

Letters to the editor

► *Early radio days*

Your excellent piece in the November issue congratulating Radio Lincolnshire on reaching its twenty-fifth birthday reminded me that if things had turned out a little differently – and especially if local radio bosses in London had got their way – celebrations could have been held up for several years.

I was Lincolnshire County Council's public relations officer (their first, actually) twenty-five years ago and devoted the best part of three years in the late 1970s canvassing the possibility of bringing local radio to the county. A little matter of a moratorium on opening new stations while the government decided a policy on pirate radio, and the pressure to allow the expansion of commercial radio, had held everything up. The BBC's stated preference-list of six cities as the first to receive local radio when the ban was lifted was headed by Durham, with Lincoln last.

In spite of strong opposition from BBC local radio chiefs in London, a campaign led by the still fairly new Lincolnshire County Council, supported by all seven district councils and the county's members of parliament, eventually pushed Lincolnshire to the top of the list. Having orchestrated the coup – as PRO I knew how desperately such a large and mainly rural area needed an all-county daily news medium – I went further. I got our new coalition of councils and MPs to back another campaign to get the BBC official choice of name – Radio Lincoln – changed to Radio Lincolnshire. Of all seven district councils only one, Lincoln City, voted against. In my opinion it was absolutely essential that an all-county radio service should have an all-county name and eventually the BBC, bowed to pressure.

The County Council shared my views from the beginning and really went to extraordinary lengths to help bring the new station into being. I was encouraged to offer the proposed manager, Roy Corlett, every facility when he first arrived to set up the station from scratch, and he did originally operate from my office at County Offices.

It soon became obvious to us that he was operating on a shoestring and the County Council offered rooms while they looked around for a permanent home. Later, when it became clear that the BBC was likely to launch with a limited-range

transmitter to save money, the County Council offered a loan or subsidy. Unfortunately, the attitude of the BBC in London towards local authorities apparently trying to get their foot in the door rebuffed all such overtures. Roy was told to leave County Offices and find other accommodation.

When they finally went on air it was from the former cinema in Lincoln's uphill which is still their home. And they did get a more powerful transmitter than originally planned.

The rest, of course, is history. The county has benefited enormously from the establishment of the radio station and I like to think the BBC benefited from the enlightened approach of Lincolnshire County Council to their initial problems.

J E Coleman, Cherry Willingham,
Lincoln.

► *Mince pie memories*

In my childhood (I was born in 1909) preparation of Christmas puddings and mincemeat began towards the end of October. The ingredients of both were mixed in their separate bowls immediately before the twenty-first Sunday after Trinity. On that day, 'Stir-up Sunday', members of the family took it in turn to stir the mixtures. We were told it was because the collect for that Sunday began 'Stir up, etc', though who made the very odd connection between the 'wills of the people' and mince pies and Christmas puddings, I do not know.

The puddings were cooked on the following day and the mincemeat put into jars for later use. The mince pies were made and eaten from about a week before Christmas until Twelfth Night.

The mince pies were never round. Special patty pans were used. They were oval and kept just for the mince pies. Jam tarts and fruit pies were cooked in round pans as they are now. When the children asked why mince pies were oval, we were told it was because they represented the crib of the Christ child.

Pies with a lid need a vent to let out the steam during cooking. In round pies this vent was made by a skewer but mince pies were different. The vent was made by making a snip in the top of the pie with scissors. During the snip the scissors were pulled up slightly, leaving a tiny mouth-

like opening. We were told this was a kiss for the baby Jesus, and the children of the household were usually allowed to make it.

Mrs E M Friesse, Grantham.

► *Wellington Bomber crash*

I wonder if any of your readers can remember any details of a Wellington Bomber crashing in Bluegate Pasture near Little Limber in 1943. I was only a young lad at the time but was able to have a guided tour of this aircraft.

Apparently the pilot had been waiting for permission to land at RAF Kirmington (now Humberside Airport) but had been held off because he had not been able to lower the undercarriage. However before he was given permission to land he became very short of fuel and decided to land the aircraft in a field before his engines stopped. No one was hurt in the landing but the Front Gunner/Bomb Aimer was wounded by a bullet that had entered the fuselage level with the pilot and had passed through the aircraft's structure before passing through the back of his seat and into his kidney region.

This experience set the seed for me to become a pilot and I subsequently joined the RAF in 1953 and became a pilot. I initially flew Hunter fighters with 222 Squadron in Scotland and the Vulcan V Bomber with Nos. 50, 101 and IX Squadrons from Waddington and Scampton during my Service career. I left the Service from RAF Scampton in 1977.

Now I have retired and am living again near my home town of Market Rasen I am interested in finding more about this Wellington aircraft. Unfortunately I cannot remember the date I was allowed to view it and so finding more details is very difficult. So if any reader can help in this respect I would be very grateful.

E G Brown, Squadron Leader RAF Retd
16 Dovecote, Middle Rasen,
Market Rasen, LN8 3UD

If you would like to contribute to this page please address your letters to: The Editor, Lincolnshire Life, PO Box 81, Lincoln, LN1 1HD or email us on editorial@lincolnshirelife.co.uk For more information about 'Lincolnshire Life' visit our website on www.lincolnshirelife.co.uk