

## A history of Wetherby District Lions Club

By Colin Gaden – Charter Member and Melvin Jones Fellow

The club was formed during November 1965 by their 'Mother Club' Leeds Skyrack Lions at meetings in the Angel, Wetherby. There were officially presented with their Charter on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> April 1966 and their first President, Robert Hudd received it at an event in the Majestic Hotel, Harrogate. There were 16 Charter Members and after 47 years the average membership is between 20 and 30 Lions and the official venue for meetings is the Bridge Inn, Walshford on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday each month at 7.45pm. The Club has undertaken many projects over the years both fund raising and service depending on the needs of people within the community. At the Charter Presentation event the Club accepted the motto of the association which is – 'We Serve' and Lions Clubs have six objects.

- 1 To create and foster a spirit of generous consideration among the peoples of the world through a study of the problems of international relationships.
- 2 To promote the theory and practice of the principals of good government and good citizenship.
- 3 To take an active interest in the civic, social and moral welfare of the community.
- 4 To unite the members in the bonds of friendship, good fellowship and mutual understanding.
- 5 To provide a forum for the full and free discussion of all matters of public interest, partisan politics and sectarian religion alone excepted.
- 6 To encourage efficiency and promote high ethical standards in business and professions, Provided that no club shall hold out as one of its objects financial benefits to its members.

In the early days of the club the projects were not as ambitious as the main projects of the club at the present time, which are the annual Christmas Party for 200 pensioners including a hot lunch and concert every January. It also organises the Great Yorkshire Bike Ride on the day of the event which each year raises over £100,000 on the one day. The club also organises a Dickensian Christmas when the members dress in Dickens costumes and the Silver Band play in the Market Place and there are stalls.

In those early days the members distributed 250 sacks of firewood at Christmas time to needy people and also collected canned foods and packets of tea for distribution.

An annual event was the organisation of tombola at the Rosemary Fellowship at St James Hospital in Leeds to raise funds for the Phsyiatric unit. The Cheshire home at Spofforth was provided with a tarmacadam driveway, and visited the home once a week to play games with the residents.

The Marguerite Hepton Hospital at Thorp Arch was very busy in those days with children having severe orthopaedic conditions and the Lions visited twice weekly to show 8mm films to the children. Bickerton Grange was the home to Refugee children from German displaced peoples camps and the Lions helped.

Jumble Sales were very popular in the 1960 and 70's and the Lions raised lots of funds with these.

In 1967 the Lions organised a Wish Week when people were invited to make a wish and if the Lions could possibly grant the wish they did so.

The Great Yarmouth Holiday home for Blind people was available and the Lions sent two people each year for a holiday.

The Lions took over the organisation of the Derby and Jones party in January 1969 and continued this party every January since.

In September 1969 a Scout HQ was planned to be erected on Barleyfields Road and raised £1,500 towards the materials for the building.