

51.  
SOCIAL LIFE.

WHEN ONE READS the Parish Magazines of 80 years ago one is astonished at the activity of the village in those days. Every week has its entry: Clothing Club, Choir Concert, Night School, Mr. Leigh's Concert, Drum and Fife Band practice; and in the Summer months Cricket Club practice every week, frequent Cricket matches, Choir Outing and Children's Outings to the various big houses of the neighbourhood, sometimes suitably referred to as School Feasts! The Autumn, too, brought its own pleasures in the form of Harvest Homes and Harvest Thanksgiving occasions, and soon the round of Concerts, Gleees, Poetry Readings and Night School would start again, with, of course, Christmas parties for the choir and the schoolchildren. From April onward there are notices in the Church Magazine of all the Fairs, including those at villages as far away as Longtown and Bishop's Castle; so that one can truly say that a good time was available for all, both in and out of the village.

We have discovered, too, that at one time Eardisland had its Feast, or Wake, but we do not know when this came to an end. The following notes from the Revd. J. Barker's Diary were made by the Revd. F.W. Worsey, his successor, in 1902, and have been preserved in a book of notes on Eardisland prepared by the Revd. P.H. Birley, and lent to us by the present Vicar:

"Eardisland Feast.

1900. September 2nd. This year Eardisland Feast, or Wake, is on this Sunday, as late a date as it could be. For the Feast, according to what I could gather from old inhabitants, is always the first Sunday after the 26th of August, and as that date was this year on a Sunday, so the day is observed the Sunday after."

Recollection of Eardisland Feast in 1826, communicated to the Revd. J. Barker by Mrs. Caldecott (aged 84), on Monday evening, August 29th, 1892:

"There was a performing Company which acted in the Tithe Barn at Monks' Court for 5 nights, and one of the pieces performed was "Blue Beard." In a caravan by the Court House was a glass-blower, and Mrs. Caldecott has a little blue scent-bottle with white lines across it, which was blown and bought by her. In another caravan was exhibited Queen Charlotte lying in state. There were stalls for selling cakes and fruit under the yew trees in the Churchyard and Mrs. Williams, who used to drive the van from Pembridge to Leominster twice a week and to Hereford on Saturday, and had a family of 19 children, had a stand for selling cakes on by the Cross Inn. The Feast was kept up for the week, and there was bowling on skittle alleys and dancing at the Inns. When Mrs. Caldecott was 8 years old she had a sixpence given her to spend, and some of it was spent in having a swing-boat by the Porch House wall."

Presumably Eardisland Feast had stopped before 1867, the year Mr. Barker came to Eardisland.

We were very excited to read of these happening of long ago. There is, now, alas, no Tithe Barn on Monks' Court Meadow (at one

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# Eardisland Coronation Celebrations

To be held in  
RECREATION GROUND AND SCHOOLROOM

JUNE 2nd, 1953

## Souvenir Programme

10 a.m.—SHORT SERVICE followed by Holy Communion in Church conducted by the Rev. P. E. Rock.

10.15—1.50 p.m.—TELEVISION IN SMITHY.

2 p.m.—CARNIVAL. Assemble at Post Office ready for Parade at 2.30 p.m.

### CARNIVAL CLASSES:

HISTORICAL (Two). School Age and Adults.

HUMOROUS (Three). Under 5, School Age and Adults.

Original (Three). Under 5, School Age and Adults.

BEST GROUP OF CHARACTERS (Two). School Age and Under, Adults.

N.B. Group consists of two or more characters.

Entries to Miss Margaret Davis, Post Office, by 6 p.m. on June 1st.

3 p.m.—ARRIVAL OF CARNIVAL AT RECREATION GROUND.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

JUDGING OF CARNIVAL AND PRESENTATION OF PRIZES.

3.15 p.m.—TEA IN SCHOOLROOM for children aged 4—14 years of age.

3.15 p.m.—COMIC CRICKET MATCH.

3.45 p.m.—CHILDREN'S SPORTS. CASH PRIZES.

4.15 p.m.—ADULT TEAS IN SCHOOLROOM (in relays), continuing until 6 p.m.

5.30 p.m.—ADULT SPORTS. CASH PRIZES.

6.30 p.m. (approx.)—PRIZE DRAW.

7.0 p.m.—COMIC FOOTBALL MATCH.

8.0 p.m. (approx.)—SOCIAL IN SCHOOLROOM, COMMUNITY SINGING, DANCING, GAMES, Etc. REFRESHMENTS SERVED.

Children's Mugs will be presented immediately after the Children's Sports. This will be followed by the Presentation of Goodwill Gifts to Parishioners over 70 years of age.

Finis.—The Old Hundredth.

Music by Mr. Reg. Russell, Pembridge.

The Bells of St. Mary's, Eardisland will ring at intervals throughout the day.

Leominster Printing Co., Ltd.



time glebe land); neither have we had travelling players within the memory of anyone living, though the Kingtons remember having heard about occasional visits of Players in their grandfather's time. Also Miss Blackmore remembers seeing a Dancing Bear perform on the bridge sometimes when she was a little girl; and she has in her possession very attractive pencil sketches of two of her uncles, executed by travelling artists with exceedingly colourful Italian names. All this, however, belongs to the past, and only the May Fairs remain of the traditional social life of 100 years ago.

Accounts of village concerts of the old days are most entertaining; certainly the supporters got their money's worth, even on the occasions when the cheapest seats were 6d. (Often the charge was "what you please".) Almost invariably they were money-raising events, for such affairs as the Choir Outing, and were well patronised by the well-to-do and their friends. 1889 sees the first mention of a *Conversazione* - "a new departure from the usual entertainments at Eardisland" - the programme (admission 1/- and 9d., including tea and coffee) consisting of 5 groups of Tableaux and Living Waxworks; a Comic Lecture; 5 groups of Tableaux and Living Waxworks; a comic Lecture; Songs, Recitations, etc.; and Dancing. We were fortunate in having a Vicar with a large family, all of whom, along with their friends, did their duty in helping to provide the entertainment.

A concert, in November, 1888, included Nigger Minstrels! It was held to raise money for the hire of a piano during the Winter months, and a moveable stage; and in 1906 we even started our own Choral Society, with Mr. Harvey as Conductor.

The CRICKET CLUB seems to have been started by Mr. Leigh, the Schoolteacher, soon after his coming here, so one is fairly safe in saying that Eardisland Cricket Club has been in existence since 1860. Mr. Leigh is reported as having started cricket among the schoolchildren also, so that he was able to draw "recruits" for his men's team as they were required.

Mr. Leigh taught in Eardisland till 1872, and it would seem that the advent of Mr. Clowes to Burton Court in 1863 gave strength to this Cricket activities. Some rather amusing entries appear in the Church Magazines of 1871 and 1872, and it would seem that Mr. Clowes ruled the Cricket Club with a rod of iron: 29.7.71: "...as has frequently been the case before, Eardisland played with a man short, the eleventh man not showing up till the second innings when, however, he did good service. At 2 o'clock dinner was announced, and then all adjourned for host Macklen's spread." The team on this occasion had four members of the Clowes in it. The match took place on the "Eardisland Ground" - presumably what is still known as the Cricket Meadow? - and the opponents were Mr. Hayes' Eleven. Mr. Macklen, the "host", was proprietor of the Cross Inn for many years. 12.8.71: The team on this occasion travelled to Malvern Wells, to play a team captained by another member of the Clowes family, Major Clowes, who lived at Malvern. Our team left by train from Kingsland Station at 8.20 a.m. - "cool and pleasant was the early walk" - and once again they were beaten. "our second innings was most unfortunate, Hillyard, one of our most trusty bats, being run out after scoring 3. (When will our men learn not to run, when a ball is hit straight to a man, close in?)... We were told that 28 and 36 made only 64, against the 83 of the Wells Club, so that we were well beaten on one





innings. Such will be the result of our matches until we learn to field, to run, and raise another bowler."

The Eardisland Cricket Club (known later as the Burton Court Cricket Club) has been fortunate in always having had an excellent ground on land belonging to Burton Court. During the run of the old Club teas were provided from Burton Court free of charge for every Home Match; they were brought down in hampers by the under-groom in the stable trap, the groom making a fire in the meadow, by the Pavilion, and boiling the kettles for the tea. The butler and one maid came from the Court to serve the teas. For Away Matches free transport was provided from Burton Court.

Unfortunately, in 1940 Mrs. Clowes had the Cricket Meadow ploughed up, and the Cricket Club was not started again till 1949, when Mr. Griffiths, Nunhouse Farm - himself a keen cricketer - gave a part of a meadow as a ground, and a new Club, now called the Eardisland Cricket Club, was formed. This agreement came to an end in 1953 when Mr. Lawson Thomas, Lower Rhydimoor, provided a meadow for the Club. Home and Away Matches are played during the season and the Club is still flourishing. Now the Teas are catered for by the local Inn, members paying 1/6d. each for Home Matches and the Club paying the same sum for each of the visiting players. Transport for Away Matches is now undertaken by hired taxis.

The TENNIS CLUB was started in 1886, and entry in the Church Magazine for October, 1888, reads:

"A Meeting of the Lawn Tennis Club was held at Mr. Barker's house, J. Clowes, Esq., President, in the Chair. It was agreed that the courts be re-levelled... the date of the Annual Dance was fixed. The accounts were passed, showing a balance of £2.5s.4d. This Club has gone on most successfully for 2 years, and now numbers about 50 members. Next year the subscription will be raised to 3/6d., and all new members are required to pay an entrance fee of 2/6d."

The Tennis Club seems to have grown and flourished, the Courts being in the Cricket Meadow. It is safe to assume that the subscription went up over the years, and I am told that in the Twenties it was 2 guineas a year. Members played every Wednesday afternoon till 7 p.m., and at other times by arrangement. In the Thirties membership began to drop heavily, and at the same time there was a feeling that the Club should be made available to everyone and that the subscription should be reduced. Accordingly, a Village Tennis Club was formed, the subscription fixed at 7/6d. a year, and for a time the membership was reasonably good. It was, however, found to be impossible to keep up the condition of the Courts on such a small income, and the Tennis Club was finally wound up in 1936.

A FOOTBALL CLUB was started in 1889, an entry in the Church Magazine for December of that year reading:

"Football Club. This Club has lately been formed. Two matches have already been played, in which the Club suffered defeat, but it is hoped with practice the team will improve."

The Captain was Mr. Rogers, the Schoolmaster. Mr. Rogers came to the School in 1888. He seems to have been an excellent



Fardisland Bowling Club  
Mrs. Cloves presents the Cup.

athlete, and it is safe to assume that efforts to keep the Football Club alive were made by him during his time here (1888 until 1901).

We have been unable to find out when the old Football Club finished. Another Club was, however, started in 1952, and this ran until 1939. Mr. Levick gave a Cup. When the Club was disbanded the Cup was impounded by Herefordshire Football Association, and it is understood that it can be recovered only for competitive football.

Eardisland BOWLING CLUB was started in 1902, the ground being in the Cricket Meadow and the two Tennis Courts being used. Play took place every evening, from 7 o'clock onwards; the subscription was 5/- per annum. The Club continued until 1940, when Mrs. Clowes ploughed the meadow, doing away with the village's sporting activities.

In the latter years women were allowed to join the Club, and when one turned up in shorts it caused a 'stir', and a meeting was called, when Mrs. Clowes, the donor of the land, and whose word had always been law as to what took place on the green, raised an objection to women appearing on the green in "unfeminine" attire. She was not a woman to be argued with, and the shorts vanished from the green.

Mrs. Clowes gave a cup to be competed for annually, and anyone winning it three years in succession kept it. The Club provided a pair of bowls for the runner-up. Match games were played on the green with neighbouring Clubs and return matches played. The Club was well supported until the end, and it was felt when it had to be abandoned that one of the main attractions of the village, both for men and women, had been lost. There is still a balance of £15 and several sets of bowls are in the care of Mr. Reece Williams. The Recreation Ground Committee are meantime working to raise money to start a new green on the Recreation Ground.

In addition to the Cricket Club we now have an AIR GUN AND DARTS CLUB, run at the Cross Inn. We also had a RIFLE CLUB for a short time since the War, but this was abandoned owing to difficulty in finding a suitable practice range.

The READING ROOM was founded in 1872. In 1876 it was transferred to the upper floor of the old Grammar School from the old girls' schoolroom, Mr. Clowes having bought the building and having had it repaired and re-roofed for use as a Reading Room. It flourished through the years, coming to an end in 1936 only because Mrs. Clowes had had the premises (the old Grammar School) converted into two cottages for farm workers. It must have provided an excellent recreational centre for the men of the Parish, having both educational and recreational facilities.

The following items from the Rules of 1872 are interesting:

"The Reading Room shall be under the management of the Vicar. Subscription, 1d. a week, to be paid weekly or quarterly in advance, donors of £1, or annual subscribers of 5/-, being honorary members. The Reading Room shall be



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Col. Flower and Scouts.  
1916.



Miss Powell and G.T.C.  
1968.

**Eardisland Branch**  **British Legion.**

Dear Sir,

It has been decided by the Entertainment Committee that an Excursion should be arranged for members, on Sunday, May 6th, as follows:- (1957)

Pembroke, depart 8.45 a.m.  
Kingsland, depart 8.55 a.m.  
Windsor, arrive 1.55 p.m. Interval to visit Castle.  
Windsor Bridge, depart 3 p.m. (by boat), passing Elton College Playing Fields, Windsor Home Park, Runnymede, Magna Charta Is.  
Chertsey, arrive 3.30 p.m. (Tea on boat).  
Leave Chertsey, by motor-coach, 3.30 p.m., for Hampton Court Palace. (Interval to visit famous Gardens).  
Motor-coach for tour of London Coronation decorations and illuminations, depart Hampton Court 7 p.m.  
Return by motor-coach to Slough, to view flood-lighting of Windsor Castle.  
Depart Slough (train), 11.15 p.m.  
Kingsland, arrive 3.30 a.m.  
Pembroke, arrive 4.0 a.m.

Transport to and from the station, by Bus, will be provided for those living at a distance.

The cost of the trip to non-members will be: Adults, 14s. 6d.; children (under 16), 8s. 1d.

All those going on the trip are advised to take food with them, as tea is the only meal provided.

In view of the extra cost of the trip, members are asked to contribute 4s. per head towards the cost. Representatives of the Branch will visit members, and names of those going, and 4s., must be given in not later than April 30th.

Any member wishing to attend the Royal Review on June 27th, at Esher, Surrey, please let me know.

It is proposed to hold a Jumble Sale in Eardisland Schoolroom, on Saturday, May 5th, at 2.30 p.m., and to devote the proceeds to the cost of the outing. We ask that all well-wishers will support us, either by gifts for the sale, or by purchasing goods there. Particulars as to collection of rummage may be had from Branch Representatives.

L. E. GRIFFITHS, Hon. Secretary.



5s.

open every day from 9 a.m. till 9.30 p.m., Sundays, Good Friday and Christmas Day excepted. During the Winter months a fire to be lighted at 6 p.m.

No book or newspaper to be taken from the Reading Room without permission from a member of the Committee.

Provision shall be made for playing Chess, Draughts and Dominoes, but no game of chance, no stakes and no betting will be allowed. Smoking shall be allowed to members over 18 years of age on alternate days of the week."

In 1898 we have the first mention of a Draughts Tournament - against Kingsland - and, in the early years of this Century, Whist and Draughts matches were frequent. There is a first mention of a Dance in 1903, and in 1909 there is mention, also, of matches in bagatelle, quoits, and "rings". Between the Wars Whist Drives were a weekly event, ladies being admitted to a Whist Drive once a month.

From 1936 the village was without a Reading Room or a Men's Club, mainly because there was no suitable building. When the Smithy was converted by Mrs. Clowes in 1946 a Men's Club was formed there, being open during the Winter months for two nights a week, the subscription being 2/6d. and the lower age limit 12 years. Mrs. Clowes accepted the office of President. For a time it went very well, running Whist Drives in conjunction with the Women's Institute, and investing in an autoball table, darts, draughts, quoits, playing cards, etc. Unfortunately, however, membership dropped, and in 1949 it was decided to close the Club. The balance in hand - £21.18s.5d. - remains in the Bank against the day when a new Club may be formed.

A troupe of Boy Scouts was established in the village in 1914 in the Reading Room, the headquarters being later moved to Burton Court. It did not, however, survive the War, the support being inadequate.

Girl Guides were started in the village in the early Twenties, and continued for about 10 years. Some of the old members still belong to the Dilwyn Trefoil Club. Twice since then we have had a pack of Brownies, the last being run by Mrs. Rock. A branch of the Girls' Training Corps also was successful for a time, but this too was recently closed owing to insufficient support.

A Post of the Comrades of the Great War was instituted in 1920: in 1921 this merged into the British Legion. After some years our branch faded out owing to lack of interest, and it was not until 1927, at a meeting attended by 24 ex-Servicemen, that it was decided to form a new Branch. It was an almost instant success, and although at first it was not intended to admit members from outside the Parish the applications became so numerous that in the end it was decided to throw the Branch open to the parishes of Pembridge, Kingsland, Shobdon and Monkland. In 1928 the membership was 42; in 1947 there were 336 members. In 1948 it was decided that Pembridge and Kingsland should form their own Branches; this they did, Eardisland's membership then standing at 133. Mr. Griffiths, Riverside, acted as Secretary of the Branch for 21 years - from 1927 to 1948 - and a presentation was made to him in 1935 in recognition of his long service. Throughout the years our Branch has had a Dinner every year, and a money-raising effort usually twice a year, often for an outside charity.

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W. I. Drama, 1935.



W. I. Drama, 1953.



The WOMEN'S INSTITUTE was formed by Miss Collett-Mason, organising Secretary for Herefordshire, at Burton Court on July 10th, 1919.

Mrs. Clowes was elected first President, and 25 members joined. The membership now stands at 56. Meetings are well attended, and lectures and demonstrations on many and varied subjects have been given and much knowledge gained.

The Drama team, (producer, the late Mrs. Birley) has won the Cup and County Banner in the Drama Festival, the play on this occasion being "The Person Responsible". After Mrs. Birley's death the Institute was without a producer, but recently the Drama group has been revived.

The Choir has from time to time competed at the Music Festival and gained first and second class awards. It also takes part in the County Carol Services.

During the War the meetings were held in the afternoons, and one afternoon a week members met for sewing and knitting for the Red Cross.

A successful Savings Group was run through the Institute, and incorporated non-members. Jam was made during the War. The members made and gave to the Moral Welfare Officer a complete baby's layette and shortening outfit.

The Institute's first Summer Outing was to the County Exhibition in Hereford in 1920 by waggonettes, starting at 8.30 a.m. and returning at 10 p.m. Now they go as far as London by coach in very few more hours.

The Institute rents its own Room, and has equipped it with stacking chairs, a piano, and crockery.

Annually, the Institute and local branch of the British Legion combine in organising a Fete, Flower Show and Sports on the Recreation Ground, which provides the "Gala Day" of the year, as well as the major money-raising effort.

A market stall was run in the village every Saturday morning for several years, and brisk trade was done and proved very useful to housewives. W.I. members are now members of the Leominster & District Market Stall, and send their surplus produce there, and also assist as sellers.

Members have visited Denman College for an outing, and a bursary is given by the Institute to send a member a year to the College. Fruit Canning is done by the Secretary, the machine being owned by the Institute.

The Institute has sent substantial donations to Dame Agnes Hunt Memorial Fund, and the Lord Mayor's Flood Distress Fund.

Four members reached the final of the County Cogan Cup Quiz (1954), losing by two marks.

Nowadays, when a great number of homes have a Television set, there is perhaps not the same enthusiasm for a corporate social life. We have, however, an Entertainments Committee, on which all the village organisations are represented, and each year this Committee meets to agree the Winter programme. Most organisations have a moneyraising effort yearly, usually taking the form of a Whist Drive and Draw - though a few years ago Old-Time Dances were very popular. Our principal Whist Drive is the Fur and Feather, at Christmas, this date being offered to the different organisations in turn and being always very well patronised. Almost every week parties go to Whist Drives in neighbouring villages; as many as twelve go, and transport is either by bus or by taxi. Usually, too, we make an annual trip to Kington, to see the play put on by the Kington Players, this outing being organised by the Women's Institute.