SOME MEMORIES/ANECDOTES ABOUT GLENHILLS LIBRARY AND THE AREA by Joyce Calow

This year, 2021, Glen Hills Library will be 60 years old. During those 60 years, the library has moved from its original site on Westview Avenue to the Memorial Hall. Many of you reading this will, I'm sure, remember one of the original librarians, Angela Sawford, who worked at the Westview Avenue site for many years, eventually moving to the Memorial Hall in 2000. Angela has many happy memories and has told me the following: "I really loved my job at Glen Hills Library and worked there for 34 years, retiring in 2008. I remember the heater in the old library. It was oil fired and surrounded by asbestos. To light it, it was necessary to undo various valves to let the oil flow in (but not too much or it flooded), then set fire to a piece of rag and drop it in. Health and safety would have loved it!"

In 2015 Leicestershire County Council announced that 36 small libraries would close unless they were taken over by the Parish Council or a Charitable Trust. With strong support from councillors it was agreed that Glen Parva Parish Council would take over the running of the library, with the help of volunteers. A café was also set up to raise funds to defray the costs. And here we are today, 60 years on. **Happy Diamond Anniversary Glen Hills Library**.

My Aunt and Uncle, Gert and Lawrence Atkins, lived 2 doors away from the original Glen Hills Library building on Westview Avenue. They lived there with their children David, Tony, Richard and Margaret. I have asked my cousin Margaret if she has any memories of the library (she would have been 13 when it opened), and she has spoken with her brothers and has told me the following:

Tony remembers that before the library building on Westview Avenue was opened, books were kept in the **Primary School*** in big wooden boxes, and at the end of the school day people could go and borrow books. Also, on Howard Road, there were 2 shops, Bill Smith the butchers, and Gibson's, a grocery shop. Gibson's used to have books which people could borrow.

My cousin Margaret joined the library when it opened on Westview Avenue, and was a member from the age of 13 until she was around 20. Her parents were never members of the library, but she remembers they were often fed up with people parking in front of their house when they visited the library. Their next door

neighbour, **Miss Peggy Bright****, the local District Nurse, who was a very dear friend and almost like a family member, often had parked cars blocking her drive and would have to go into the library to ask for the offending car to be moved if she was called out in an emergency.

***Glen Hills Primary School** at the time was the old wooden building on Cork Lane. This was sadly burnt down in the early 2000s, but luckily by that time all the children had moved to the new school buildings on Featherby Drive. Houses are now built on that site. The headmaster for many, many years, was Mr Buxton, fondly remembered by many ex-pupils. I remember going to a School Fete there where the guest of honour was celebrated local author and old girl of the school, Sue Townsend. She opened the fete, and did some book signings. This was the time that her Diaries of Adrian Mole were in the bestseller lists. She kindly signed my dog-eared copies. I remember the name Mrs Claricoates, the school secretary for many years, was immortalised in print in those books. Upon Sue's death a few years ago, her family presented a photograph and plaque to the library; you can see it now proudly displayed inside by the entrance doors.

****Nurse Peggy Bright**. Nurse Bright was the local District Nurse and was familiar with just about everyone who lived in the area. She first worked with Dr Brittan, the local GP, and in the latter part of her career with the GPs at the Northfield Road Practice. Nurse Bright delivered just over 1800 babies in her time working in the Glen Parva area, and was awarded the Queen's Medal for Long Service, presented to her by Princess Marina. Her hours were long, and she was dedicated to her work. She met my aunt and uncle when she delivered my cousin Margaret over 70 years ago, and became a very dear and loved friend. As a child I was brought up in Barwell, but we would visit relatives in Whetstone, Blaby and Glen Parva. This involved 2 bus journeys each way, so it really was a day out. We would visit grand parents, aunts and uncles and cousins, and Peg would always be there. She really was like a member of the family. Peggy worshipped at All Saints Church, Blaby, and retired in around 1972. I wonder how many people reading this remember Nurse Bright – she may even have delivered you!