



The amenities available in Snitterfield are about to be updated thanks to help from the Parish Council and the ongoing efforts of the Sports Club.

Its Chairman, Chris Gallimore, describes the task in hand.

SNITTERFIELD SPORTS CLUB IS ABOUT TO RE-FURBISH ITS OWN 'RUSTY SHED'

Although there is little sign of actual rust, the hut which stands at the entrance to the playing field on Wolverton Road is in a seriously dilapidated state. Built almost forty years ago, and now with paint peeling and windows broken, it is in need of major renovation. The Parish Council has decided that the way to achieve this is by leasing it to the newly formed Sports Club at an annual peppercorn rent. This will provide the much-needed changing facilities for both cricket and junior football. Already, internal work has begun,

with the plumbing getting a complete revamp ready for the installation of two showers. Parents from the Junior School whose children take part in the football coaching on Saturday mornings have agreed to take up paint brushes, and so we should see some action and significant improvements in the very near future.

Such development will, of course, cost a not inconsiderable sum despite the inspired efforts of volunteers. This is where the Sports Club is pleased to report that despite only being formed some six months ago it has already received significant funding. In the first place, the Parish Council has made a grant of £2,000 to be shared equally between the four sports – bowls, cricket, junior football and tennis. Secondly, the Elizabeth Jackson Charitable Trust (a locally based charity) has given the Club a donation of £2,000 specifically for this development.

The Snitterfield Sports Club is delighted that the first major project is one which, as well as enhancing its facilities, will also make a positive contribution to improving the built environment in our lovely village.

Spring is in the air!

At long last we are getting a few more sunny days after the chilly, long weeks since Christmas, the daylight hours are lengthening and we have more time to put to good use.

In this issue we look back at the events of Christmas and forward to the next one – we're hoping you will be creative and help design our new Snipe Christmas card.

Looking to the future – your views are urgently needed by the Parish Council. There's exciting news about the Sports Club events and buildings, further information on keeping your homes secure, and news and views from local people.

Looking to the past – we have delved into the Records Office archives and discovered fascinating facts and history of some of the village's oldest buildings and characters.

And with good weather on the way, now is the time to get out and about and enjoy the village. Take time to observe the spring growth in the fields and hedgerows, the magnificent trees around us (see the photo on the back page), the abundance of birds and animals. Walk along the many public footpaths (observing the country-side code of course), and make the most of our lovely surroundings.



With this issue you will find the Snitterfield Parish Questionnaire prepared by the Parish Council. It is so important that you respond to this questionnaire as soon as possible. This is your opportunity to contribute to the future planning of the village – the key issues covered are ones that affect us all. Post in the box provided, situated by the new parish notice board in the village centre.

News from Richard Hobbs – your District and County Councillor



Crime in rural areas is a concern for many residents. I applaud the neighbourhood watch initiative to introduce Smart water into Snitterfield but we must not forget that there are also many other ways that we can help the police to combat crime. After all there is no need to give the prospective criminal our banking

details in the rubbish bin or leave the car keys hanging on the hook by the back door which you may have forgotten to lock.

I know most people are more vigilant now than they used to be so the inventive criminals are using new ways to gain access to the inside of your home. In particular bogus callers are now targeting older people who may live alone.

The County Council is therefore working hard to raise awareness amongst older people so that they can protect both themselves and their homes This has resulted in the development of 'The Merchant of Menace', a unique drama production which was launched at the civic hall on the 2 February in front of a live audience of 100 people and was followed by a tour across the County.

Speaking to members of the audience after the production they commented on the professionalism of the first year Performing Art Students from the Stratford College and how well the message was conveyed on what to do when someone calls at your door:-

STOP Check your other doors and take the keys with you

CHAIN Put your door bar or chain on

CHECK Details of the callers' identity before you let them in

Due to the popular demand the play is now being recorded and copies can be obtained on DVD or VHS free of charge. If you would like to order your copy please contact Eva Holland on 01926 412535 or by email at evaholland@warwickshire.gov.uk

DO YOU ENJOY A GAME OF BRIDGE?

Snitterfield Sports Club are thinking of starting a bridge club in the autumn. If you are interesting in playing bridge either one afternoon or evening please contact Valerie Hobbs (01789 730331).

Richard Hobbs recalls... VILLAGE CHARACTERS

I have lived in the Snitterfield area for nearly fifty years and often reflect on the many local characters who have come and gone during that period. Two people who readily come to mind are Ned Wyatt and Tom Pardoe as they typify country folk living in a rural village.

Tom kept his sheep on the Manor field and the small paddock on the end of the Green, which belonged at that time to the Bainbridges, the sheep often escaping to forage neighbouring gardens. Tom could often be seen, walking bow legged, stick in hand and a bottle of milk in his pocket at lambing time ready to feed his young lambs but the best time to obtain a progress report on the lambing would be in the New Inn on a Saturday morning. I remember going into the pub as a youngster but could not work out why the seat next to Tom was always vacant. I was soon to learn as he would start a story and if he didn't think that you were paying attention would dig you in the ribs and say "what do you think of that chap?" This was so unexpected and so painful that I would often end up with half a pint of beer in my lap.

Ned on the other hand had a job at Stratford Stock Sales on market day and also helped Tom with odd jobs. The fun started when they began a vegetable round together using a grey Fergy tractor. It was a sight for sore eyes – Tom driving and Ned sitting on the trailer. Although firm friends they were always arguing and these arguments grew more comical when Tom, a veteran driver, started to teach Ned to drive and it was a regular sight to see them driving round the village with Ned displaying the L plates. In order for Ned to take his test the tractor needed a mirror and this was secured with an electric fencing stake and baler twine, but proved to be an utter disaster as when the pair reached the pub car park at the end of the weekly round, Ned getting off the tractor the wrong side got tangled up in the string and the wing mirror. They looked like Laurel and Hardy and were the butt of many a joke until the mirror was eventually fixed by the Engineer in charge of Bearley Radio Station, Eric Seager.

After passing his test Ned was then able to drive round the villages on his own. In Bearley we greatly valued his vegetables but also the extra service of weighing Andrew, our son of six months, on his scales. The sheep dogs also welcomed his visits as they would follow him up the road eating the trail of brussel sprouts as they fell off the trailer.

Ned and Tom are sadly no longer with us but old villagers like them will never be forgotten.

SNITTERFIELD BOWLS CLUB OPEN DAY – SUNDAY 15 MAY 2005

Snitterfield bowls club is looking for new members – of all ages – beginners or with previous experience. This Open Day gives you the opportunity to visit the club and inspect our facilities. The green will be open and members will be on hand to welcome visitors and assist anyone wishing to try their hand – bowls will be available on loan. Please wear flat shoes such as trainers. New bowlers will have the opportunity to attend regular coaching sessions and are encouraged to play in matches and club competitions if they wish; casual roll-up sessions are also available. Experienced bowlers can be sure of regular competitive games in club matches – this is not the case in all clubs. In the event of inclement weather we will be able to play shortmat bowls in the clubhouse. To encourage new members we are offering a first-year subscription of £25 and junior membership at only £2.50. All members of the bowls club are automatically members of the Sports Club with access to the bar and other social activities

THE DAY STARTS AT TWELVE NOON – THE BAR WILL BE OPEN AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE PROVIDED. ANYONE INTERESTED IN MEMBERSHIP BUT UNABLE TO MAKE THIS DATE SHOULD RING ANY OF THE FOLLOWING NUMBERS:

Terry Whitehouse – 01926 831028

Joan Carrington – 01926 851739

Dave Guise – Snipe Bar Steward – 01789 731731



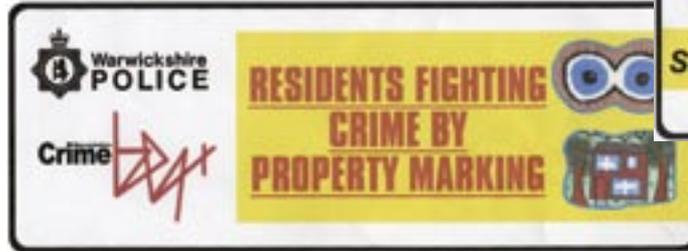
HAVE YOU MARKED YOUR PROPERTY YET?

Neighbourhood Watch wardens Dave and Renata Stephens are working hard to continue reducing the amount of house burglaries in our village.

The Neighbourhood watch team delivered more than 520 burglary advice packs issued by Warwickshire police in Snitterfield during the run up to Christmas. The response to our call to action to apply for SmartWater, the property marking system, was less than one percent. As a result of this disappointing number we have been following up on a door-to-door basis to inform householders direct of how effective this solution is, and sales have improved. If we can reach the target set, we will be able to erect these signs in strategic positions in the village roads and under Snitterfield road signs which will further deter burglars.

Thanks to those of you who have already marked your property. You will have found how easy it is to use, and we urge everyone to try it. Packs cost £11 each, and one pack is sufficient to mark up to 60 to 70 items. You can mark anything from televisions to lawnmowers, computers, mobile phones and personal items of value. Road signs will be erected as each area achieves the required target number.

To reserve your Smartwater pack please contact us, Dave or Renata, telephone 731426, or at Winterfield, Church Road, Snitterfield, or contact your Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinator.



Our Community Safety Officer, PC 679 Nick Stephens, can be contacted on 01789 414111 Ext 4598. If you have any worries do give him a call. He will be happy to advise you on any house security issues you may have.

GET CREATIVE – HAVE A GO AT ILLUSTRATING OUR 2005 SNIPE CHRISTMAS CARDS

It may seem a bit early to be thinking about Christmas but we all know it is best to plan ahead – and this year SNIPE magazine is holding a competition to design a village Christmas card. So come on – have a go!

Entries are open to all residents of the village, sports clubs and pupils at Snitterfield Schools. Designs should fill an A4 sheet of paper, which will then be reduced to a proportional size for printing and selling in plenty of time for Christmas.

The subject must be appropriate for the Christmas/winter season and be relevant to the village itself. Inspiration could be drawn from subjects such as a village scene, a character living in the village (human or otherwise), landmarks within the village or nature in the surrounding countryside etc.

Somewhere within the picture should be a snipe (the bird featured on the front page of this magazine and from which the village takes its name), although it can be a tiny element of the overall design.

Artwork can be traditional, abstract, impressionistic or totally original and any medium can be used (paint, crayon, marker pen, contact print, computer art, black and white or colour photography, etc) as long as suitability for reproduction is taken into account.

There are three categories:

- Child (11 years old and under)
- Young Person (12 to 17 years old)
- Adult (18 years old and above)

All entries must include your name, age (coy adults can be approximate!), address and telephone number and should be placed inside envelopes marked 'SNIPE CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION'.

Entries can be placed in the green post box outside Sally and Andy Hopkinson's cottage at Taxus, Smiths Lane (three houses up from the Foxhunter) before 1 June.

Up to three designs per entrant are allowed. Please don't fold your envelope, and remember to put in your details.

The cards judged by the SNIPE committee to be the best in each category will be printed in full colour and sold in packs. Prizes will be awarded to the winners.

The chosen designs will be illustrated in the next issue of Snipe and any profits raised through sales will go towards publishing future issues of the magazine.



CHRISTMAS CONCERT



The Christmas Concert held in the Village Hall in December was once again a great success. Organised by Mary Geisler, the concert artistes were all residents of the village and played to a full house. The audience enjoyed a full programme, joined in to sing-a-long and had a thoroughly good time.

Mary Geisler, Pauline Brace and Don Rushton gave a hilarious performance as they led us through the tribulations of Noah, especially when he had to confess to God, "Yo knows what subcontractors are loick!". Then followed Sally Le-Page playing piano and clarinet solos; Ron Grant with The Hippopotamus Song; Snitterfield School children, accompanied by Val Marlowe, sang popular songs from World War 2, the children wearing a fantastic array of 1940 costumes; Ron Grant sang again; Pauline and Mary recited more items together and on their own - all in all everyone had a very entertaining time!

During the interval mulled wine and mince pies were kindly supplied by members of the Village Hall Committee, and a lucky prize draw took place.

We look forward to the next concert - with a packed house expected - make sure you get your ticket early!

www.snitterfield.com

Further development of the website has taken place and the following items added

- In the Events Diary, Agendas for Parish Council Meetings are included approx one week before the meeting, in order to give you the opportunity, if you should so desire, to make your voice heard on any issues affecting you in the public sessions of the meeting.
- Minutes of the Parish Council meetings have been added, in order to give you the opportunity to see how your parish councillors are dealing with the day to day matters affecting the village, including the actions taken on planning applications.
- A Neighbourhood Watch section has been added in order to keep you in touch with new initiatives to defeat crime.
- With the formation of Snitterfield Sports Club in September, pages have been added in order to inform villagers of the excellent facilities available and the activities undertaken.

Future additions

Within the next few months, as well as the normal updating of the site, it is intended to add a Local Services section, which will provide an opportunity for local businesses to advertise their wares.

If you require further information, contact Ken at findken@snitterfield.com or telephone him on 731380.

BUS SERVICE 24

**FROM MONDAY 11 APRIL
Welcombe Garage and First
Midland Red will be providing
an improved service with
extra journeys.**

SNITTERFIELD
TO STRATFORD
08.23, 09.23, 10.23, 11.23, 12.23,
13.23, 14.35, 16.38, 17.28, 18.38.

STRATFORD
TO SNITTERFIELD
09.00, 09.50, 11.50, 12.50, 13.50,
16.15, 17.05, 18.05

You can now obtain public transport news and details of bus service changes on www.warwickshire.gov.uk/publictransport

Maureen Jeffery and Janet Smith of Medlars Farm Shop are more aware of food and festivals than most of us as Easter approaches

FASTING AND FEASTING – THE TRADITIONAL FOOD CUSTOMS OF EASTERTIDE

In these modern times the Easter weekend is looked forward to by many as a welcome extended break from the office, the time for the first cut of the lawn or a chance to tackle that DIY job that's been hanging around all winter. Certainly, Wyevale and B&Q will have one of their busiest weekends of the year and supermarkets will take more over the Easter weekend than they do in Christmas week.

In terms of food, well, Hot Cross Buns have been on sale all year round, Easter Eggs are nice but the children have chocolate most days and increasingly fewer families sit down to a full roast dinner. How different were the Easter and Lenten customs of earlier times, when the year's religious dates were observed by almost everyone and most dates and festivals had local traditional foods to signify each occasion.

The Easter kitchen calendar starts with Collop Monday or Peasen Monday – the day before Shrove Tuesday. The Lenten fast would commence in two days time on Ash Wednesday; a time when no meat would be eaten for forty days. The word 'collop' means a slice or rasher of meat, and it was on this day that cooks would use up all the household's remaining meat that would not keep, by drying, salting or preserving with fat, until Easter. Next came Shrove Tuesday and as well as meat having to go, eggs and butter were also frowned upon during Lent. Pancakes were the best way to use up this produce, although the name Pancake Day wasn't in common usage until the 1820s.

Of course, not everyone's larder was crammed with food that had to be eaten; in fact Shrovetide was a very lean time of year for many, particularly agricultural workers, and it was quite common for the poor to go begging for money, food or just pancakes. This was called 'shroving' or 'gooding' and it fulfilled a much needed community function during the poverty of the 17th and 18th centuries. Lent commences on Ash Wednesday and only one meal a day was eaten throughout the forty days, which for most people was a bowl of frumenty – essentially a porridge. It truly was a time of abstinence and it would come hard at what was always a difficult time of year – the days were short and dark, the winter's cold would bite through worn clothing and draughty houses, no fresh food to be had even if the people could afford it.

Mothering Sunday marked a happier day – always the fourth Sunday of Lent it was a time when children in service were allowed home for the day. Originally the reference to 'mother' was a return by the child to his or her mother church but since the late 1600s it has been a day for remembering mothers. The child's employers would either give or allow the child to make a simnel cake to take home as a gift. This is now eaten on Easter Day but originally it was simply decorated with flowers added by the children as they walked home.

Then comes Passion Sunday or Carling Sunday (Caring Sunday). It was the custom to eat carlings, or dried peas, on this day. They were soaked overnight and served with vinegar. Peas and beans have been associated with death and mourning since the days of the ancient Greeks, who believed that they contained the souls of the dead.

Palm Sunday, also known as Fig Sunday in many areas until the late 1930s, brings us to the sixth Sunday in Lent. In many regions, including Warwickshire, as religious observance slackened, eating habits became more flexible and relaxed, and fig puddings and pies were standard dishes for this day. Other Palm Sunday specialities include rice pudding in Kent, in Northamptonshire and

Warwickshire, little pies were made with a filling of candied peel and hard boiled eggs.

Good Friday has long been a time for Hot Cross Buns with the Christian symbolism of the cross taking over from the much earlier customs of the Pagans. Small cakes were made at this time of year to celebrate spring and the goddess Eostre. Both the Greeks and the Romans had festive spring cakes which also bore a cross as a symbol of the sun – a circle bisected by two lines cutting the bun into four quarters representing the four seasons. Hot Cross Buns were thought to have holy powers and each year a bun was taken and hung in the house to protect all within from harm. If a member of the household became ill (or one of the animals) a small amount of the bun would be crumbled into warm water or milk. This was thought to cure most ailments. In fact, this seemingly laughable cure could well have occasionally done the trick - after all, could this have been penicillin?

As children growing up in the 1950s, we remember Good Friday as a most sombre day for all. No newspapers and only two shops opened their doors, just for two or three hours. The bakers would open to sell hot cross buns, which hadn't been on sale at all before or after that day. Similarly, the fish shop opened early and almost everyone observed a fish day. Easter Day and the fasting is over, for many life continued just as it has throughout Lent and much of the year – a change of date didn't mean a change of circumstance. Luckier and richer people could, at last, once again eat meat, and the traditional roast lamb would be brought to the table. Few vegetables would accompany it. Then custards and cheesecakes to use up the glut of eggs laid during Lent and the milk that was now becoming more plentiful. The feast was in thanks that those round the table had survived the long winter months and the new season of foods and crops was beginning – an experience sadly missed by many in our modern times when the seasons have become blurred by the year-round availability of most foods. Easter biscuits were given to children as they left church – imagine how sweet and good those would have tasted – and Simnel Cake moved from its place on Mothering Sunday to be eaten at Easter – now with a layer of marzipan in the middle and on top – along with 11 balls to represent the apostles, with the important exception of Judas.

Finally, whilst chocolate eggs are a very recent innovation, the custom of giving eggs at Easter is an ancient one – Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, and Romans alike are all believed to have dyed and decorated eggs as gifts, and many families today still have coloured boiled eggs for Easter breakfast. Chocolate eggs were introduced in the first half of the 20th century but there were very few to be had during the wartime years. In the late 1940s/early 50s they were almost all imported eggs, decorated with sugar flowers and elaborately wrapped in cellophane and ribbons. It was an invention by Bill Harry in the early 1950s that led to the take-off of chocolate eggs by the great Midlands chocolate firms. With more and more homes now having electricity, Mr Harry designed a carton to protect light bulbs from breaking in transit and the potential of a similar box for fragile Easter Eggs was realised.

This year, Easter is as early as it can ever be as the full moon upon which the dates of Easter is decided is so close to the vernal equinox on 21 March. Spare a thought for how welcome this important festival would have been to our ancestors for centuries past.



OVER THE GARDEN WALL

*“Up we go! Up we go!
till at last, pop! his snout
came out into the sunlight....”*



Garden Pests...

Recently Val Bourne advised The Garden Club how to encourage wildlife into gardens. It seems that little encouragement is needed in the gardens of Snitterfield as in fact we are plagued by various creatures, great and small.

From over my garden wall the air is occasionally punctuated by colourful expletives inspired by the appearance of ominous mountains of earth, by courtesy of the mole. Several feeder tunnels are dug and the mole having an excellent sense of smell and hearing can detect a worm up to 5 metres away. They gorge on the worms eating half their body weight in one day. Fumigating, trapping, poison, sound detectors, rose prickles, milk bottles have all been tried with little or no success, but a neighbour across the courtyard won the admiration of fellow residents by her account of flushing out a mole run with a hose, grabbing the bedraggled creature and depositing it over the fence into the nearby field.

This winter, besides the squirrels digging out the tulips in the pots, muntjac have feasted on the crowns of the hellebores. Last summer they desecrated the echinops, hemerocallis, tulips and fritillaries. These small deer were introduced originally to Woburn Park in the early 20th century and since then have reproduced and expanded

their populations outwards. But an even more exotic visitor ventured into the garden, a red deer! The man of the house shook his head in disbelief on hearing my observation until he came face to face with it a few days later. During the weekend, while we were away, the deer devoured all the first blooms of the June roses as well as stripping the holly bushes and urinating on shrubs. The most effective way to repel these unwanted guests would be to build 8 foot fences, dangle shiny CD discs and to generously shovel lion dung around the perimeter although Renardine is supposed to be effective.



The dreaded lily beetle rampant in Southern England, was not heard of in Warwickshire until horror of horrors, yes it has reached Snitterfield. The only successful way to deal with it is literally to inspect each lily bloom daily, handpick the brilliant red beetles and repulsive larvae resembling bird droppings off the plant or spray with permethrin or fenitrothion (Provado is recommended).

Perhaps because of the bypass, rabbits had not ventured in the Whitehorse Hill area. Early New Year a white bobtail was seen disappearing rapidly under the garden hedge. An old remedy of Epsom salts watered on young plants is an alternative to repellent substances based on quassia, pepper dust or aluminium ammonium sulphate, all of which need frequent applications especially after a rainfall.

It is becoming a battle of wits to beat these and other pests; pheasants, pigeons squirrels, foxes, field mice, slugs, snails, vine weevil, just to mention a few!

So if you peek over our garden wall, amongst the protective wire netting structures you might see a LION!

Margaret Tweed



AN ARTIST'S HEAVEN



Many of you will have seen the exquisite paintings of Glenda Rae at our Craft Festival. Glenda writes about how the view from her studio influences her work:

“In a quiet corner, tucked away down The Green, there is a little orchard with several old gnarled apple trees. Unpruned and weathered by time and the seasonal elements, they are the inspiration for many of my wildlife water-colours. My studio looks out on this ‘little piece of heaven’ and sometimes as I watch the comings and goings of the wildlife, I forget that I am supposed to be working. The animal visitors to this little haven are prolific – foxes, squirrels, rabbits and hedgehogs to mention but a few. Other regular visitors catch my eye – pheasants, green and spotted woodpeckers, whitethroats, redstarts, and in December the fieldfares arrive (almost always at the same time each year, on the 14th and 15th). The RSPB did a survey in 2003 and in one hour they recorded a staggering nineteen different species of birds! A heron visits our pond and peers at our tempting gold fish, a muntjac deer appears fleetingly, disappearing in an instant if I move. I use many of these images as I paint. I also illustrate books for Harvest House in Oregon, USA, where ‘Meeting God in Quiet Places’ and ‘Meeting God in Holy Places’ are best sellers.”

Sometimes in contrast to the flora and fauna, Glenda escapes into her fantasy world of fairies, unicorns and mermaids. Her originals and limited edition prints sell world-wide from her web site and exhibitions around the UK. She specialises in water-colour, enjoying the transparency of this medium, which is her speciality. This technique has taken her a lifetime to achieve – misty backgrounds and highly detailed foregrounds give her pictures a three-dimensional effect. At the present time she is working on a book of her own illustrated poems which will be published later this year. Retire? “Never” she replies “not as long as I can hold a paintbrush!”

Sally Hopkinson has been delving into the aspects of Snitterfield's past...

A MODEL VILLAGE

An 1816 map in the possession of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust shows Snitterfield to be a very different place at the beginning of the 19th century. Two pubs are in evidence, the White Horse Inn, where The White Horse House now stands at the top of White Horse Hill, and Bell Inn, where Bellbrook House now stands. The main nucleus of the village was around the church, including the manor, Snitterfield House, and the vicarage. There was a scattering of houses along School Lane and on the west side only of Smiths Lane, then known as Farris Lane.

Robert Philips had two sons, Mark and Robert Needham Philips. Their father had expanded his lands by buying the manor of Wolverton in 1820 and his sons went on to buy up cottages and houses in and around the villages, until Robert's death in 1890. They vastly improved many of the cottages and houses in Snitterfield using stone and brick from the demolished Snitterfield House and it became, in the most part, a model village. To our 21st century eyes, we may regret the fact that they pulled down and replaced so many half-timbered treasures but to 19th-century villagers it was an act of philanthropy. The Philips had their own estate carpenters and builders, together with a stone yard behind White Horse Hill and a brickyard at Black Hill.

The windows of the typical houses built by the Philips have stone mullions and lattice set in iron frames. They are well built of brick from the brickyard and some are faced with stone from the old mansion. The later Philips houses have wooden finials at the gable points and ornamental barge-boards. The chimneys are tall, often six-sided and in the Tudor style. Several examples of this style can be seen in Smiths Lane and Church Road. The house we now know as Park House was enlarged using stone from the demolished manor. Mark Philips, who was Manchester's first Member of Parliament from 1832 to 1847 until ill health forced his resignation, subsequently made it the family home, turning the surrounding



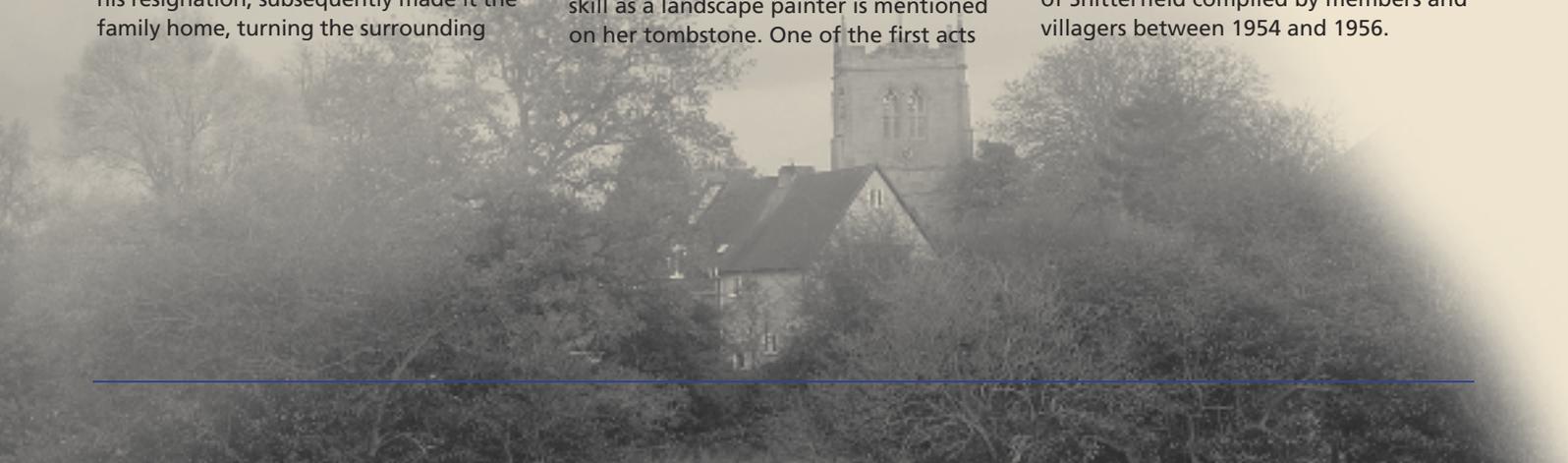
land into a fine estate.

In 1845 Mark Philips purchased the manor of Welcombe. He built a house for his architect to live in on Smiths Lane (now The Gables) and, following the demolition of an 18th century manor house, a neo-Elizabethan mansion was built in 1869, known as Welcombe Lodge (now the Welcombe Hotel). It was built on the site of a house which was formerly the residence of William Combe, nephew of John Combe, well recorded as being a friend of Shakespeare. Upon his death, the estate passed to Mark's brother Robert, who in 1876 erected the Welcombe obelisk. Built of Welsh granite, it dominates the surrounding countryside. It was erected at a cost of £4,000 in memory of Mark Philips but now also bears inscriptions dedicated to Robert Needham Philips and their father.

Upon Robert Needham Philips death in 1890, the estate passed to Caroline, his daughter. She knew Snitterfield well, having stayed at Park House with her Uncle Mark for long periods. After years of her formidable uncle, who held the pursestrings, refusing his consent, she finally married George Otto Trevelyan in 1869. He had become Liberal MP and went on to become Secretary for Scotland. Caroline, Lady Trevelyan, is buried in Snitterfield cemetery and her skill as a landscape painter is mentioned on her tombstone. One of the first acts

of benevolence by Sir George and Lady Trevelyan was to turn the house now known as The Gables into an Institute for the use of the people of the village. It was rented from the Welcombe Estate for £7 a year and supported by subscriptions. It consisted of four rooms for a caretaker, a Reading and Newsroom, Library and Billiards Room. The large News and Reading room held papers, periodicals and illustrated magazines and was big enough to hold concerts, whist drives and debates. A bar for the sale of (non-alcoholic) drinks was also run. It became the centre of recreation for the village in the days when television and radio were non-existent. Later, a Mr Harper and Dr Burt, two stalwarts of the Institute, organised a team of volunteers to move tons of earth from one end of the garden to the other to make a level bowling green. Two tennis courts were also added. Sir George was a renowned author, one of his most famous books being 'American Revolution'. He entertained US President Roosevelt as a guest at Welcombe in 1910. In 1928 Sir George bequeathed the village of Snitterfield to Robert, his son, who sold the cottages, farms and houses so that many tenants became owners. The Trevelyans also gave land for the cemetery, the War Memorial and the Wesleyan Church. Following the death of Lady Trevelyan, her son Robert offered to give the Institute as a free gift to the Parish Council. It was, however, thought to be too expensive to upkeep alongside the proposed new Village Hall and it was sold in 1930. The balance from the sale was given for the future Village Hall, with a proviso that £50 was to be used to provide a bowling green and tennis court. The Institute building was soon converted into the three houses we now know as The Gables while Welcombe Lodge was sold to British Rail and became the hotel we know it as today.

Many thanks to the WI for lending the original History Scrap Book of the Village of Snitterfield compiled by members and villagers between 1954 and 1956.



TO THE MANOR BORN

In 1816 the Manor of Snitterfield was sold by George, Earl of Coventry to a Manchester industrialist, Robert Philips, for £65,000. This included the purchase of a Queen Anne-style mansion standing close to the church, known as Snitterfield House. It had been built at the end of the 17th century by Thomas Coventry, later Earl of Coventry, following his purchase in 1668 of the manor estate for £14,500. He took up residence there in 1691, having married the Duke of Beaufort's daughter, Anne.

Lady Anne was the member of the Coventry family most closely associated with the village and lived here for the last 50 years of her life until her death at the age of 90 in 1763. She was well known for her charity and philanthropy, despite her life having more than its fair share of tragedy: she lost her first child as a baby and her husband died four years before the death of her eldest boy at the age of nine. During her long reign as lady of the manor, she gained a place in the hearts of the people of Snitterfield and was known as the Good Lady Anne. As well as her many charitable deeds within the village she bestowed on our church a three-tiered pulpit (now only the top remains on a heavy Victorian stone base), a large chalice known as the 'Easter Goblet', a paten and a flagon. Her own workmanship was also in evidence with the gift of elaborately embroidered altar frontals. The chancel was also provided with a new roof and tiled floor, sadly destroying the remaining stained glass and Tudor monuments in the process.

Thanks to two detailed drawings by Thomas Ward in 1810, we know that Snitterfield House was a fine but comparatively modest building compared with other major Warwickshire houses built in the same decade, such as Ragley Hall and Packington. Brick-built and symmetrical, the Coventrys initially used it as a secondary residence as their main seat was at Croome in Worcestershire. It was an early example of the



style of house that became popular after the Restoration, built to a square plan of five by five bays with two main storeys and a hipped roof broken

by dormer windows and tall brick chimneys. Stone pilasters, crowned by Ionic capitals were placed between the ground-floor pedimented windows. A pillared portico covered elegant steps up to the main entrance to the south. A sale catalogue of 1796 refers to a hall, a drawing room, a study, dining parlour, breakfast parlour and a housekeeper's room, together with seven main chambers (bedrooms) and six attic bedrooms for staff.

Over time the house, mostly occupied by tenants, fell into disrepair and during renovations in 1830 a considerable portion collapsed. A decision was taken by Robert Philips to dismantle the house and now few traces of its position remain, although part of the old walls and back entrance to the gardens on Church Road still exist. Evidence of the garden pavilion belonging to the mansion can also be seen in the row of brick cottages dating from 1680 sited west of the church off Church Lane.

Until the onset of Dutch elm disease the site could easily be identified at the end of an avenue of elm trees running in a straight line across the park from the lane to the south, as can be seen in the 1959 photo overleaf and maps predating the 1970s blight. This was the carriage ride leading to the house across the park from the old Warwick road. Although the house itself disappeared, its legacy lives on. When it was dismantled its materials were used in many of the building improvements and new cottages that appeared in Snitterfield during the 19th century.

THE MYSTERY OF THE SHAKESPEARIAN CUPBOARD

It is recorded at the turn of the century that Mr W H Bryan*, a Snitterfield saddler who lived in a cottage a little to the north of the church, preserved an old oak cupboard, upon the door of which is a design in small brass nails:

	I BOUGHT IT	15	
1582	I SAWED IT	MAY	WILLIAM
JUNE	I CARVED IT	83	SHAKESPERE
	I NAILED IT		
BORN APRIL 23, 1664			

The history of the cupboard, as given by Mr Bryan [at the turn of the century], runs as follows: It was originally in the house of John Shakespeare, at a farmhouse now destroyed, but formerly standing in a field to the northeast of the church. When the house was pulled down, the cupboard passed into the possession of two men who lived in a nearby cottage. The men grew old and the cottage was pulled down. Mr Bryan's grandfather then bought the cupboard and built it into the

wall of his own house. In the course of time this house was also rebuilt and the old cupboard removed into an outhouse as a piece of useless lumber; there it remained for some years until a visitor one day remarked that it was a curious old piece of furniture and advised the owner to have it cleaned and put in the house. The process of cleaning soon revealed the inscription.

What has happened to the cupboard I wonder? Does anybody recall this cupboard or knows if it still exists?

*The saddler is stated to be Mr W H Bryan in W S Brassington's book. However, the WI History Scrapbook talks about the village saddler being Mr William Ray, who also had his workshop close to the church, reputed to be in the current-day kitchens of 2,3 and 4 Park Lane (Shakespeare Cottages). His family have been Snitterfield saddlers for four generations. Is it possible that Mr Brassington misprinted the name or were there two saddlers with similar names in the village?



HOWZAT FOR A SPORTING SUCCESS

Cricket returns to Snitterfield this year after a gap of nearly 30 years.

It was in 1976 that the thwack of leather on willow was last heard around the village, but a determined campaign by club president and local shopkeeper Lee Hillier and a small band of fellow dedicated enthusiasts to create a square on the Wolverton Road playing field has borne fruit. The first official home game of the new era will take place against Rowington on Sunday 8 May, starting at 2.30, although it is hoped to stage a 20-over village game before this to celebrate the opening of the new square.

Fifteen Sunday games have been arranged for the season – seven home and eight away – starting with away games against Bidford on 17 April and Bearley on 1 May. See right for the full list of fixtures. Spectators are welcome at all games.

Following the last game of the season on 4 September it is hoped to organise a weekend tour to the South Hams area of South Devon.

And with the lighter evenings in midsummer several midweek limited over games are also planned.

New players (and non playing members) are always welcome and the club officials are keen to give everybody who'd like to play the opportunity to do so. If you'd like to join the club either to play or just to support it call in at Snitterfield Stores and speak to Lee. Membership costs £25 for individuals and £30 for families. This includes £5 automatically entitling you to membership of Snitterfield Sports Club on Wolverton Road, and use of its facilities. Those aged 16 and under can join free of charge. Cheques, payable to Snitterfield Cricket Club, can also be dropped in at the Stores.

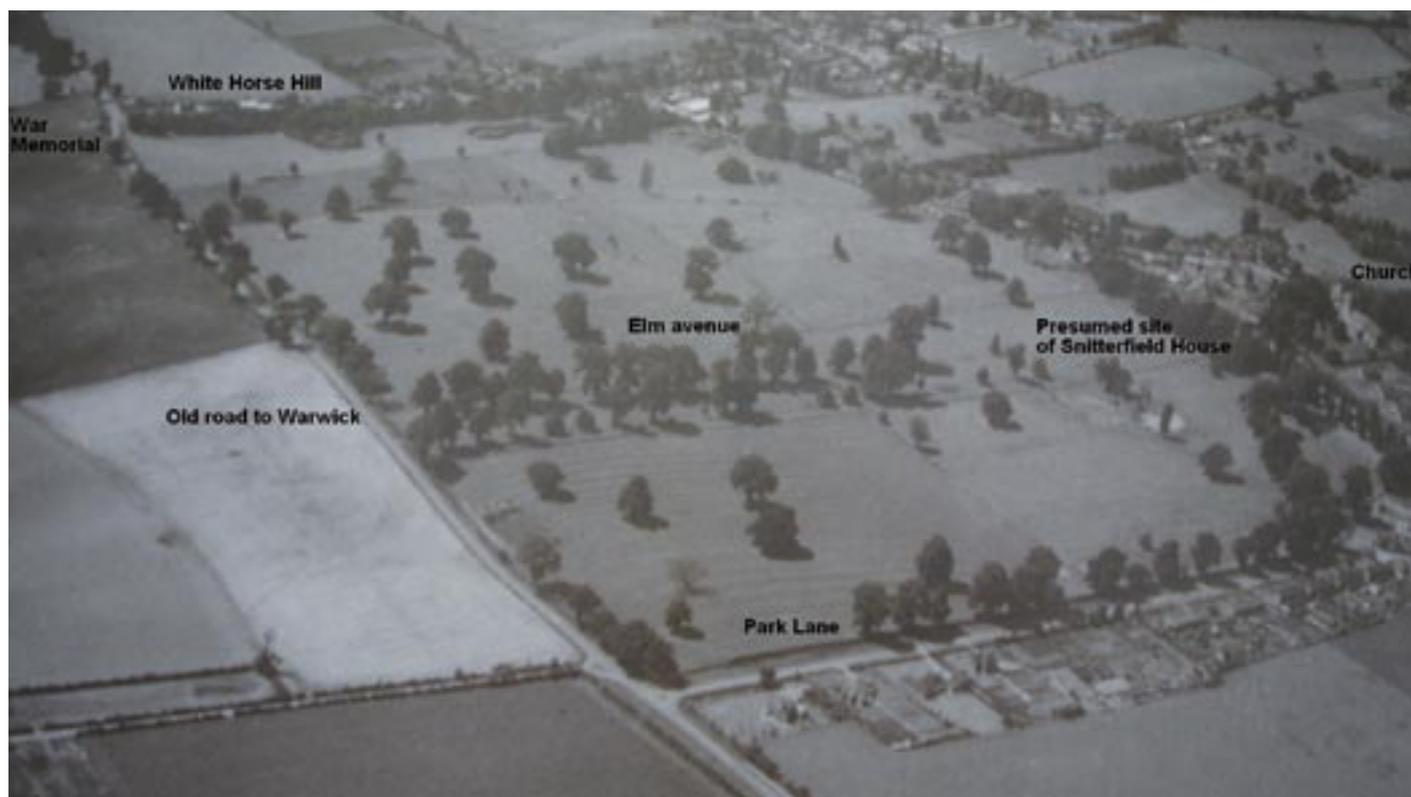
Net practice will start later in March at a date to be notified and the committee will also organise a pre-season tidy up day for the hut and field. Volunteers to help with this will be welcome – look out for further information in the Stores and on the village notice boards.

Finally, the club is also looking for corporate sponsors to help fund the purchase of equipment and ground maintenance. Sign boards will be prepared for each sponsor and

displayed at each home match and used in publicity. Sponsors will also be acknowledged on the official fixture list. Sponsorship costs start from £50. For more information about supporting your local village team see Lee at the Stores or phone him on 01789 730007.

Fixture list (all games start at 2.30 unless stated differently)

Bidford	17 April	away	2pm
Bearley	1 May	away	
Rowington	8 May	home	
Wellesbourne	15 May	home	
Norton Lindsey	22 May	home	
Kings Norton	29 May	away	
Ashorne	12 June	away	
Darlingscote	26 June	away	2pm
Kings Norton	3 July	home	
Ashorne	10 July	home	
Darlingscote	24 July	home	
Ilmington	31 July	away	
Bards	7 August	home	
Harbury	21 August	away	
Bards	4 September	away	2pm



The wonderful trees around us

Snitterfield's trees are among the most interesting in Warwickshire. Regarded as native species, we have specimens of willow, oak, ash, beech, birch, elm and alder, plus Scots pines, redwoods, cedars and yew. As trees renew their tissue each year they can live for hundreds of years (the oldest British trees are yews, a few reaching the grand age of 2000 years, the tallest are Douglas Firs reaching 181 feet in height). Despite their ability to reach these mammoth proportions trees are very vulnerable to attack. Threatened by diseases, insects and animals, man is their foremost enemy. Cultivation, timber harvesting and careless lighting of fires take its toll. Fortunately in Britain the value of trees to the environment was recognised by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Acts. These established tree preservation orders to protect notable trees and woodland from felling. Twenty years later the Civic Amenities Act also required tree planting and preservation to be considered in all plans for

development and insisted that protected trees are replaced when they die. We are very fortunate here to have the most wonderful heritage of planting, for instance some of the trees shown in this photograph of Snitterfield (an aerial view taken in 1959) were believed to have been planted by Lancelot Brown (known as 'Capability Brown' for his habit of saying, when looking at grounds he was asked to landscape, "this has great capabilities"). He transformed many great parks and gardens in Britain.

Over the next year we will be out and about to photograph some of Snitterfield's finest and oldest specimens through the seasons. If you have a particularly interesting tree you would like to record please let us know, it will help to create a record for future reference.

