

## **Here today and gone tomorrow**

Over the years various items and interests in the village have waxed and waned. What prompted these thoughts, a drive to Swithland passing the new elaborate entrance and gates of Roecliffe Manor. I was reminded of when we were involved with Roecliffe back in the 70's. Roecliffe Manor had been a children's convalescent home and Dora Tomson had been the Matron. When she retired she came to live in the village in Main Street with Nurse Matthews. Roecliffe Manor had been obtained to be used as a home for disabled adults by the Leonard Cheshire Foundation. It stood there, a lovely house but an empty shell awaiting our help. On the 31st January 1972 a very enthusiastic meeting was held in Newtown Linford Sunday School. At which both Mrs Clemerson and Mr Vernon spoke to us about the work of the Cheshire Homes. It was decided to form a local branch of Friends. A further meeting was held on 7th February, consisting of representatives from various areas of the village - Mrs Castle, Mrs Wheeler, Mr Coleman, Mrs Gibson, Mr Sarson, Miss Golland, Mrs Neaverson, Mrs Trewin and Andrew Augustus. The Chairman was Mrs Trewin, Secretary Miss Dora Tomson and Treasurer Mr Coleman. It was decided that our major effort would be to obtain good unwanted linen and raise money for further bed-linen, towels etc. required to set up the new home at Roecliffe Manor. A village collection was made and a considerable amount of bed-linen, pillows, quilts and towels were taken to Roecliffe. A large amount of furniture was donated, also household and kitchen items. Meanwhile a house to house visit by each Committee Member explained the aims of the Friends and enlisted offers of help, gifts of money, deeds of Covenant and further linen and furniture. A register of those willing to help was made and sent to Mrs Clemerson. A band of young people under the direction of Mr Coleman our Treasurer volunteered to clear and tidy the gardens of Roecliffe Manor. Many hours were put in by them and other volunteers from the village, 29 including the Crusaders, in preparation for a Garden Party. On Sunday 9th April a visit was arranged for those interested in seeing the house and gardens before the residents arrived. The total received by Roecliffe from all the Friends for the fete was just over £1,000. Newtown Linford friends' share was £122 from the Tombola staff, pony rides £1.10, Singing Minstrel £4.11 and the carriage rides £9. By July nearly £1,000 had been raised by Newtown Linford Friends this included donations and deeds of covenants. In November the Crusader coffee morning raised £126. A Christmas Fair was held at Heatherfield Ulverscroft, the home of Mrs Broad, the house was decorated by friends. In the evening there was a sherry party, and on the following day a coffee morning and tea and biscuits between 3-5pm. By 1975 the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Fete raised £2,500, our efforts £189.75 including the tombola (£115.90). For many years practical help was provided by our Village, cooking at weekends, serving meals and assisting in the rehab of residents. Those who could sew were wanted for repair of pillow cases, sewing on name tapes and other mending jobs. Several of our residents used to go to Roecliffe to talk to residents and help them with letters. Eventually the upkeep of the Manor became very expensive and when the purpose built units at Syston and Staddon Road, Anstey were built the residents moved and the Manor was closed. We disbanded our group of friends - the end of an era. While it was empty the vandals did a great deal of damage. It took many years to sell and now we have a family in residence.