



Ramsbury Village Diary

20th Anniversary 1986-2006

Editor: Ben Tottenham



1st Ramsbury Scout Group

The 1st Ramsbury Scout Group has experienced many changes since 1986. The Scout Hall has occupied three separate venues; two were located in the High Street before the Group moved to its present location in Hilldrop Lane, a purpose built hall with excellent facilities in superb surroundings, which could be claimed to be one of the best in Wiltshire. Scouts and Cubs have maintained a long tradition in Ramsbury and have embraced the changes as Scouting has evolved. Beaver Scouts were first introduced as a new section into the Movement in 1986, the 1st Ramsbury Colony was established in 1988, the first Colony to be formed in North East Wiltshire. Other changes include a new look uniform and the launch of a new essential scouting programme with an exciting new badge scheme. Currently the 1st Ramsbury Scout Group has three flourishing sections involving boys and girls, with keen and committed leaders, supported by an active executive committee. However, the Group is always eager to recruit more adult leadership with ideas and enthusiasm to meet the challenges that Scouting has to offer the young people of Ramsbury.

Axford

With the death of Francis Burdett Fisher in 1993 the village lost its historic roots. There are now very few original families still in Axford. Most of the 'council houses' in Kennet Rise have been bought privately and enlarged, and there are few small homes suitable for first time buyers or OAPs. The shop has gone and communal activities have low priority. We risk losing the village atmosphere that used to be part of rural England. However, we do have fundraising activities that bring the village together. The Village Fête and Open Gardens support the Church & the Village Hall. The Hall was restored with help from the Lottery & other sources and is kept going mainly by the very successful Bingo evenings organised by the Hall Committee. Could more uses of a communal nature still be found? St Michael's Church celebrated its 150th anniversary on 1 October 2006, but as the remaining ageing population die or move away, the regular Church attendance in Axford is not high even though supplemented by loyal friends from Ramsbury. Special services such as Harvest Festival, Carol Services are popular so we will build on that for the future.

Beating The Bounds Of The Parish

Beating the Bounds of the Parish has taken place for the past 37 years on the May Day Bank Holiday except for the year of the Foot and Mouth outbreak. About 100 people of all ages from 5 to 85, set out for the 11-hour walk round the 26½ miles circuit. The youngest walker is ceremoniously 'bumped' on the half way stone. At the lunch break some walkers retire and others join the throng. The Parish Council provides refreshments at points where the route meets a road. At the finish, certificates are issued for those completing the full distance. A wonderful, challenging day is enjoyed by all. Aldbourne beats the bounds of their Parish on the same day and the two parties pass one another en route.

Bella Voce Choir

Twenty years ago there was a Ramsbury School Mothers' Choir which reformed each autumn to sing in the annual School Carol Service. They proposed the formation of a proper choir inviting others to join them to rehearse music throughout the year, to sing for their own pleasure and for others. Bella Voce choir was established in 1999. At first they practised in the school hall and were invited to sing at Holy Cross Church and Ramsbury Methodist Chapel and for several weddings. Gradually they became recognisable by the deep red dresses they wear for performances. The Memorial Hall purchased a new piano and the thirty choir members now practice there every Tuesday with Sian Haynes as musical director and Kevin Bates as accompanist. The choir has sung at weddings, funerals and church festivals, as well as at concerts in Hungerford, Aldbourne and Ramsbury. Their Christmas carol music is very popular. They were honoured to be invited to sing at the Wiltshire High Sheriff's traditional annual service to "Celebrate the Rule of Law" in Holy Cross Church, Ramsbury. The Choir thank Ramsbury Parish Council for their grant to cover music and rehearsal costs.

Bird Notes

Since 1986 the changes to the bird life in Ramsbury reflect national trends, we have our winners and our losers. Twenty years ago Cetti's Warbler had only been recorded in Britain a handful of times, now it is considered a resident and in Ramsbury it is heard by the river throughout the year. It is the birds of prey which have made the most progress. Twenty years ago the Kestrel was the most common, with Buzzards, Sparrow hawks and Hobbys being uncommon residents and visitors. The local Buzzard population has since been swollen by an influx from the West Country and Red Kite, which only visited Wiltshire prior to 1990, now breed in the area. Twenty years ago if you walked from Lamplands to Axford during spring you could have heard male snipe 'drumming' or performing a courtship flight, not any more. These birds do over winter on the water meadows at Littlecote but as breeding birds in Wiltshire they have all but gone. Lapwings, which used to nest on the fields above Lamplands haven't been seen in the last few years, they are susceptible to disturbance from walkers for example, on the other hand new farming methods have brought a population of Skylarks to Ramsbury which are the envy of many areas.

Coffee Centre

The Coffee Centre was started in 1980 and is still going 26 years on. The venue was then the old scout hall which apparently had no running water, but was always full of news and happy times for villagers meeting there. In 1988 the sales stall and Coffee Centre was run by Mrs Sally Clark and Mrs Joyce Edwards and had moved to Red Cross Centre. During that period I became involved and finally took over in 1996 with help and ideas from Mrs Lloyd. We sent two monthly collections to the Prospect Hospice. In 2006 the Red Cross premises were sold and the Coffee Centre closed after a sale party in June. It reopened at its new venue, the Methodist Church in July 2006. Open every Thursday from 9.30 to 11.30 am, it offers a cake stall every first week and a Fair-Trade stall every third week of the month in addition to its weekly sales table, and has increased our charitable donations to The Bruce Trust, Ramsbury Surgery, Prospect Hospice, East Kennet Community Transport, Douglas Arter Centre and, this year, to the Methodist Church. Since 1986 a total of £5,530 has been given. All are welcome. Julie & Robin Coe.

Meals On Wheels

Ramsbury Meals on Wheels was started, under the umbrella of the WRVS, by Anne Tiplady and Dorothy Mills, with Frank Edwards as treasurer. The Meals were to go to the sick or infirm. Cooks would produce the meals in their own kitchens and so twelve would be the maximum. After 18 years or so, Sonia Rapson took over organizing and she was followed by Mary Cook for the next 21 years. In 1997 the Red Cross, who had succeeded the WRVS, withdrew from the service. Frozen meals were offered from Wiltshire County Council but it was felt they were an unsatisfactory option and so it was decided that Ramsbury would go it alone. An enthusiastic committee was formed. Help came from donations, the Parish Council and Ramsbury Charities and with the hard work of Frank Edwards and Frances Mills, the new secretary, Charity 1067180 (Ramsbury and Axford Meals On Wheels) was founded. Many people have enjoyed being involved in cooking, delivering and eating the 32,000 or so meals that have been produced, and Frank Edwards, Mary Cook and Ann Tiplady have given over 102 years of help between them.

Parish Council

In 1986 the Parish Council was and remains the lowest rung on the Local Government ladder. The Council met in a smoke filled office in the Institute (now Oakes House). There were 15 Parish Councillors with Ronnie Price as Chairman. During the Hall refurbishment the Council moved to the Coach House, courtesy of the Brooks family. Now in 2006, 15 Councillors still meet in the (thankfully smoke-free) Memorial Hall, with one meeting annually in Axford Village Hall. The list of Councillors in 1986 contains some names which remain today. The typewritten minutes were distributed by hand: now the word-processed document is distributed by email. Also, the Council has its own website, www.ramsbury.org. In 1986 most of the Councillors had been re-elected after resigning over a referendum about the fate of an ancient dead elm in the Square. Common sense prevailed, the tree was removed and the new oak flourishes. Responsibilities remain much the same with planning looming large. The precept in 1986 was £6,000, that for 2006-07 will be £26,000 in part because the Council is now the proud possessor of a public convenience. All Councillors are still volunteers and, as in 1986, do their best to represent the interests of the villages of Ramsbury and Axford.

Project 2005

As we enter the New Year, "Project 2005" looks forward to a year of progress following the consolidation of last year. We have met Sport England again and are pursuing a Grant through them and also an opportunity with the Football Association. We expect to proceed with some further works including surfacing the new car park so that it can be used. This will tidy up that corner of the Field. The next work will be on the Pavilion, and to create a store for the equipment needed to maintain our beautiful new grounds. We will continue with some of our existing initiatives, including our 200 Club. Membership is due for renewal, so please let me have a cheque for £60 for the year. There is a draw every month and a minimum of £250 prize money each month. All for a monthly stake of £5! Join now! Contact Ian Smith 520871. The annual fund raising Ball held in a marquee on the sports field is always a huge success and very popular with all who attend. We wish the Diary a happy anniversary and long may it continue to offer such a brilliant service to our Village.

Ramsbury & Aldbourne Bowls Club

Twenty years of recording the activities of our Community is worthy of this imaginative celebration. In 1986 the Bowls Club had reached its early thirties, the original enthusiasts had stopped playing and twenty years on the Club has matured and sustains an ever-changing membership of about 35. From the start the Club was open to both men and women and affiliated to both the Wiltshire and English Bowls Associations. This is a sensible Ramsbury initiative that is about to be recognised in 2007 when the separate national bowls organisations for men and women will merge! The Club has always had a progressive outlook, having a full programme of mixed competitions and well contested fixtures against other clubs. The birth of the Village Diary coincided with the formation of the Ashley Baker League, of which the Club was a founder member, and still is an active participant. The Club has also demonstrated a desire for excellence in the sport and although one of the smallest of the 52 bowling clubs in Wiltshire, it has the highest number of qualified coaches and the highest proportion of players who play for our County. Ring 540378 for a month's free membership and coaching.

Ramsbury & Axford Golf Society

Twenty years ago, Tiger Woods was unheard of, and the Ramsbury & Axford Golf Society had not been formed! After twelve years of the annual Ramsbury Trophy golf match being held at Marlborough GC by popular demand the Society was formed in November 2006 in order "to provide a social society for the residents of Ramsbury, Axford and surrounding areas based upon the game of golf". The first event was held at Ogbourne Downs GC before Christmas and, despite gale force winds, was a great success. The programme for 2007 has been established as follows:- Spring Stapleford at Tidworth GC on 22 March, Ramsbury Trophy at Marlborough GC on 8 May, Presidents Cup, venue and date to be decided, Autumn Drive-in during October 2007, and Christmas Turkey Trot. Also, there will be a knock-out competition organised to run throughout the summer & autumn culminating in a Final to decide the Society champion (or bandit as the case may be!). New members are welcome: application forms are available from the Post Office, Midway Stores or www.ramsbury.org.

Ramsbury & Axford Link Scheme

The Ramsbury and Axford Link Scheme started in December 2002, is one of 42 Link Schemes in Wiltshire under the auspices of Community First. Run by a Committee of local people and supported by a team of over 40 volunteers. We offer practical help to anyone in the Ramsbury and Axford area who needs it. Most tasks are transport related, trips to hospital, surgery, hairdressers, visiting relatives. But we can also help with small gardening jobs, visit for a chat or game of cards. We will do anything a good neighbour would do, but not anything that would take a paid job away from a local person. When the scheme started a number of people felt it was not needed "Ramsbury people already help each other", but in our first year we completed 359 tasks. The success of the scheme relies on a dedicated Co-ordinator. Ken Taylor did the job wonderfully for over three years and has just been succeeded by Wendy Jordan. The Co-ordinator matches the request for help to a volunteer, no charge is made but the scheme depends on donations from the users to maintain it. Each month we help between 20 and 40 people and have become a much valued service in the community.

Ramsbury Amenity Group Guided Walks

The RAG Guided Walks were started after the restrictions imposed at the outbreak of Foot and Mouth Disease, were lifted. They were encouraged by the Parish Council, led by Ronnie Price, and have continued

now for five years. The set four-mile walks on the second and fourth Sundays of each month cover nearly all the public paths in the parish, and have been recorded in a published set of guides that can be found in the Post Office. In the summer there are alternative walks that are just outside the parish. The walk is reached by sharing cars to the start point. These walks include Westwood for the bluebells, and Martinsel and Coombe Hills for wonderful views. Dogs are welcome under control and new walkers of all ages.

Ramsbury Bridge Club

Twenty years ago bridge was confined to Ramsbury homes and if you wanted a competitive game, you drove to Marlborough, Hungerford, Newbury or Swindon. Ten years ago "Bridge at the Bell" started to provide a local competitive game and to nurture beginners to face the trial of the competitive clubs. The club has had players aged from 17 to 93 and provides a friendly relaxed-pace evening of bridge every Sunday in the Bell.

Ramsbury Community Bus

The "Ramsbury Flyer" has been providing transport in the village for more than 13 years, since the first community bus was acquired, after a public campaign, in the summer of 1993. Kennet District Council has now provided three successive mini-buses and these are managed by a local committee and driven by volunteers. We provide a scheduled service to Hungerford on Wednesday and Friday mornings, leaving Isles Court at 10.10, Knowledge Crescent 10.12, Saxon Forge 10.14 and The Tree 10.16 and returning from Hungerford at noon. We also provide transport for patients between Ramsbury Surgery and the surrounding villages. This is a valuable community service that is appreciated by both doctors and patients alike. Please contact reception at the surgery for the details. The Flyer is also used for excursions and can be hired by community groups for their own trips at very reasonable rates. Call Muriel Lye 520555 to check the conditions and make bookings. Thank you to everyone who supports the Flyer as committee member, driver, hirer or passenger. We are always in need of new helpers. If you would like to assist, please contact the chairman, Peter Raper 521092.

Ramsbury Cricket Club

In 1986 when the Diary's first edition was produced, the cricket club had been in existence for around 130 years, having played its first matches on the 'racecourse' ground in the 1850s. The racecourse ground was part of the Burdett estate and the team was known as the Ramsbury Burdett Cricket Club. For more than 130 years the club played 'friendly' matches against local opposition, but in the early 1990s entered the Wiltshire Cricket League. They were quickly promoted through the divisions but in the mid '90s tragically lost their captain, and the ambition and momentum were dented. By 2003 it was decided to return to playing Sunday friendly's only and to give younger players an introduction to the game. This approach, together with Sunday morning coaching, appears to be successful, for in 2006 Ramsbury were able to select an under-15 team to play a Swindon Cricket Club XI.

Ramsbury Football Club

Founded in the 1880s, the football club has enjoyed many successes over the years, and the team of the late 1980s was particularly strong. However most of the players were not from Ramsbury, and when Robbie Mills, secretary for over 25 years retired, it was decided to encourage youth football. From 1994 when the club had just one junior team, the club now has over 150 junior members and over 20 senior members. The senior team plays in the Swindon & District League and the seven junior teams play in the North Wilts junior and youth football leagues.

Ramsbury Footpath Changes

Since 1986, two footpaths have been re-routed. A section of the Manor Path now bypasses Harbrook Cottage after a public enquiry decision. The route to Axford was moved to follow the river over new bridges and away from the Priory meadow. Ramsbury's footpaths have developed through hundreds of years of use by villagers. Recently one of the most important footpath/bridleway routes which follows the southern boundary of Ramsbury from Mill Lane bridges to Froxfield Road has been altered. Used by horse riders and dog walkers, families and visitors, especially on sunny days, it now has a mesh-wire fence and a mixed-thorn hedge which will grow to ten feet. Thousands of trees in copses have been planted along the field boundaries. Ten years from now the path will be perpetually in shade, the surface will rarely dry, a quagmire in winter, and the joys of that level walk will be gone forever. How sad.

Ramsbury Horticultural Society

As a sponsor for the introduction of the diary in 1986, when alternative publicity options were minimal, we welcome its success. Since then our Society has seen some radical changes, most notably in our show schedule, which is more concise now compared with the 1980s when there were some very serious entrants, especially in the vegetable classes. Members now enter our shows more for fun and to learn a little along the way! Our talks are as varied and informative as ever and our outings, to location favourites, old and new, are still very much enjoyed. New since the 1980s has been the 'Gardens Open' event where, through the generosity of the owners of village gardens (especially in respect of time and effort), we have been able to disburse over £14,000 to local charities. An annual horticultural quiz with Lambourn has also been introduced, and we presently lead them in the trophy award. Our two main concerns for the future are to maintain a programme comparable with our present one, and the need to find more villagers to join the society and to assist in running of affairs.

Ramsbury Library

Twenty years ago the Library was in the ground floor of Oakes House, an annexe to the Memorial Hall. Early in 1991 it moved to the Coach House in the Square for the next 18 months, courtesy of Dr and Mrs Bernard Brooks, The third move was to a static mobile office parked in the Memorial Hall car park and the final move after five years was to its present site in Chapel House built and used by the Salvation Army. In 1986 the library was staffed by Mrs Kathleen Edwards and Mrs Diana Copp for 13 hours per week including two evenings, joined by Mrs June Spivey for 18 months. In 1989 the opening hours were reduced to ten and Mrs Mary Cook took over. The Library is one of only two single manned libraries in the county – the other being Aldbourne. This village amenity is much valued by some readers and reading groups but it could be used much more. Computerisation has occurred in even the smallest libraries and books can now be requested and renewed from computers at home. A free internet service is available for everyone and a little personal help is always at hand.

Ramsbury Lunch Club

Ramsbury Lunch Club was the wonderful idea of Rosemary Triptree many years ago. The idea came to fruition with help from Phyllis Broadway, Theresa Payne and Mary Tollyfield. Originally held in the Congregation Church Room, the meals were cooked at Ramsbury School. Mary Tollyfield described the first meeting as "quite an emotional scene with many people from either end of the village who hadn't seen each other for years, so pleased to meet up again". Through the hard work of its willing and happy volunteers, we are proud to say that the Lunch Club is still providing an opportunity for the older members of our community to meet for a hot meal in the company of friends. Transport to and from the Church Room is arranged for those in need. This is a very important and appreciated service. Ramsbury Lunch Club welcomes anyone over the age of 60. If you are interested contact Denise Milner 520174.

Ramsbury Memorial Hall

The Memorial Hall proudly encompasses many aspects of our village life. Built in 1927, as a memorial to the sacrifice of many from the area in the Great War, it fulfilled a need by providing a hall large enough for the village. Near the Church, it has provided an excellent after-service venue for christenings, weddings and funerals. Over the years it has been a theatre, sports hall, cinema, polling station, dance studio, lecture hall, social hall, casino and Red Cross training room, with almost every organisation using it plus regular private hirers. Its low point came in 1987 when, owing to the closure of the adjoining Institute Building, an integral part of the Hall, it had to close. For eight years the hall was out of use, while a group of dedicated trustees tried to find a solution to the problem with very little money available, no income and a massive cost to make the hall usable again. Sale of the Institute Building for conversion into flats, purchase of the premises behind the hall, enabled the building of a new kitchen and toilets, sourcing Lottery and other funding; the completely refurbished hall was reopened in 1995. Twelve thousand people annually now use the hall.

Ramsbury Methodist Church

The Church continues to play an active part in the life of Ramsbury as it was doing 20 years ago. The 1988 major church refurbishment still creates a lovely space for the 10.30 Sunday service. Each week there is a different preacher and every month includes a Holy Communion and a family orientated All Age Service. There is now a Group Minister, Irene Byron, who lives in Hungerford and who leads the Area Circuit. Christmas always brings out the tradition of carol singing around the village with the Methodists and the Silver Band. Last year there was a successful open air service held in Knowledge Crescent with members of

Bella Voce leading the singing. The Church hosts the Coffee Centre on Thursdays, the Chat Shop on every third Friday afternoon, and the hall is used by the Pre-School, WI and for Ballet Classes. May this church continue for many more mentions in the Village Diary supplements. Contact Marian Hearne, Senior Steward, 520674

Ramsbury Pre-School

Ramsbury Pre-School came into being in 1973 and has operated from the Methodist Church Hall since that date. The Pre-School is an educational charity whose trustees are parents of the children attending Pre-School. Five paid members of staff are currently employed and there are 38 pupils on the roll. Ramsbury Pre-School is and has always been a thriving setting, offering the best possible education for the under fives. Over the years Ramsbury Pre-School has been proud to provide a friendly, caring and welcoming setting in which young children learn through play. It has been necessary to move with the times whilst retaining the original character of the Pre-School. Pre-Schools now operate under strict OFSTED guidelines and have to cover certain areas of the curriculum and keep detailed records. All staff are now qualified, and regularly attend training courses further to improve their skills and expertise. As times change, needs change. We are now looking towards purchasing our own purpose built accommodation better to suit these changing needs. The committee are currently in the process of a large scale fund-raising project to this end.

Ramsbury Primary School

Back in 1986 the school was still housed in the old Victorian building. Today we have a bright new building with a purpose built hall and all mod cons including a wonderful computer suite. Despite many staff changes over the years, there has also been continuity: four members of staff have been with us for over ten years. Since 1986 there have been numerous major educational changes including the National Curriculum; the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies; OFSTED school inspections; national tests for children at age 7 and 11 years; school league tables etc. In 1986 the Headteacher had a budget of about £3000. Now the school is directly responsible for spending of about £500,000. We are a much more musical school now and very IT-literate. Since 1986, blackboards and chalk have been replaced by electronic whiteboards written on digitally, that share interactive programs and web based images with the children. In 1986, Ramsbury was regarded as a 'good' school: now this year we have an 'Outstanding' OFSTED rating. Ramsbury School is a happy place for both staff and pupils.

Ramsbury Red Cross

Twenty years ago, the Ramsbury Red Cross covered an area bounded by the M4 (North); County boundary Ham and Buttermere (East); Fosbury and Tidcombe (South) and Beckhampton (West). Activities involved running the Youth Section, Meals on wWheels, medical loans, transport and escort duties, doing first aid duties at horse, motor-bike & car racing events, fêtes, concerts, etc., and assisting at blood donor sessions. The members held between them: the B.E.M., four long service medals, four badges of honour (devoted), one badge of honour (outstanding) and four commendations. The ambulance did non-emergency county work each weekday taking patients to Oxford and London for treatment and taking the sick from hospital to home, the longest journeys being to Cornwall and Scotland. The first ambulance was given in 1945 and was replaced regularly by public donation. During the Gulf War, Ramsbury members were used to co-ordinate activities in North Wiltshire and provided round the clock teams of ambulance drivers, crews, nursing, and welfare personnel. Eighty-nine people volunteered to be trained. Courses in First Aid were held each autumn ensuring that there was a core of well trained local people in the village. The Red Cross sold the rooms in 2006 and the Centre was closed.

Ramsbury Roxy

Ramsbury Roxy was started in 2005 to bring local cinema back into the village. Enthusiastically welcomed, it has become one of the established parts of Ramsbury life. It provides an opportunity to have a social night out, see a film and enjoy a drink at the same time without having to travel far. The shows are in an ideal setting in the Memorial Hall and have proved to be a great success attracting audiences from Ramsbury and the surrounding area. Films range from the older classics to the more modern and have recently included: Casablanca, Gosford Park, My Big Fat Greek Wedding, Billy Elliot, The Dish, Touching the Void, Brief Encounter, Erin Brokovich, Sixth Sense, Chicago, A Girl With a Pearl Earring, Mrs Henderson Presents, The Third Man and March of the Penguins. The cinema is open to all and tickets are available from Ramsbury Post Office in advance or at the door on the night. Doors open at 7.30 pm and a bar is available

with the film starting at 8 pm. The current programmes are detailed in the Village Diary and also displayed on yellow posters in and around Ramsbury.

Ramsbury Silver Band

Founded in 1900, the band is one of the older village organisations. We celebrated our centenary at Hilldrop Farm. The band includes five members who were playing with us 20 years ago and seven who were not born then. Ages range from 10 to 77 and it is never too late to start. Our bookings are varied – mainly fêtes, bandstands and carnivals. When the Ramsbury Building Society opened a branch in Swanage in the 1960s the band played for the opening and returned annually for a bandstand concert for over 40 years. December is traditionally a busy time for the band ending very early on Christmas morning with carols through the village, a tradition many villagers enjoy. Once a window was opened and some water aimed in our direction. However, that did not hurt nearly as much as the five pound note which was thrown but taken by the wind before anyone could catch it. Our Christmas playing highlights environmental changes. Twenty years ago it was not unknown for trombone slides to freeze up in the cold, whereas this year we were playing carols in Marlborough High Street in our tee-shirts!

Ramsbury Tennis Club

In 1986 when the village diary was first produced, the tennis club was 13 years old and had a membership of around 100 with about one third of these being juniors. Play was on two courts with no floodlights and there was a small summerhouse that served as a pavilion. Since that date the Club has grown to be one of the top clubs in the county and in 2003 was awarded Wiltshire LTA's 'Club of the Year'. Twenty years on we now have five floodlit courts, one a 'Kids Zone' and a membership of over 250. We field eleven senior and six junior teams in the summer leagues, and three adult and one junior in the winter. The club has a permanent coaching team that operates an all-year programme for over 100 players and is a County Accredited Performance & Mini Tennis Centre. I wonder what the next 20 years will bring?

Ramsbury Toddler Group

Ramsbury Baby and Toddler Group meets every Wednesday morning in term-time in the Memorial Hall from 9.45 to 11.45 am. It is a relaxed, friendly and informal group where we all help with the setting up and clearing away and take it in turns to provide a mid-morning snack for the children. The group is currently thriving, as there seems to have been a baby-boom in Ramsbury! We welcome all babies and children from age 0 to 5 with their parent(s) or carer. Pregnant mums are very welcome to come and have a preview! We have a good selection of toys including a playhouse, tricycles, a slide and play tunnel, home corner, cars and garage, play farm, dolls and pushchairs. We also provide craft activities, dressing-up, song-time and story-time. We have a baby area, baby toys, books and plenty of tea and coffee for the adults. Your first session is free: just turn up. Thereafter the cost is £1 per adult and £1 per child over the age of one. Under-ones are free. Any enquiries, phone Emma Jeffrey on 520961.

Ramsbury Village Design Statement 2002

The "Ramsbury Village Design Statement" was produced by an *ad hoc* committee of villagers over an 18-month period in 2001–02. It is a description of the village, highlighting the qualities its residents value, and setting out their wishes for the design of development. It is intended to help to manage change in the village. For residents, it provides guidance on keeping any alterations and extensions in sympathy with the character of the village. For developers, architects and designers, it explains what the village community would like to see in new and altered buildings, and in changes to the village's landscape setting. For local authorities, it sets out material considerations to be taken into account in arriving at judgements on planning. Kennet District Council adopted the Statement as Supplementary Planning Guidance in November 2002. Although it does not have the same status as the Kennet Local Plan, it is complementary to that plan, and its 44 "Guidelines for the Future" give district officers and councillors valuable information about how residents would like to see the physical and social structure of their village develop.

Ramsbury WI

Ramsbury WI was 66 years old when the Diary began in 1986. It is now a very lively 86 year old, and looking forward to its 90th birthday in 2010. Membership dipped during the 1990s but is now climbing steadily, and currently stands at 44. In the WI we are very much aware that women today have both opportunities and pressures undreamed of in 1920. Ramsbury WI has adapted itself to the times, and works hard to provide monthly meetings with a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, where members can come and

hear really good speakers. Joining WI is an excellent way to make new friends and get involved in village life. In addition to its own meetings and outings Ramsbury WI is also the gateway to the many opportunities afforded by WI at county and national level, either to pursue new skills and interests or to join in the NFWI's campaigns on issues central to rural life. The Village Diary, along with the Parish Magazine, is the principal means of publicity for the WI, and we are very grateful to all those who give up their time to produce it. Happy anniversary, and best wishes for the next 20 years!

Ramsbury Youth Club

The club has come full circle since 1986 with a six year gap in between! In 1986 the club was active at the Church Room under the chairmanship of Dr. Michael Handford with an active membership of around 30 teenagers from Ramsbury. In 1987, the club moved to a Portakabin (ex temporary Primary School) on the site of the new surgery, sharing with the Snooker Club. Linda Smythe, Paul Court and later Rosemary Court led the club until the Courts retired in 1999. The club then folded for lack of leadership and funds were ring-fenced in the Parish Council accounts. Happily, in September 2006, Rosemary Court & Jenny Harker restarted the club back at the Church Room. They meet on Mondays from 7 to 9 pm. There are between 30 and 50 active members. There are plans to invest in new equipment, and the club is affiliated to Youth Action Wiltshire which organises events for teenagers. They recently had an enjoyable trip to the bowling alley at Thatcham and are hoping to organise other outings and activities. Jenny hopes to run the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme under the umbrella of the club from September 2007. Contact Jenny 520273.

Ramsbury's Green Issues

When are the bins being collected or when are the cardboard and plastic skips at the Surgery site? The Village Diary provides the answers. Twenty years ago, we bagged everything in black sacks, piled it high, and Kennet carted it off to rot in landfill. Recycling was confined to the site next to the old youth club and to the distant Household Recycling Centres. We were lucky if we recycled 5% of what we threw away. Today, Ramsbury residents, using Kennet's kerbside recycling services, recycle more than 50% of their waste and are a shining 'green' example. We resisted the installation of four wind turbines but rose to the challenge of saving energy using low-energy light bulbs and better loft & wall insulation. Perhaps a water turbine at one of the many old mills on the Kennet could be a next green step? We had a fantastic Food Fair this year, which showed us the importance of buying local food from our local shops. Twenty years ago we had many more Ramsbury shops and rarely used the bus. Today, our cars liberate us but are both a threat to our last remaining local services and not good for the environment!

The Royal British Legion

Over the past twenty years the ex-service membership of the Legion has gradually declined both locally and nationally. This is in some ways a good thing as it means that there have been no world wars during the past sixty years. Nationally, owing to this, some branches and clubs have been forced to close. Here in Ramsbury the branch and club are still in existence. Thankfully this is mainly owing to the support given by associate members.

The Royal British Legion – Women's Section

Congratulations to the Village Diary on 20 years of good work. Inevitably the past 20 years have seen changes in the membership of the Women's Section. Among those who were active in 1986 and who have since died are such notable community personalities as Mrs Looker, Elsie Chamberlain, Iris Chamberlain, Veronica Greavier and, more recently, Muriel Hawkins. We remember with gratitude the service they and many others gave to the Legion and to the Country during the war and afterwards. We are thankful for those members who remain from past times and are delighted that a new generation of younger members has come forward to carry on the work. Throughout the 20 years, speakers from the wider community have continued to give their time to entertain us with interesting topics. Mrs Nina Fox still invites us to a summer supper that has been greatly appreciated over the last 20 years. Fund raising for the Legion amounted to £65 in 1986 and £500 in 2006. We are confident that the tradition of mutual support among members and a contribution to the work of the Legion nationally will continue in the future.

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