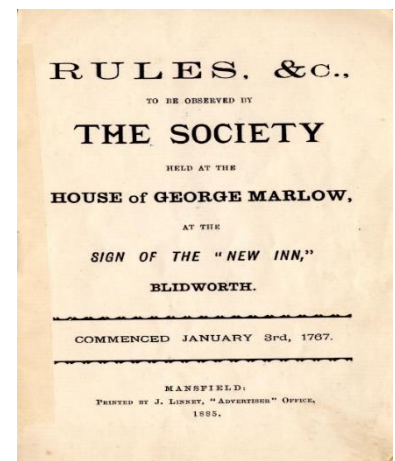
Founded January 3rd 1767, George Marlow of the New Inn Blidworth, situated opposite St. Mary's Church formed a Society. The rule book, financial and special events, members names, dates of meetings etc. are all recorded and still exist to this day. The first contribution was sixpence per month, but due to inflation the subscription rose to one shilling on alternate months.

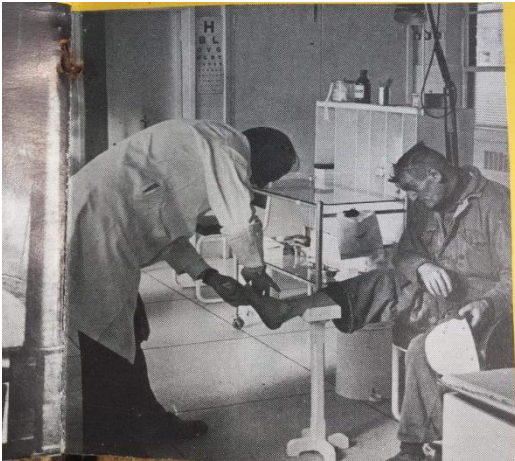
In 1769 sick pay was 5 shillings per week. Funeral benefits were set at £5. On the death of a member's wife, he received 30 shillings, the death of a second wife, a further 30 shillings, these sums were deducted from the members own death benefits.

Around 1900 there were 5 such clubs in the village, all associated with the local inns and these "sick clubs" combined their resources to fund a club doctor. Doctor Saunders of Hucknall was chosen and he visited Blidworth, held a surgery, on Surgery Lane, each Tuesday and Friday mornings, and also visited the sick in their homes.

Some men belonged to more than one sick club, and were then better off "on the club" than at work, which led this worthy doctor to remark, "If a man belongs to one club, I can cure him. If he belongs to two, then I can do him some good. If he belongs to three, then he is incurable".

In 1923, the Newstead Colliery company began employing men at Blidworth to construct the new Colliery and these men together with the hundreds of men later employed in producing the coal, paid a compulsory amount into the company sickness scheme and thereby qualified for the services of local doctors who resided in the village. In 1924-26, the construction of the Colliery surface plant began and amongst these buildings was a medical centre. (Photo of Tommy Saville in the ambulance room, Blidworth pit – from booklet Welcome to Blidworth courtesy of Denzil Jones.





A description by Michael Gallagher in his book reads as follows;
“The ambulance room is a model of what a room should be. The floors and walls are tiled, light blue and white tiles are used in the scheme, and a very pleasing and hygienic effect is produced. The equipment consists of a bath, operating table, cabinets for lint, dressings, splints etc. It contains everything that is necessary for the first aid treatment of wounds and fractures. There is also an electric water heater which may be used to obtain an instantaneous supply of hot water if required.”
Blidworth miner’s families, unofficially, used this facility, particularly in the case of emergency and Jack Wedd, the ambulance man who lived very close to the colliery was always on call both at home and at work. Jack and his wife Elizabeth were still the village first aiders until the

1950’s.

Ransom Hospital near Mansfield was developed at the turn of the 20th century as a private hospital and later became an NUM funded hospital. Set in a lovely location within Sherwood Forest, the sanatorium was renowned for its fresh air techniques with patients sleeping on the open verandas of the wards. Newstead Sanatorium near Ravenshead was opened by the Duchess of Portland in 1942, Newstead specialised in treating Tuberculosis, a worldwide pandemic in its day, and although not completely eradicated, effective vaccines and antibiotics control the infection to a large extent.



Doctor Alan Spencer

Two doctors that began treating patients in the village during the 1930’s. Doctor James Matthews with a surgery on the Crescent and Doctor Alan Spencer with a surgery on Dale Lane. Both used a surgery attached to their homes. Doctor Spencer continued to practice in the village until retiring in the 1960’s and is remembered fondly for being a friendly character who knew most of his patients by name and in many cases was present when they were born, including yours truly. He often suggested to the parents of the newly born male children that they name the baby after himself, hence there was numerous Alan’s in the village, again, including yours truly.

I remember his waiting room on Dale Lane very well, there was no appointment system, if you were ill you simply turned up and waited your turn. The room could be full, with 20 plus people in there, all sitting on hard wooden bench seats. You made a mental note of all the faces and went in to see the doctor after everyone who was there before you. Never once did you hear anyone saying “I was here before you.” It was a

system of one out, one in, while you waited for an hour or more in a room full of people coughing and sniffing. One of the original wooden seating benches was transferred into the waiting area at the Blidworth Abbey Medical Centre, although very rarely used, today’s patients seem to prefer the softer seats whilst waiting to be electronically paged.

In the years immediately after the Second World War the priority was the welfare of the people. The Minister of Health, Aneurin Bevan, was given the task of introducing a system of health for the nation, and in 1948 medical care became free and based on need rather than on ability to pay.

The NHS has constantly evolved throughout its history and today is almost unrecognisable as the service that was established 70 years ago. However, it is under significant pressure and facing perhaps its biggest challenges since it was established.

Together, we can ensure that everyone enjoys the best possible health and quality of life post-COVID.

A note in Harry Clarke's diary written in the 1930s-1950s, entitled Gipsy Ways by Gipsy Petulingro (page 1):

Gipsy Ways. (By Gipsy Petulingro)
How to catch rabbits. We make up a 'smoker' as follows: we cut strips of brown paper, about 2 feet long & 3 inches wide, soak them in a solution of Saltpetre & vinegar, dust them over with a little Cayenne pepper, dry them, & roll them up. We then place one in the windward side of a rabbit hole & light it with a match, putting the net over the bolt hole. The rabbit will soon be sneezing & run out for a breather & into the net he goes.

How to make pond water fit to drink.
Get a large earthen flower pot, one with a hole in the bottom. Over the hole lay 3 or 4 iron nails. Then put in the bottom a piece or two of chalk & some about 6 inches of powdered charcoal. On top of this put some sand; Pour water in the pot, & let it run through the hole in the bottom into your water-jug.

Remedys with Herbs.
For the Liver. Boil up one ounce of Dandelion root in a pint & half of water. Good for Rheumatism too.
For Blood Pressure. Take one ounce of the leaves of the common stinging-nettle. Pour over them one pint of boiling water. Let it stand until cold, & take a Wineglassful twice a day. Strain it before drinking.

Another extract from Sam's diary, but annotated by Harry:

(When I was down Beck Lane getting bracken, I met Mr. "Neddy" Godfrey who was quite vehement and called Lloyd George for the break-up of the clubs, i.e., **for bringing in the National Scheme.** HC) -

John Wood, a long-time resident of Rainworth, local author/poet and a former Ranger book “A Walk Around Rainworth” – a walk, in verse of course, around natural Rainworth starting at Ell Lake on Burns Day 1987.



“Burns day 25th January 1989 a bad storm felled many trees in the woodland including one of the large black poplar trees on the field side of the lake and sadly the winds of 1990 felled the other.”

The Battle of Burns Day 1990

Twass burns night 1990 when the wind whipped through the trees,
From the wailing of its chanter came a tune of unearthly ease,
A death toll of destruction was counted in its wake
For many fell that dreadful day in the woodland ‘round Ell Lake.
In Wobo Wood a mighty beech, with roots ripped from the ground,
Lay toppled by the claymore of the wind which ran him down,
Ailing birch had their heads lopped off, as too did proud Scots pine,
When this strong wind blew with the breath of death and eerie, awesome whines.
A crack willow line of archers were smitten by the blast
As this harbinger of death attacked them and felled them in its path,
Their bows were left unlifted, their arrows left unhewn,
In death they lay defeated on that dreadful afternoon.
Some, they fell in Birch Wood; some in the Spinney lay;
Both the dead and dying awaiting their decay.
Others lay in Marsh Wood upon the boggy ground,
While some had partly severed limbs that hung so limply down.
The battle raged on Poplar Way where the giant poplar stood,
And like his friend who fell last year, he too shed his heartwood blood,
Twisted and shattered he toppled and fell, caught by a neighbouring pine,
The storms of '90 had taken their toll as they had in '89.
And when the battle was over and Burns Day was many hours passed,
And the winds of destruction had moved on their way, tranquillity reigned at last,
A still, silent calm of reflection; of absent friends in the crowd,
Whom we'll think of many years to come when the winds of destruction roar loud.

A poem by Arthur Radford, to light our way in these dark and stressful times:

The Sun

The sun, earth's star providing light and warmth for all life,

Be it creature or plant or fish in the sea,

All welcome in the morning of their turn,

As the sun shares itself with every one in the dawn of each day,

A new dawn to some but first warmth will tell them.

They are here on earth's gifted place to see the light of life.

Some will witness drama, some joy but each will welcome the first beams
of sunlight to start them on their purpose of being,

To bring new life of their kind on earth's welcome bosom.

Here to Help during the COVID-19 Crisis Visit [Blidworth And Rainworth Fight Against Covid-19 Facebook page](#) set up by the Blidworth and Rainworth Parish Councils; the Sherwood Forest Community Church C of E and Methodist Churches in Blidworth, as well as the Blidworth Welfare, the Head-teachers of Local Schools and the Social Action Hub (Food share and Co-op). Our purpose is to supply useful and accurate information to the community and to help the vulnerable at this time. We recognise the outstanding response that members of the community have had by making pages etc, this is just a way of consolidating all the various groups.

Contact them on the following numbers:

[Rainworth Social Action Hub food share 01623 490498](#)

[Blidworth on the move for medical transport 07915929936 & 07377267643](#) Plus
[General Enquiries 07816933429](#) (Lines open M-Fri 8.30am - 6.30pm)

[Blidworth food share at Sherwood forest community church 07907 664862](#)



HANDS



FACE



SPACE