

STORIES OF INTEREST



Tom Brown

TOM Brown's school days were joyous and idyllic amid a Worcestershire wonderland largely untouched by the world war raging at the time. Clearly, I am not referring to the fictional character of the renowned children's novel, but to a real-life personality, Thomas Brown, who was sent as a boy evacuee from Birmingham in 1939. Within weeks of war being declared, Tom, then aged nine, his 11 year-old brother Fred and their friend Ken Gill were evacuated from Victorian city housing in Winson Green, to the wide open spaces and pastoral beauty of Shrawley. "We came by train to Stourport and were then taken by bus to Shrawley, where all the evacuees were assembled in the village hall," recalls Tom. "Fred, Ken and I were determined to stay together, but nobody would initially accept us as a threesome. We were therefore taken first to Dr Mills' house by Dick Brook and, within a short time, a home was found for us with the Bettridge family at Bettridge Farm, Sankyns Green. It was a lovely place with a big walled garden and I can vividly remember the three of us all sleeping in a large comfortable bed looking out each night through the windows at the starlit sky. We would sometimes spot shooting stars, and it all seemed like paradise to us. We were taught how to catch rabbits and took to country life very much as an adventure. However, we were obviously expected to help out every day on the farm and worked hard but enjoyed it." Some months later, the boys were transferred from Bettridge family farm to the home of the Halford family at Court Farm Shrawley. This was another super place. It was by the side of

The Bettridge family lived at East Grove Farm, Sankyns Green which prior to 1920 belonged to The Earl of Dudley. It was put up for auction in that year at the Public Hall in Worcester and was not sold at £4,000.

The Bettridges lived there from about 1921-1962 when it was sold to the Headleys.

In June 1967 the farm was bought by the Warrington family who still farm there.

Court Farm was part of the Vernon Estate when the Halford family, as tenants, farmed it. They were followed by W Parslow in 1957 who farmed it for the estate for eight years until 1965. In 1966 James Powick took over the farm again farming it for the estate until the death of Ruth Horton and then farming it for himself.

Shrawley Wood and ran down to the River Severn. It was also near some small lakes, and I remember once going out in the Vicar's punt. Again, we were expected to work on the farm from early morning and would fetch in the cows from the riverside meadows for milking and also muck out. We did potato picking too and other farm work, but it was fun." Not long after arriving in Shrawley, Tom, Fred and Ken were enrolled into the village school. This was only small and had just two classrooms, so the influx of Birmingham evacuee children caused a bit of a problem initially until things could be sorted out. "For some weeks, we could only go to school for half the day. Local children would be taught in the mornings and we would go to school in the afternoons. Boys and girls were also put together for all lessons so it meant us boys being taught to knit, embroider and sew. I suppose it was unusual for boys to learn how to cast on and off knitting needles, but it all stood us in good stead in later life", says Tom. Another of his enduring memories is of the day in "the terrible winter of 1940" when he, Fred and Ken went to the Picture House in Stourport. "When we came out we found that everything was frozen solid and covered with ice. We went to the bus terminus but a Midland Red man told us no services at all were running so we started walking back to Shrawley. The roads and paths were covered with thick ice and we hadn't gone far when it started to snow and we found ourselves walking through

a blizzard, only able to see a few feet in front of us. Trees were also crashing down under the weight of snow and ice." It was the only time during our evacuation that I was ever frightened, and how long it took us to get back to Court Farm I don't know, though it was certainly hours. When we thankfully arrived at the door, Mr and Mrs Halford had clearly been very anxious and concerned about us and immediately boiled up hot water so could chill out in baths." Tom also remembers when the evacuee children were invited to a tea party at Shrawley Wood House, then the home of the aristocratic Vernon family. It was the only time I ever saw a butler and servants all in proper dress," says Tom. The idyllic Shrawley days for Tom, Fred and Ken suddenly came to an end in the summer of 1941, when they were returned home permanently to their families in Birmingham. "I still don't know to this day why it all came to such an abrupt end, and we very much missed the country life at Shrawley. We had enjoyed marvellous times." Tom Brown was to be reminded of his Shrawley schooldays sometime after moving to his present home in Edgbaston, Birmingham. "I was doing some gardening when a new neighbour said the flowers I was planting reminded her of the time she was a wartime evacuee. To our great mutual surprise, it turned out she had been at Shrawley and in its village school at the very same time as us. "What a small world! She was then Eileen Cutforth, but is now Mrs South." It was from her that Tom Brown received a now treasured copy of a photograph taken of pupils and staff at Shrawley School in 1939.



Shrawley's Village Halls & Activities



The original village hall built as a working mans club for the men of the village, in timber on a brick foundation in 1913 on land donated to the parish by Sir Harry Vernon. It had facilities for air rifle target shooting, darts and a full sized billiard table. The billiard table was sold by Mr Thomas the school teacher just after WW1 when a 'Welcome Home' fund was set up for the men who returned home from military service. Later a three quarter table was bought but again sold when the village hall moved to the school building.

Other activities which took place there include the Mother's Union; G.F.S (Girls Friendly Society); WI from 1920 which organised canning sessions during the war; a mobile library; a flourishing Youth Club; ballroom dancing lessons organised by the Rector, Mr Gould; Village plays; dances, led by Bill Barker on the piano, George Bullock on the piano accordion and Mrs Cheshire on the violin; Whist Drives and Beetle Drives.

The 'Christmas Tree' - which was an annual party on New Year's Day for all Shrawley schoolchildren - was started by Mrs Allen and held at the Wood House. It was carried on by Ruth Vernon at the Parish Room for many years and eventually organised by the WI.

Village celebrations for the end of the Wars, 100th Birthday party for Mr Turford, and a welcome home party for our Japanese prisoner-of-war, Eddy Harris, plus Harvest suppers and parties for the Pensioners in the village organised by the Youth Club, were among other highlights.

The G.F.S. held their meetings there for many years, and there was great excitement when some



Clockwise from top right

Party organised by the Youth Club

WI basket weaving outside VH.

George Bullock and his trio

Fancy dress party

Ladies get together

Mr Turford's 100th Birthday Party

of the girls clubbed together and got Cavan O'Connor an Irish tenor known as 'The Vagabond Lover' to come to sing at the Parish Room. With the song 'I'm Only A Strolling Vagabond' Cavan O'Connor embarked on a stage career, he would dress in an old suit or corduroy trousers, a cravat or handkerchief round his neck, and a hat pulled down on his forehead. The Parish Room was packed to the rafters on the night!

The hall was made redundant when the School became the new village hall in 1983 and has lain empty save for storage until 2007 when it was demolished to make way for a new dwelling.





1983-

Sir Harry Vernon, the owner of the Wood House, founded the building in 1860 as a one-roomed school and schoolhouse. In 1890 the room that is now called the Robert Walker room was added and then the Edward Davies room in 1911.

In 1977 the school was closed and was eventually purchased by the village and opened in 1983 as the new Village Hall.

Over the next twenty years volunteer help from many local people maintained the Hall.

Toilets had to be changed from child size to adults, additional heating was added over the years and modifications to the kitchen was a constant chore to keep up with the health and safety regulations.

Michael Bendall, Robert Walker, Edward Davies and William Austin played a leading role in the conversion and maintenance of the Hall. Later the rooms in the newly refurbished Hall were named after these men.

By 2000 it had become obvious that the Hall was in need of a major refurbishment. After four years of planning, applying for grants and fund raising work finally started on the Hall in April 2004. The Hall was officially re-opened on 11th February 2005.

After the school was converted to a Village Hall some what later the attached schoolhouse was rented out as a nursery school. This is now known



The opening ceremony
L to R - W. Austin, E. Davies,
D. Pritchard (Chairman of PC)

as Walnut Cottage and it takes children from 3 months to school age. In 2006 major refurbishment work was carried out on this building to bring it up to the standard required for a modern nursery facility. Rent from the school provides a major source of income for the Hall. Recently undertaken projects by the Management Committee are the major refurbishment of both the Village Hall (£210k) and Walnut Cottage nursery (£91k). Funds from Village Hall reserves and from fund raising by the committee and other local groups contributed over £70k towards these projects; the remainder has come from grants.

The re-surfacing of the car park is the next project. This will require grant support. The Trustees would also like to improve the kitchen facilities by installing a commercial dishwasher.



Clockwise from Right

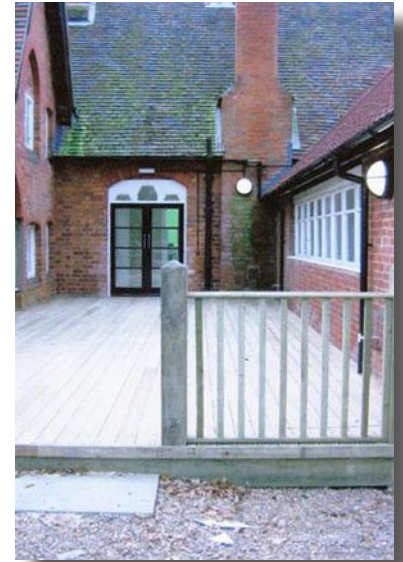
After refurbishment

Main Hall before - same room after, laid for a celebration

The Computer Suite

Rededication of the War Roll 2006

Celebrating a Birthday



LOST LOCAL FERRIES

HAMPSTALL FERRY

Two miles below Redstone was the crossing at Hampstall. It was once the direct way from the Abberley Pass, by way of the Burf, to Hartlebury and Dudley, and much used by pack horses and drovers. It was a dangerous crossing, and used to have a notice above the landing stage with the words, 'Passengers cross here at their own risk'. Indeed, the dangers of this crossing were seen on August 4th, 1919, a Bank Holiday Monday, when the ferry with 17 people aboard, capsized, and nine people, including two or three children, were drowned. At the inquest, it was found that the ferry-boat which should have carried a maximum of ten had seventeen on board, and the minimum freeboard permitted of 12 inches was, on this occasion, no more than two inches. It was stated that some disturbance, either aboard, or the wash of a passing steamer caused water to enter over the side.

SHRAWLEY FERRY

The Ferry here stood at the ford crossing the Severn beneath the cliff known as Oliver's Mount, which in medieval times had a castle guarding the ford, like the one at Holt, but which was destroyed during the Wars of the Roses, or earlier. Shrawley, until Victorian times, was very cut off from the rest of the county, and its main access was by river. At the crossing was the Wyre Inn, or Weir Inn (possibly so called because of the nearness of Shrawley Fish Weir). The inn was the principal tavern of Shrawley, with a fine bowling green and a great tree at its door. A ferry worked here and was much used by Ombersley men who crossed for a social evening, for the music and dancing at the inn were renowned. It was here that the dances, 'Old Severn' and 'New Severn', were collected and used by Julius Harrison in his Severn Suite. The ford must have been very shallow at times, for it is recorded that Ombersley men often did not wait for the ferry, but walked across the Severn with the greatest of ease. The inn and ferry have long since gone. The inn had been built against the cliff and its cellar was a cave. The cave is there and the platform, on which the house stood, is very noticeable, still with a stone wall surrounding what was once an attractive pleasure garden.

LENCHFORD FERRY

This ferry was in use in the 1930s but not for the general public, being worked by the landlord of the Lenchford Inn for the convenience of his customers. It had long been a private affair, the Lenchford wharfing being used by the Foleys and the Dudleys in the 18th and 19th centuries as the nearest point on the river to Witley Court. Coal for the Court was brought from their collieries at Himley by

barge to Lenchford, and from there by horse and cart. In the 19th century, as much as 2,000 tons was stored at a time, and the procession of coal-laden carts from Lenchford to Great Witley lasted several weeks at a time.

HOLT FERRY

Noake in his 'Guide to Worcestershire', published in 1868, says, '.....' there had been from time immemorial a ferry over the river at that point (Holt Fleet), till in 1826, Lord Foley laid the foundation stone of the present handsome bridge, which was opened in 1828.' The old ferry lane on the east bank still runs to the river immediately north of the bridge and at the river's edge stands the Ferry House, which was large enough to accommodate travellers who were unable to cross when the river was too dangerous. On the west bank stood the old hostelry called the 'Holt Fleet Inn', which for centuries had provided shelter and good fare for travellers on that side. It was certainly in existence in 1607. When Holt Bridge was opened and the ferry ceased, the Ferry House became a private residence but the Holt Fleet Inn entered a new lease of life for, throughout the 19th century, until the 1930s, the old Georgian hostelry and its tea gardens became the most popular resort on the Severn



Thomas Telford's fine bridge was built under a Private Act of Parliament. There were two toll houses, one on each side of the river, and the one on the east bank remains, with a little cobbled path in front, though in 1980, it was altered drastically. Tolls ceased in 1900. It was the last of the toll bridges in Worcestershire.

Extracts from the Sale WORCESTERSHIRE. catalogue

Great Witley and Holt Estates

8,500 ACRES

OF VERY RICH FREEHOLD

Pasture, Fruit, Hop and Arable Lands

NEAR

WORCESTER, STOURPORT & KIDDERMINSTER

192 LOTS

CONSISTING OF

41 HIGH CLASS FARMS

(SOME OF THE MOST FAMOUS IN THE COUNTY)

Several Capital Small Holdings

WELL-BUILT RESIDENCES & PREMISES IN GREAT
& LITTLE WITLEY, HOLT, & SHELSLEY BEAUCHAMP

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THE CELEBRATED HUNDRED HOUSE, THE WELL-KNOWN HOLT FLEET HOTEL,
THE RED LION INN, HOLT HEATH.

VALUABLE ACCOMMODATION LANDS

About 100 Well-Built Cottages

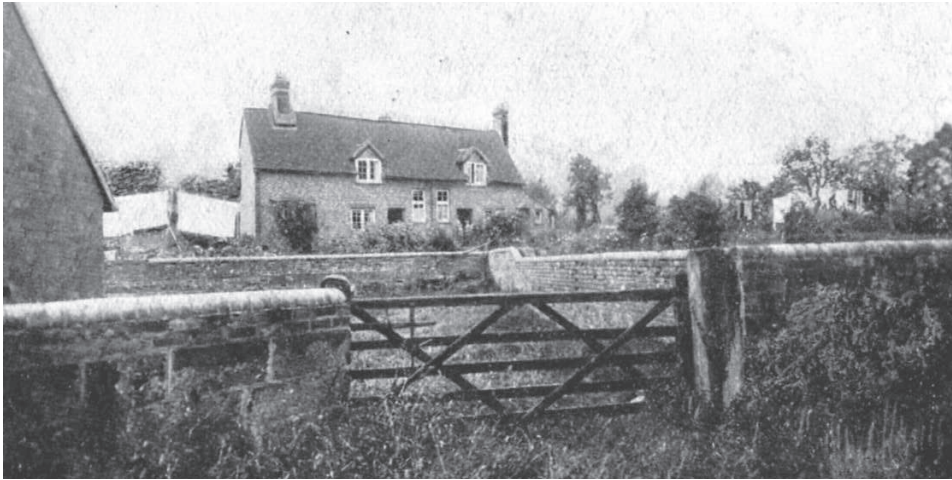
FINELY GROWN WOODLANDS

To be offered for Sale by Auction in Lots by

NORBURY-SMITH & CO.

*At the Public Hall, Worcester, on Monday
and Tuesday, September 27th and 28th, 1920,
Commencing at Two o'clock each day.*

Illustrated Particulars, with Plans and Conditions of Sale (Price 5s.) may be obtained from:
The Solicitors, Messrs BIRD & ELDRIDGES, 10, Gt. James Street, Bedford Row, W.C.1, and of the Auctioneers,
Messrs. NORBURY-SMITH & CO., 5, George St., Hanover Square, London, W.1. Telephone No.: Gerrard 7872.



LOT 123. *Sold*

(Coloured Blue on Plan No. 1.)

PARISH OF SHRAWLEY.

The Excellent Small Holding

KNOWN AS

WESTHOUSES

having an Area of about

8½ acres

Situated under half a mile South of the Village of Shrawley, near Church House Farm.

The TWO COTTAGES are built of Brick, with Tiled Roofs, and each contains:—Three Bedrooms (two having Grates); Living Room, with open Range; Pantry; Back Kitchen, with open Range, Sink and Copper.

OUTSIDE:—Closet; Pigstye; Cellar.

Garden.

Water Supply from a Pump.

The BUILDINGS are erected in Brick, and comprise:—Barn; three-bay lean-to Cattle Shelter; Cow House for four, with Feeding Passage; Root House; three-bay Cattle Shed, with Yard.

SCHEDULE.

NO. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	AREA.
376	Grass	3·243
374	Do.	4·233
375	Cottages, &c.	1·203
TOTAL ..		A. 8·679

Both Cottages and Gardens are let on Quarterly Tenancy to Messrs. T. POWICK and W. WALKER, at Rentals totalling £13 per annum.

The remainder of the Lot is let, together with other Lands, to Mr. J. MILLICHIP, at an apportioned Rental of £12 per annum.

The Purchaser of this Lot will be required to pay, in addition to the purchase-money, the sum of £89 for the growing Timber.

Commuted Tithe Rent Charge

Land Tax as assessed.

(133)

(Coloured Pink on Plan No. 1.)

PARISH OF

The Excellent

EAST G

having a

176

of which about 85 acres are Gra

It is situated on the Southern within half a mile of the Village Lot 117, and

The Superior FARMHOUSE is

ON THE GROUND FLOOR:—Ent Drawing Room, with G Room, with Grate; Kit open Fireplace and Over two Coppers, and a Pum Kitchen, with Grate; Basement.

ON THE FIRST FLOOR (approach each having a Hob Grate

ON THE SECOND FLOOR:—Fou

OUTSIDE:—Closet. Partly Wa

The FARM BUILDINGS, whic Tiled Roofs, afford the followi for four, with Loft over; L Cow House for ten, with Calve Loft over; two Nag Stables; with Yard; Calf House; Ca Store and Cider House, with Houses

This sale of over 8,500 acres spread over thirteen parishes including Shrawley and included 41 high class farms, 100 cottages and 3 licenced houses. The Great Witley and Holt Estates were owned by the Earls of Dudley and were put up for auction on the 27th/ 28th September 1920 at The Public Hall Worcester. The sale brochure details Post and Telegraph Offices at Witley, Shelsley, Beauchamp and Holt Heath with

LOT 121. Not sold at 42,000

Plans Nos. 1 and 10.)

OF SHRAWLEY.

Grass and Fruit Farm

KNOWN AS

ROVE FARM

Area of about

6 acres

25 acres Arable and 49 acres Orchard.

side of the Great Witley-Shrawley Road, of Shrawley. Bounded on the East by on the South by Lot 130.

built of Brick, with Slate Roof, and contains:—

ance Hall; Dining Room, with Grate; rate, having Marble Mantel; Breakfast chen, with Range; Back Kitchen, with n, Sink (having Soft-water Pump over), p supplying Drinking Water; Secondary Dairy; Store Room. Large Cellar in

ed by two Staircases):—Seven Bedrooms,

r Attic Bedrooms and a Lumber Room.

alled Flower Garden.

h are erected in Brick and mostly having y Accommodation:—Two Pigstyes; Stabling ose Box; Cow House for two; Barn; s' Cot, and Loft over; Trap House, with Goose House; four-bay Open Cattle Shed, rt and Wagon Shed; Artificial Manure Granary over; Wood Shed; three Fowl s; Coal House.

(130)

In No. 343 is a Pair of Brick-built COTTAGES, with Tiled Roofs (known as Cook's Cottages), each containing:—

ON THE GROUND FLOOR:—Living Room, with open Range; Pantry; Coal Cupboard; Back Kitchen, with Copper, Sink and Oven.

OUTSIDE:—Pigstye; Closet.

One Cellar for common use of both Cottages.

Water Supply from a Pump.

In Field No. 337 is a Shed and Coal House.

SCHEDULE.

No. ON PLAN.	DESCRIPTION.	AREA.
317	Arable	11.736
316	Grass	14.877
341	Apple and Pear Orchard	14.172
337	Grass	5.206
338	Cherry Orchard	3.550
346	Do.	2.160
342	Wood	1.747
366	Grass	9.063
348	Apple and Pear Orchard	12.112
347	Buildings, &c.	2.056
345	Apple and Pear Orchard	6.408
343	Cottages, &c.270
358	Wood962
357	Do.	4.691
360	Grass	7.018
344	Wood	2.718
359	Orchard691
361	Grass	1.766
365	Do.	20.314
364	Apple and Pear Orchard	3.943
362	Do.	1.569
363	Wood618
373	Apple and Pear Orchard	4.401
400	Grass	10.413
399	Do.	7.077
401	Do.	9.856
425	Arable	8.169
429	Do.	5.724
Pt. 426	Wood	3.320
TOTAL ..		<u>A.176.607</u>

The Woodlands are in hand; the Coal Shed in Field 337 is let, together with other Lands, to Mr. E. BULLOCK, on a Quarterly Tenancy, at an apportioned Rental of 1s. per annum. The remainder of the Lot is let to Mr. J. MILLICHP on a Yearly (Michaelmas) Tenancy, with other Lands, at an apportioned Rental of £238 per annum.

The Timber, Timber-like Trees and Underwood in Nos. 357 and 364 are reserved to the Vendor, together with the right to fell, stack, cart and remove same, but the Purchaser of this Lot will be required to pay, in addition to the purchase-money, the sum of £219 for the remainder of the growing Timber.

This Lot is sold subject to the payment of a Yearly Rent Charge of £3 3s. 6d., payable to the Lord of the Manor of Shrawley (as to which see Conditions).

Commuted Tithe Rent Charge £

Land Tax as assessed.

(131)

just a Post Office at Witley. All the properties were to be sold with freehold tenure with most having long standing tenants. All the standing timber was valued separately and had to be paid for in addition to the property price. Many farms were described as having fruit orchards and hop fields and the land being rich and fertile.



People & Places



Memories of Mary L Johnson, Holders Cottage, Born 23rd November 1899.
"I can remember the stocks at the side of the road on the corner of Pound Meadow, also Mr Masterman & Walter Bunce digging on Olivers Mount. A local seasonal craft was bark peeling from the oak timbers for the tannery in Hylton Road. The small leaved lime in Shrawley Wood is a rare kind known locally as Shrawley Witon. I also remember the local Wheelwright and Blacksmith making wheels for the farm carts."

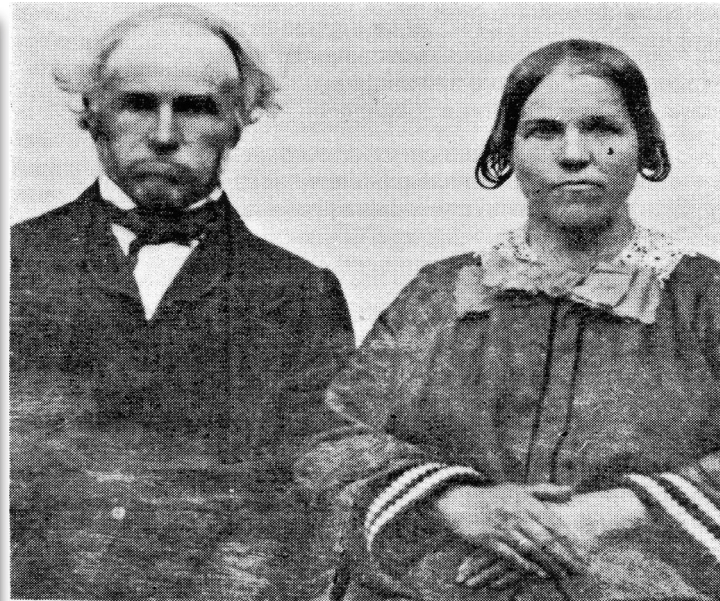
*Left
Glazenbridge, Northern end of the village.*

*Below left
Reverend Boulton and wife in the old Rectory garden.*

*Below right
Nichols Farm and George Clarke*

*Bottom
Village outing with Sir Gerald Nabarro at The Houses of Parliament.*





From Top left

Dennis Powick with son James and daughter Anne on ponies.

James Powick and wife Mary Anne who emigrated to Nelson in New Zealand in 1855 after farming at Bonefields.

The Whitmore family - L to R Thelma, Paul, Jack Davies, Walter, Jessie, Len, Edith.

Ruth Horton and Charlie Oakey with the days catch.

Sankyns Green farm taken early 1900's with L to R. Margaret, Tom Jones, Denis, Annie Jones (nee Howe) and Tom junior.



The Friendship Club

Shrawley over 60's club began on Thursday 22nd March 1973 in the old Parish room. Its founding members were Irene Holloway, Mrs B? Fellows and Mrs ? Price. (see original notice in Parish magazine). The club enabled the older members of the village to get together once a fortnight to socialize. Trips were arranged and various other entertainments were provided including the occasional meal. One of the first events organised was an Easter Bonnet parade on April 19th 1973. In June of the same year there was an outing to Rhyl. The Christmas meal that year was held at The Lenchford Hotel (see smaller notice) and the total bill for 49 members was £63.50 paid for by a 50p contribution from each member with the balance coming out of club funds. Money was raised for the club by holding various events such as the Christmas Fayre. By now there where members joining the club from Astley and Ombersley Sunshine Club made a visit. Other places visited in the early years were Stratford on Avon, Alton Towers, Windsor Castle and Hodnett Hall. Over the years the numbers have slowly got less as the elders of the village passed away and because there are now many new people living in Shrawley and the social attractions have changed. It is to be hoped that this very worthwhile club will continue to flourish.



Irene Holloway one of the Founding members



Shrawley Over Sixties & Friendship Club

On December 13th, 1973 Members, Organisers and Helpers had a very enjoyable Christmas Luncheon and Party at the Lenchford Hotel. Votes of thanks were given by:

Mrs. L. Holloway	to	Mr. & Mrs. M. Bendall
Mrs. J. Price	to	Mr. & Mrs. F. Horton
Mrs. C. Fellows	to	Transport Volunteers being:
Mr. and Mrs. M. Bendall,	Mrs. J. Foster,	Mrs. M. Dunn, Miss Pratt,
Mrs. Tonkinson,	Mrs. Greenwood	also Mrs. C. Fellows

proposed a Toast to absent friends.

Mrs. D. Cooper gave a vote of thanks on behalf of Club Members to Mrs. Holloway, Mrs. Price and Mrs. Fellows, thanking them for all the work they do for the benefit of the Club. Also a special vote of thanks to Marya and Joyce Holloway and Jillian Fellows for all the help they have given on our various outings by pushing wheelchairs enabling our Members who are unable to walk any distance unaided to enjoy the day out with their fellow members.

Cost of Christmas Luncheon was as follows:

Overall cost:	£63.50
49 members and helpers paid 50p each	£24.50
Balance paid out of Club Funds	£39.00

A very successful Christmas Fayre was held in Shrawley Parish Room on December 15th. A grand amount of £122.03 was raised, also a donation of £5.00 was received enabling the grand total of £127.03 to be placed into Club Funds. The Organisers would like to thank everyone who so generously gave their help and support to make this event such a great success.

At the Club Meeting on Thursday, January 10th Committee and Members present passed and agreed on the following Club Rules:

Rule 1. Any member who does not attend and support Club Meetings regularly must, if they wish to remain active members and participate in the Club's Social Functions, attend at least three Meetings in any twelve weeks preceding any social function to entitle them to participate in same.

Rule 2. As a raffle is held at each Meeting to keep Club Funds stable, members not attending a Meeting must forward 10p for raffle tickets plus 3p subscription.

Rule 3. In case of ill health Rules 1 and 2 do not apply. Only 3p subscription need be paid.



In 2003 the local newspaper made a visit to the club and the above picture appeared the same week.

Over Sixties Club

The Club will start on THURSDAY 22nd MARCH 1973 in the Parish Room, Shrawley.

Meetings will be held every two weeks from 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Admittance will be 3p. and refreshments will be served. Mrs. Irene Holloway will be the Organiser with Mrs. Fellows and Mrs. Price helping.

Transport to and from the Parish Room can be arranged for those needing it, and it is hoped to visit all the over 60's during the next few weeks to find out what transport will be needed. At the opening meeting entertainment will be arranged by the WRVS to make this a special afternoon.

Raffles will be held to help make money to pay the various expenses which will arise, and if anyone would care to help with small prizes for these raffles and also with refreshments for the afternoon meetings, donations will be most gratefully received by the organisers.

If anyone would like any further particulars, please contact any of the Organisers.

