

ROECLIFFE WILSON

1933 to 2013



A village institution for 80 years

ROECLIFFE WI 80 YEARS 1933-2013

“A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH”

(Jane Robinson)

Trawling through the minute books from 1933 onwards, the most striking thing is the degree of social change between then and now. Lack of transport meant that social life revolved around the village and its inhabitants and Roecliffe WI was at the forefront of organising socials, whist drives, plays, concerts, dances, children's parties, etc. They had a captive audience as there was no competition from television, foreign holidays, trips to London, visits away to look after grandchildren, etc. Money was limited and entertainment was home-made and local. Outings were arranged for members, their families and guests. Speakers spoke mainly on craft-related items or home economic topics but the wartime minutes make for interesting reading. Since its inception WI has always been instrumental in supporting and contributing to village amenities.

Carol Harland remembers

- Every year Roecliffe WI organised a Christmas Party for the village children with Dougie Bentley as Father Christmas and Mrs Cambage and Mollie McCarthy going to Wakefield to buy each child a present.
- Socks were knitted for the services during the war.
- WI helped to organise the VE Day celebrations.
- Monthly whist and domino drives were organised.
- A play was put on each year – arranged by Mrs Green, Annie Bentley and Mrs Crozier.
- The village Harvest Supper and Children's Sports Day were catered for.
- Displays were put on at the Aldborough Show each year. Carol Harland remembers one where John Benson made an “Open All Hours” shop front for the display.

The Early Years 1933 to 1940

On March 16th 1933 Roecliffe WI was inaugurated by Lady Lawson-Tancred. Miss Tankard of Whixley outlined the object and aims of The Women's Institute. The first bank account was in the Penny Bank and the first social evening was held in December with optional fancy dress. The first President was Mrs Greene, Secretary Lady Lawson-Tancred and Treasurer Miss Troller.

1934

A drama Group formed; there were demonstrations on bottling fruit and vegetables, making wash-leather gloves (buying skins) and slipper making. Magic lanterns were used for slide shows, one on "America" by Mr Andrew Lawson-Tancred. Two unusual topics given the times were a speaker who talked about "The League of Nations" and Mrs Greene who talked about her Mediterranean Cruise aboard SS Homeric in June 1934!

Lady Lawson-Tancred spoke on a new arrangement for a weekly collection of "gifts in kind" for Harrogate Infirmary. Pre-NHS could these perhaps have been sheets and blankets?

2 March - a letter from Mr Lord was read out regarding the **installation of electric light in Roecliffe and the WI agreed that they would raise money to pay for this.**

1937

Lady Lawson-Tancred spoke on "Old Fashioned Dress". At a social evening, members were free, guests paid-same as now! There were demos on dry-cleaning, sea-grass stools, and making household soap. Summer outings feature frequently and were fully subscribed – unlike now!

20 September .Boroughbridge Players perform a play for the WI

1938

November. Lady Lawson-Tancred spoke on "The Recent Crisis", i.e. the prospect of war. One hilarious-sounding meeting was a demo on the making of jellies by Rowntree & Co of York. Each member was served with cocoa and jelly at the end instead of tea and biscuits!! Dr Rust spoke on Home Nursing and First Aid. Other talks included ones on Food Values and Nutrition. It was decided girls over 14 could join WI and it was proposed a register be kept. Mrs Greene and Lady L-T appear to alternate as Presidents. Bulb competitions and film shows also feature regularly.

1939

June – Two members attended a Palace Garden Party in York. Spring Vegetable gardening, cane tray and basket making were followed up with two classes.

3 September – Outbreak of war

29 September – Owing to the fact that it would be too costly to darken the windows in the school it was decided to suspend meetings until after Christmas.

The War Years 1940s

1940 – 8 Nov Social evening arranged, with proceeds to buy dartboard for the Searchlight Camp.

12 April Suggestions were made to hold first aid classes and also have sewing meetings to darn for the searchlight unit. Both suggestions carried.

6 June after four social evenings WI paid half the cost of blackout curtains for the school. The rest was to provide something for each Roecliffe boy who had been called up. It was agreed that each one should receive a postal order for 7s 6d. 8 July – letters of thanks were received from these boys and read out at the meeting.

WI Ambulance – it was agreed to send 2s towards this fund

1941 Letter read out about registration of women for part-time farm work. Subsequent meetings were mainly social. It was decided that each Roecliffe boy serving in the forces be sent a hand-knitted garment and a postal order for 2s.

January, agreed to start knitting for the Forces at the monthly meeting and to have a whist drive to raise funds to buy wool. Knitting party arranged to meet once a fortnight.

1943 A parcel of seeds from Canada was opened and Mrs Horace was asked to distribute them.

The agenda of the NFWI was discussed. Members were against the raising of the subs to 3s and the Arkendale delegate was to be asked to vote against this on behalf of Roecliffe WI. Arising out of the report was the question of a bus service to Roecliffe so Miss Bentley was asked to write to the Yorkshire Federation to see what could be done. This was followed up and **Roecliffe WI was instrumental in securing bus service to Roecliffe.**

1944 Proposed that one copy of Home and Country be taken each month and passed round members.

11 Feb – Whist Drive and Dance in aid of Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund. £56 was raised.

1945 9 Feb WI ask if it would be possible to have a public telephone kiosk in Roecliffe.

Letter read from United Bus Co – unable to run a bus to Roecliffe at the present time. Sec asked to write to West Yorkshire Bus Co to see if they would.

Church Farm was farmed by the Vicar at that time because he had a salary from the farm but no stipend from the Church. This is now Village Farmhouse (Mark and Nathalie Davies)

.

Post-War and 1950s

1947

Madge Benson joined WI in September

1948

Each member brought a seed potato for a competition. Still trying to get a school bus.

Roecliffe celebrated its 15th anniversary

Competition for growing hyacinths!

1949

Oct 26 Decided to ask the West Yorkshire Bus Company for extra buses to run to the village on a Saturday

Christmas Social – the gift of tinned foods which had been sent from Australia to be saved for the Social Supper.

1951

3 new members, now up to 40! Dress-making classes each Tues evening run by West Riding

1952

March I was **proposed that Roecliffe shall have a Parish Council**. Proposed by Mr Green, seconded by Mr Jim Driffield. The total cost for this would be £54.15s.9d. A subscription list was opened and **the first donation was £10 from Roecliffe WI**.

August . Proposed that the Lighting and Watching Act of 1833 be adopted for Roecliffe

1 August - First meeting of Roecliffe Parish Council.

Christmas party for all children up to 15 yrs. Rations to be claimed for party food.

1953

No June meeting. **Members agreed to prepare a Coronation Tea and Supper for the village.**

Re-start monthly whist drives and dances. December 15 Lighting to be switched on for the six months of winter.

1954

Decorative stitching classes to commence in April. 3shillings per 10 classes!

1955

June Plant bulbs on the Green

1957

June Methodist Church converted to a shop by Major Slater.

Roecliffe WI 21st birthday party

1958

August Lighting period extended to nine months

1959 Roecliffe WI paid for a school classroom to be decorated, £13.0s.3d!

Pond “filled in” and levelled. On-going saga for three years. **WI agitated for former pond area to be properly levelled for safety reasons.**

The Changung Village



The pond in front of the school, filled in in 1959

Bar lane before the road level was raised, 1966



The school spire is replaced

The field behind The Crown before Roecliffe Park was built



The Swinging Sixties

1962

Mrs Cleghorn and Mrs Audrey Young represented Roecliffe Parish Council who were opposed to the closure of Boroughbridge Secondary School.

1963

April 50 years ago, 32 members and average attendance was 23.

Aldborough Show discussions. Members' antiques were judged.

May "Blind Sale" (to raise money for the blind – these were held at regular intervals throughout the years)

Sept Bring and Buy Sales. Immediate demand for extended bus service. £25 proceeds from a jumble sale were to be given for the Christmas Party Fund. Proposed visit to York Theatre.

November Mrs Kathleen Cleghorn to give a film Show on "Regensberg Camp". The enslaved labour population from Nazi occupied countries were assembled into these camps following the end of the war.

December Buy linen and make tablecloths, will be ready for Christmas Party. Demo on Making Christmas Decorations.

WI undertook re-painting of seats on village green.

1964

February – Water pressure and electricity faults reported to Parish Council, also the condition of footpaths at Pasture Cottage. Names requested for outing to Ripon Opera.

September Roecliffe to take part in a Singing for Pleasure competition. Talk on the Problems of Being Overweight. Dancing class to commence.

Letter from Nidderdale Council regarding proposed amalgamation of the West and North Riding caused free discussion amongst members! It was proposed a letter be written to Whitehall expressing dissatisfaction!

October Request to Parish Council for a footpath to ensure safer road conditions for school children.

Miss Farnsworth (Headmistress of Village School) arranged for school-children to plant bulbs around the trees.

Discussion on the West and North Riding becoming North Yorkshire Proposed making Roecliffe a conservation area.

AGM Proposed more family council houses in Roecliffe

Children's Sports Days and Fancy Dress Competitions



Fancy dress competition 1967



They're off!
Sports Day 1969

1965

February Letter from Parish Council regarding proposed Council Houses in the village. WI campaigned for “more council houses to be built in Roecliffe to attract young people to remain in the village”.

February Buckingham Palace Garden Party – proposed that the delegate be chosen by secret ballot. July – Mrs Cambage went, rail fare paid by WI.

April Letter received from GPO stating our changed circumstances were still not sufficient to justify a sub-post office.

12 members to start embroidery classes 7.00 pm on Tuesdays.

September WI Jubilee Dinner at Crown Hotel Boroughbridge. Price 15s. to include meal

October Fashion Show – models given boxes of chocolates. Keep Fit classes
WI campaigned for “the footpath from Boroughbridge to Dowsett Construction to be extended to Roecliffe for the safety of the children walking to school”.

Roecliffe Ladies Cricket Team formed, Susan Bowman and Helen Clayton went on to play for Yorkshire Ladies Cricket.

1966

May (13 April Mrs Audrey Young Ruby Wedding). Proposal for a bus shelter and proposed to contribute £10.10s from the floating fund.

November A request to subscribe to the Aberfan Disaster Fund was discussed – wait to hear from the York Office. Birthday Dinner 9 March 1967 – Three Horseshoes Boroughbridge

Roecliffe entered “Best Kept Village” competition – WI on committee. Walnut tree outside Holmside Farm felled and replaced in 1968.

AGM Mr Bentley resigned after 30 years as Santa – Mr Keith Dobson will take over.

WI ladies



WI Jubilee in Harrogate
Mrs Yewdall
Miss Foxton
Mrs Benson



Mrs Cambage
President from
1969 to 1984



The ladies' Cricket
team, formed in 1965

1967

February Request for dangerous bend signs at Brickworks. Mrs Cleghorn to read a paper on drugs, the different types, the symptoms of an addict and what to do about it.

June Fund called "Court Leet" left to the village by the late Lady Lawson Tancred. £3 spent on bulbs.

July **Letter to Parish Council objecting to further development on Roecliffe Lane.**

August Emergency Meeting to re-arrange winter classes – Country Dancing, Keep Fit and Rugs.

WI paid for waste containers. £3 were left over and used to pay for more bulb planting. **Madge Benson requested a second bus stop opposite the council houses.**

1968

WI repainted the seats.

Roecliffe entered the Best Kept Village competition again and was runner up. Mrs Cleghorn represented Roecliffe at the ceremony at the winning village but at a Roecliffe ceremony Henry Wilson (blacksmith) and Richard Winn, the youngest member of one of the oldest Roecliffe families planted a commemorative tree in March 1969.

WI started up the litter picking (inspired by Madge Benson)

The village lights now to be kept on at night all through the year

The road level to Boroughbridge raised to relieve flooding risk.

WI paid half cost of extra litter bin on the East side of the village.

WI opposed Mr Lambert's application to establish a caravan site behind The Smithy.

WI proposed that Roecliffe be designated a Conservation Area under the Civic Amenities Act 1967. Madge Benson (WI Sec) arranged for two WI members to attend a West Riding County Council Planning Authority Meeting in 1967 and also arranged a WI lecture on the subject.

Evening Classes – dress-making, country dancing and keep fit. Talk "Growing Old Graciously"!

October 1968 Roecliffe interested in proposed Conservation Area.

AGM Resolutions, Nov 1968

Roecliffe invited by Boroughbridge to second a resolution put forward by them to the Autumn County Council meeting regarding bringing back the death penalty or corporal punishment in cases of child murder and sexual assault on children which appear to be on the increase.

As a result of a recent write up in the press concerning a forthcoming meeting named "Education in the Seventies" Mrs Cleghorn suggested it would be a splendid opportunity to attend and ask about primary schools closing and the WI's great concern about the closure of Roecliffe School.

1969 14 Feb Mrs Cambage became President

WI Events



One of the sales for
the blind, 1971



Roecliffe Follies 1976



A typical WI buffet
1971

The 1970s and 1980s

1970 April WI to write to the Parish Council about the conservation of Roecliffe and ask if our stretch of the river as well as the village could be included in the conservation.

1970 July To commemorate Jubilee Year a donation might be given to the Parish Council towards the cost of the stone nameplates for the village.

1971 WI involved in Best Kept Village competition and won!

1974 March – Letter read from the Gas Board regarding a gas supply to the village.

1976 – March Aldborough Show. After a long discussion it was agreed to base our theme on “The Potato Shortage”

1977 April saw some Canadian visitors. Mrs Cambage and Mrs Benson providing overnight hospitality to six of these visitors.

1978 February Best Kept Village was discussed and the answer was “Yes”.

1983 January Minskip WI to close due to lack of support. Mrs. Cambage reported on a successful year in spite of all the trouble over the new boundaries.

1983 March Roecliffe Golden Jubilee Celebrations held at The Crown Hotel

1983 June VCO in attendance regarding voting on the new boundaries for the WI. The vote was 15 for and 4 against – so it will be WI as usual.

1984 February Madge Benson takes over as President

1986 Entered Best Kept Village competition

Best Kept Village Competitions

Planting the Runners-up tree in 1969



The winner's Trophy presentation in 1971

The celebratory buffet
1971



The 1990s

1990

Gas came to the village.

April – Madge Benson suggested our institute plant a tree to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the WI. This would replace a tree blown down in a recent gale.

1991

Oct Mrs Benson asked for volunteers to work tapestry kneelers which are to be paid for out of church funds. Good positive response.

1992

Easter Day service in Church and dedication of the completed kneelers.

1997

Outing to Menwith Hill (inside the golf balls)

19 Feb 100 yrs to the day that WI was founded in Stoney Creek, Canada.

Grateful thanks were given to Jo Mitchell for ringing the church bells on that day.

Madge Benson celebrated 50 years membership. Mary Barker made a cake and Ros Winn iced it.

1998

Lynda Wigby elected President

Entered Best Kept Village Competition – won!

13 **SEPTEMBER**

Speaker: Mrs E Prince

"China Painting "

Hostesses: Mrs Simpson
Mrs Smith

11 **OCTOBER**

Musical Evening

"The Northallerton Handbell
Ringers"

Hostesses: Mrs Watts
Mrs Johnson

8 **NOVEMBER**

Speaker: Mrs J Waring

"Christmas Decorations "

Hostesses: Mrs Collins
Mrs Mitchell

13 **DECEMBER**

Party Evening

Mrs Y Coupe - "Country Dancing"

Hostesses: The Committee

WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

North Yorkshire West Federation



Programme 19⁹⁶

President

MRS M BENSON

TEL: 322353

Secretary

MISS L WIGBY

TEL: 01845-577464 (W)

01765-677142 (H)

Treasurer

MRS V GARGETT

TEL: 324459

Programme for 1996



Mrs Madge Benson, 60 years a member

Mrs Rosalyn Winn, 50 years a member



Mrs Angela Collin, 60 years a member

The new Millennium

2000-Millennium celebrations - WI performed in a marquee on the village green. There was a Flower Show, Fancy Dress, sketches, cake and craft competition. "I'm shy Mary-Ellen" was performed complete with green fig leaves à la Calendar Girls!

Anne Simpson presented beautiful tablecloth worked by her sister as a new millennium gift. Celebrated millennium and 125th anniversary of opening of Roecliffe School. Remember the WI concert in the marquee!

2002 – another tree planting on the green to commemorate 60 years of the WI. This and other tree plantings were well before The Village Fund!

2002-2006 Mary Barker President

2003 – Went to see the original Calendar Girls at the première in Harrogate. Dressed to the nines and sporting pearls!

2004 A seat with brass plaque installed at Roecliffe Common by the pond to mark the 70th anniversary of Roecliffe WI.
Summer Outing to the Dog Racing in Sunderland

2005 and **2009** Summer Outing to Ladies Day at Ripon Races

2009 Madge Benson died 11 October

Outing to Alnwick Garden and Barter Books

At the Great Yorkshire Show Roecliffe was extremely successful with their "Live Well, Spend Less" entry led by Jill Bolland. We scored 20/20 for interpretation and new member, Linda Warrington won the cup for her flower arrangement!

Email adopted to facilitate and enhance communication. Minutes now emailed to members.

2011 New programme formatted. Still room for creativity and change!

4 July outing to Highgrove

Roecliffe won First Prize in the Federation Countdown to Christmas Competition

2012 Janet Siswick began her 'Let's Cook' sessions at Knaresborough, teaching young and disadvantaged mothers how to cook for their families.

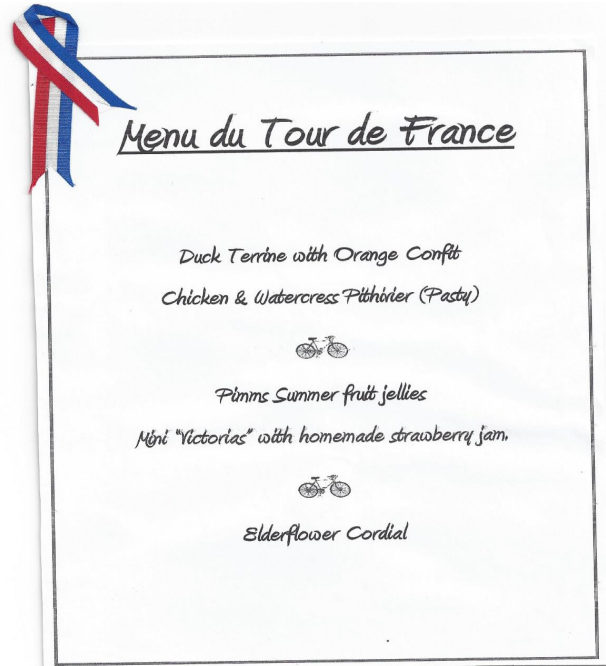
2013 Roecliffe WI celebrates 80 years with dinner at The Crown and a cabaret evening at Coronation Hall.



Christmas party 2006



The WI Tea Tent
Aldbrough & Boroughbridge Show
2012



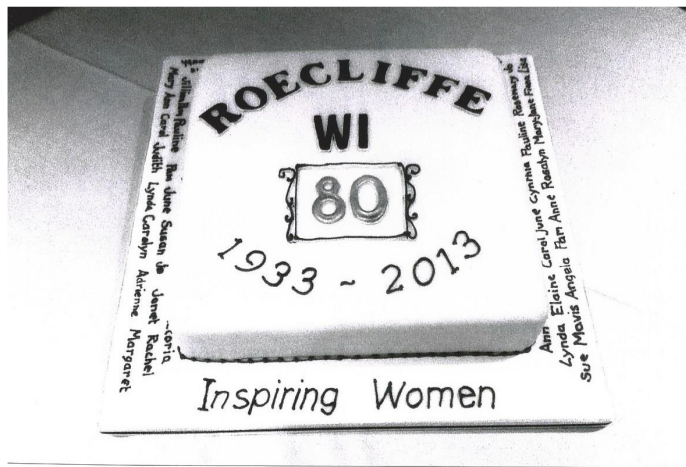
Great Yorkshire Show Entries 2013





Julie Clarke and Ann Scott
at the Anniversary Dinner

The Anniversary cake,
made by Ros Winn and
iced by Jill Bolland



Certificate presented at
the Spring Council

Celebrating the 80th Anniversary
March 2013

ROECLIFFE WI



Programme 2014

Meet Roecliffe School

7.30 pm

2nd Friday of the month

10 January

Neema Craft Centre Tanzania

Susie Hart MBE

Hostesses Ann Green, Jill Bolland

9 May

Where There's a Will

Cherry Shiel

Hostesses Cynthia Benson, Ma
Clark

14 February

A Taste of Sri Lanka

Dee Morrow

Hostesses Elaine Porter/Carol

13 June

Food as Medicine

Jan Cassells

Hostesses Pauline Kirk, Heather
Lawson

Harland

14 March

Annual Dinner

Crown Inn Roecliffe

11 July

Summer Social

Details to be advised

11 April

Sir Titus Salt & Saltaire

OPEN MEETING

Maria Glot

Hostesses Mary Barker, Judith

Haigh, June Flynn

August

No meeting

Looking to the Future

Like WIs throughout the world, Roecliffe WI has been a powerful voice both locally and nationally. Their hard work, fund-raising and lobbying have changed the face of society as well as educating and inspiring women for more than 100 years. (The WI was founded in Stoney Creek, Canada in 1897)

In September 2013 it was reported in the Daily Telegraph and in The Times that WI was actually turning people away in Bristol where an inaugural meeting of a new WI branch was being held. 350 women turned up and 130 had to be turned away because no room was left inside! The organisation is enjoying a resurgence and renaissance and proves that the original values and mission are as relevant today as in the beginning

These notes are just a snapshot of WI ladies in Roecliffe over the decades and illustrate their dedication and commitment to enhancing village life and supporting each other. They were compiled by Ann Green (President 2009-2013), Jill Bolland, Mary Barker, Ros Winn, Carol Harland and Anne Simpson who read through all the minute books back to 1933.

Photographs were added by Helen Davison (President 2014) with grateful thanks to Ros Winn and Anne Simpson who supplied the originals.

March 2014

