

£2,950 raised in three years !!! That is the proud record on the Nuneaton Hospital Carnival since its inception in 1930. As a means of providing Nuneaton with an eventful day and at the same time raising funds for the Hospital, the Carnival has proved a tremendous and popular success. Long may it so continue ! The origin of the Carnival was a meeting called by Mr Eli Deeming on the evening of July 23rd, 1930 in a room at the Cock & Bear Inn. There, six people under the chairmanship of Mr W White, met together to put into practical form the various suggestions which had been floating around the town all the year. With great enthusiasm they presented to the Nuneaton public the infant Carnival - a babe that was soon to grow to astounding proportions, and which was to shock the district out of its nearly traditional lethargy

The people present at the far reaching meeting were; Mr W White, Mr Eli Deeming, Mr A Jacques, Mr J H Smith, Mr A Keiser, Mr C Orton, Mr H Wood and the press, all of whom were formed into a committee, with the unlimited power to add. The following resolution was passed; "That we hold a Carnival on Saturday, September 13th, 1930 in aid of the Nuneaton General Hospital with a small percentage to go to St John Ambulance and the Red Cross Society" Mr J C Gardner, steward of the Hospital was elected Chairman, Mr Deeming Secretary, Mr R J Dixon Treasurer, Mr A E Cruttenden Assistant Secretary, Mr W White Vice Chairman. From this time the growth of the Carnival was amazing, with all officials working hard, on what was completely new and untilled ground. On July 28th there was a meeting over which the Mayor Dr L E Price presided. Sub-committees were formed and soon a very ambitious programme was mapped out. To go over the work done at all the meetings of the year would be boring, but one date demands mention, and it is August 20th, when Mr F C Ripp was appointed Organising Secretary. He came into the meeting straight from a cricket practice still wearing his Nuneaton blazer. Someone asked him if he were willing to be Organising Secretary, "Yes" said Mr Ripp - and it was that ! He was beautifully casual, but, it was the last time Mr Ripp had the chance to be casual that year. Concerts were organised, dances held, the use of the Grammar School field and Riversley Park secured. The classes for the Carnival were built up, prizes worked out, deputations sent to Coventry for advice from the Carnival Committee there and the rules were framed. Number two of these rules stated "That the object shall be the raising of funds, year by year for the benefit of the Nuneaton General Hospital". This rule is still the main one on the board for the Carnival is for the Hospital, and for the Hospital alone. The famous "Every Copper Helps" slogan. Adopted, was soon plastered around the town and district and it immediately seized the popular imagination. The origin of the idea, by the way, came from the Matron of the Hospital (Miss B M Partington) who also drew the sketch of the "Bobby" On October 18th, only three months after the first meeting, the Carnival - organised without previous experience and at great speed - was held. The weather was particularly kind for the time of the year, with the exception of one shower, and people poured into the town from miles around. The marshalling of the procession in King Edward Road was good and everything was highly satisfactory. The townspeople played their parts well, and all along the route were dense crowds, showering coppers on the collectors. The procession was a fine spectacle, and delighted the many thousands who saw it. The Queen, Miss Ann Seal and her maids of Honour, the Misses Doris Bambury, Edna Clarke, Marjorie Colledge and Phyllis Green, with Master Peter Rodwell as the page boy. The Queen and the maids were elected by newspaper vote as now, and the King Of Mirth was Mr Alf Clarke, who has maintained royal rank with distinction each year since. The crowning ceremony performed by the Mayor Dr L E Price was held in beautiful sunshine in the Grammar School Field, where later, the judging took place. It was at this crowning that Councillor (now Alderman) Price initiated the pleasant custom of kissing the Queen, which his successor (Alderman Pemberton) gallantly followed and we have no doubt Alderman W T Smith will likewise rise to the occasion. For the first time for over a generation there was a public ox roasting, while other sideshows kept the public in Carnival mood. When it had been announced just prior to the Carnival taking place that it was hoped to raise £1000, many people scarcely troubled to conceal their mirth; but "He laughs longest who laughs last" The total money handled by the Committee during Carnival day 1930 was £1,427 /19 /9d. On Tuesday November 18th, therefore, Alderman E F Melly (Hon Secretary of the Hospital ) received a cheque to the value of £1,100 from Mr Ripp, at a dinner held at The Newdegate Arms Hotel and the Secretary Mr Eli Deeming was presented with a suitably inscribed clock in recognition of his inaugurating the first Nuneaton Hospital Carnival. Later in the same year, a further £50 was handed to the Hospital as a Christmas Box. There was then a period of quiet until March 11th, 1931, when the second Annual Meeting of the Committee was held. Mr S Bowers was appointed Chairman for the year, The Mayor, Alderman E F Pemberton, President, Mr J H Cartwright, Vice Chairman, and Mr Ripp Organising Secretary. Fortified by a greater knowledge of conditions and if the difficulties the would have to face, the Committee worked on smoothly. The Carnival date was fixed for July 18th, which allowed plenty of time, while ensuring at least a reasonable probability of good weather. The arrangements of 1931 were more elaborate. Weddington Cricket Ground was secured for the judging, whilst the sports and "all the fun of the fair" were arranged. The marshalling too, was moved from King Edward Road to Central Avenue, Corporation Street and Graham Street and was an obvious improvement. Once more the weather was favourable on the big day and there was a huge crowd in Riversley Park at the crowning of the Queen (Miss Phyllis Gibbs) whose maids of honour were the misses Vera Cox, Millicent Ward, Mary Haynes and Phyllis Green, Miss Fannie Timmins, that was to have been a maid was unfortunately ill. The page boys were Raymond Jones and Jean Quiltenton. Alderman F P Pemberton (Mayor) performed the ceremony, which was thoroughly enjoyed. The whole of the organisation naturally showed more polish and no stone was left unturned to make another huge success. The procession was longer and better, while with a little money in reserve, more ambitious projects had been gone in for by the Committee. Their enterprise was again rewarded; for, when the accounts were straightened up, it was seen that another £1,000 would be available for the Hospital. The 1931 Carnival produced £516 in street collections (against £485 the year before), £140 from the greenhouse (£146) Programmes £79 (£90) Ox-roasting £97 (£100) and dances £42 (£140). The charges of admission to Weddington ground, however produced £100 which was not available the year before, to bring total receipts up to £1295/10/1d, against £1,427/19/9d. As a sequel a cheque for £1,000 was presented to Alderman Melly at a Concert held in the Hippodrome on November 1st. Over £2,000 in two years! The Third Year was of course, last year, which is too fresh in the memory to need recalling. The Chairman was Mr Walter Perkins, the other officials practically as before. The work, more systematised than ever, proceeded through the mechanism which the earlier workers had constructed. Carnival day was again fine, in fact it was almost too hot and crowds again lined the route. The Queen was Miss Mary Haynes and she was attended by the Misses Phyllis Gibbs (the previous Queen ), Iris Barratt, Vera Cox, Fannie Timmins, Dorothy Widdus and seven small drummer boys. Probably owing to the continued industrial depression and other causes the street collection were slightly down to £421, while donations also receded to £46, and the total realised was £1,005 - still above the thousand mark. Some expenses however, had to come from that and £800 went to the Hospital. Experts tell us, however that the third year of the Carnival is the most critical, and Nuneaton weathered it triumphantly. With the Carnival settled down and a recognised feature of the Midlands, we confidently await a bumper year for 1933. The weather has been kind to us three times, so we can only hope that the fourth Carnival day will be "in the sun". Please remember that "Every Copper Helps"