

## Ten Balls... And Counting!

It does not seem possible that it was nine years (or ten balls) ago that Shipton had its first Charity Ball. It all started at Jeremy Huntingford's birthday party when Gordon Halliday,



keyboard player with Ragged Edge, came down from the stage and said to Jane Hills, "Can we have a gig for the David Hills Trust? I've booked the New Beaconsfield Hall for an evening next March. If the band does not have a gig soon, then Terry will sell his drums and Ragged Edge will be finished."

### A Black-Tie Affair

Jane said that it was a wonderful idea and we should make it a black-tie affair. Others added their suggestions and a working party was formed consisting of Gordon and Christine Halliday, Jeremy and Gail Huntingford, John and Gill Drew, and Jane and me.

There were worries about whether or not our ambitious bubbly reception, sit-down dinner, bar and dance could cover its costs, let alone make money for a charity. In the event, thanks to 130 people buying tickets and many making handsome donations it made nearly £4,000.

Preparations went well, until 4pm on the day of the ball. We were moving the electronic piano when there was a sharp crack. Frank (O'Neill) said "I've trodden on the mains lead and something's broken." Plugged in, the piano made not a sound, meaning a printed circuit-board was broken and there would be none of

the hoped-for music to eat by. But Frank was more than a man who breaks pianos and plays guitar in Ragged Edge: he went home, fetched his repair equipment, returned and cut and soldered

magnificently and the piano worked again.

### Over £63,000 Raised for Charity

Since then the Ball Committee and co-opted interested parties have raised over £63,000 for charities with a local interest: Against Breast Cancer, SSAFFA and Help for Heroes, Pheriche Hospital on Everest, Local Youth, Kiss it Better for Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and so on. Good things often bring other benefits and one of those is that Terry Tew is now on his fourth set of drums and another is that the Shipton Charity Ball is well and truly on the local events calendar - and Ragged Edge's lady vocalist, Becky, sang for the Queen at her Diamond Jubilee.

Now the first committee has decided to hang its boots up. We are getting older and new ideas and fresh approaches are needed so we pass our best wishes and a small float in the account to Peter Hilling who is forming a new committee. We also step down with our thanks to all who have supported our efforts, to Ragged Edge for always playing for no reward and to all the local businesses who have generously given raffle prizes and auction lots.

**Peter Hills**