

To commemorate the Golden Jubilee - the 50th anniversary of the founding of the 'Parochial and Home Guard Club', known originally as the 'Home Guard Club', the 'Many' members congratulate and pay tribute to the 'Few', those founder members without whose ideals, spirit and comradeship the club could not have survived.

Before the outbreak of war a Young Men's Church Club occupied the Parochial Hall most of whose members were called up for military service, later it was used by Dunkirk survivors who were billeted in the Roundhay area in 1940.

Harry Penfold, who died in 1990, was the last original member of the club. He was one of the L.A.A. the Local Defence Volunteers, more than 100 men volunteered their services in 1940, all of whom were under or over military age. The total armoury at that time consisted of six .303 Enfield rifles, from the First World War plus 30 rounds of ammunition.

The men drilled with dummy rifles or sweeping brush handles, the drills taking place on wet days in the Parochial Hall. (Shades of Dad's Army) A hut on Roundhay Park golf course was manned dusk till dawn 2 hours on and 4 hours off to guard against attack by German parachutists. At that time Hitler had decreed that any armed and uniformed civilians would be shot on sight and for that reason the L.A.A. wore khaki denims, army boots and an L.A.A. armband. The head gear was trilbies, bowler hats, caps or knitted balaclavas.

In 1942 the then Home Guard was given permission to use the Parochial Hall as a club and a licence was granted to keep up the fighting morale. All public houses had been severely rationed but, for the above reason, the Home Guard was given priority. Wooden barrels were the order of the day but bending proved difficult.

The snooker club was formed with a few broken cues and an incomplete set of snooker balls, (one red was missing). Annual subscriptions were set at 5 shillings (25p). A committee of 12 was elected, the first president was Major Hollis of Hollis and Webb. Corporal Ryder became the first secretary and Harry Penfold, a committee member, was the first competition organiser.

Harry's first competition was the Fur and Feather Handicap, the first prize being a box of tomatoes (!) at a time when almost everything else was rationed. 2 oz. of butter, 4 oz. of sugar or jam, a little meat and points coupons or tins of beans or fish when available. These were the rations per person per week. Imported fruit and nuts were unobtainable.

The 'Many' salute the 'Few' whose energy and foresight has led to the thriving club of 1992. They would have been proud to know that what they began 50 years ago, when the future was dark and uncertain, still flourishes, despite its ups and downs, in this, its Golden Jubilee year.

Jack Parsons 1992