

THE HAREFIELD HERALD



2013/14

The occasional Magazine of
Harefield History Society

3rd Issue

SINCERE THANKS TO ALL OUR SPONSORS FOR THEIR
SUPPORT IN PRODUCING THIS JOURNAL



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EDITORIAL

WELCOME to the third edition of 'The Harefield Herald', that I hope you will find interesting and enjoyable.

Since the last edition we have been out and about visiting St Albans, Sandringham, Bath and, what with the BBC trip coming up shortly and news of a new trip just arranged (see p.9), we have been and will be quite active.

This edition has been blessed with fine contributions from members and it was the intention from the outset that it should be a Society magazine, not only for members, but preferably also by members.

My thanks to Daisy South for her evocative memories of growing up in wartime Harefield and a romantic view of Bath from Chris Emerson.c Thanks also to our Secretary, Lorraine, for her research and expertise in informing us what a village event was like, 102 years ago. One thing that was very noticeable was that everyone, seemingly without exception, wore some type of headgear.

Rosemary Causton has once again done her wonderful job, which we must not take for granted, in compiling and producing this edition and the Herald would not exist without her priceless participation. Our sincere thanks to her and Philip too.

Keep your stories coming in: articles, pictures, sketches, memories. They all add up to a Society magazine we can be proud of and **please**, don't forget the **BATH BUNS!**

Gordon Isaacs

BATH IN SUMMERTIME



Bath is beautiful. That is really all there is to it. There is so much to see and do. A lifetime in Bath would not be enough. Steeped in history, culture and nestling in a gentle valley of the River Avon in The West Country it is delightful. It is one of the wonders of our English heritage. It is well worth a look and merits more than a day's visit. However, a day was all we had and every moment has to be treasured. It was the most perfect of summer days with not a cloud in the sky. It was a day when you returned home completely satisfied. Bath does that. It satisfies all the senses. Bath is wonderful. Everything was perfectly organised under Gordon's expert preparation and care to detail. Not a thing went wrong. Not one thing.

With no cares in the world we boarded the coach on Harefield Village Green at 8.30am. After collecting friends of Harefield History Society from Denham it was quick access on to the M25 and M4. The journey was uninterrupted and we arrived at a drop off point in Bath, adjacent to The Jane Austen Museum. This is a quaint Regency building along a parade of other handsome Regency architecture. The museum recreated the early 19th century feel, with the guides and curators dressed in period costume. Well informed guides gave interesting and informative speeches about all aspects of Jane Austen's life and literature. The interactive museum was inspired for all ages of visitors.



Panoramic view of the Royal Crescent

With adequate free time there was so much to sample in Bath. The River Avon, the buildings and the architecture seem to be

packed in one area and so made visiting easy. Around every corner there is a new delight to see. There are wide streets and vistas, squares and meeting places. People were sitting in the sunshine or looking upwards at the detail that could easily go unnoticed, as everything in Bath is a feast for the eyes. Unfortunately time did not allow us to visit The Roman Baths or The Assembly Rooms. Neither did time allow us to promenade in the Regency Circus or the carefully laid out streets. Bath does inspire and it does have that feel good factor.

The Abbey is fascinating and like so many grand churches it



immediately creates that atmosphere of awe and wonder. Quiet and also resonating, sounds carry within the massive space to give you the feeling of majesty and stillness. The guide was a welcome addition to the party as she was a scholar in her own right on all aspects of this wonderful place. The calming effect of the local stone and the craftsmanship of the artisans who laboured in creating this wonderful space is too much to be fully appreciated in the time we had. Another visit, on another day, is a must.

For those who were weary from all the activity, a teatime break had been laid on by prior arrangement in the city church. The hospitality was generously given in the cool of the crypt. Afternoon tea in Bath! What a perfect ending to a perfect day. Then without us having to think about a thing the coach arrived as if by magic and we arrived back in Harefield with lovely memories of a lovely day. No worries, no effort and total satisfaction. Bliss.

Chris Emerson

MY HAREFIELD CHILDHOOD IN WW2

By Daisy South

I was born in Harefield in July 1930 and although I was orphaned at a very early age I led a fairly normal childhood until 3rd September 1939. That was the day that changed everyone's life.

The immediate effect of the outbreak of war was that the schools were closed. We were due to go back to begin the new school year, but for about three months there was no school at all. Then we began part-time classes, half the pupils went to lessons on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the other half on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. I was among the latter group and remember feeling very disgruntled at having to attend school on Saturday!

Some of our teachers had been called up to serve in the Forces. Mr Thomas went into the Army, but Mr Ross was an Auxiliary Fireman and was put in charge of the Fire Station in Northwood Road – where Preston's Garage is now. Men from Harefield Fire Station were often called to London during the Blitz and could be away several days without contact with their families, - very worrying. I can remember standing in my garden seeing a red glow in the sky and smoke drifting over, you could see and smell London burning.

Of course life was not all work or fun and games. We spent many a day at school in the air raid shelters and nights could be terrifying, hearing bombs whistling down, searchlights lighting up the sky. Even time spent in the shelters at school was not wasted. As it was poorly lit, we were unable to have formal lessons, but we learnt our times tables, had spelling bees, learnt poetry and we played cat's cradle for hours.

When I was eleven years old I joined the St John's Ambulance Cadets and for the next three years did voluntary work at

Harefield Hospital. We helped on the wards, did washing up, rolling bandages, writing letters for patients and just generally helped out. The Memorial Hall, facing the junction of Rickmansworth Road and Hill End Road, was used as a First Aid post run by volunteers from the Red Cross and St John's Ambulance. It was also used as a waiting room for visitors to Harefield Hospital.



*Daisy in her St. John's
Ambulance uniform*

The older girls at school were allowed to knit socks, scarves and gloves for the services. I really enjoyed this as it was very satisfying making something that would be sent to a serving soldier or airman.

Many bombs fell around us mostly in fields and woods, but one fell on Weybeards Farm. It landed on the cobbled courtyard and the blast cracked the beautiful Georgian house from top to bottom and it had to be demolished.

One evening my sister and her friends had been to the cinema in Uxbridge and walking home on a bright moonlit night they saw a parachute descending. She came screaming into the house saying 'the Germans are coming!' – we were terrified. Shortly after there was an enormous explosion, we found out the next day a land mine had fallen at Maple Cross and several houses had been damaged.

Throughout the war years children also did their bit towards the war effort. We all had a barrow, a simple wooden box on a pair of old pram wheels. With this we collected acorns for a local farmer to feed his pigs, horse manure from the fields to fertilise our vegetable plots; we were all 'digging for victory' and we went out wooding. Great fun was had, after any windy night we would go out with our barrows to collect fallen wood to supplement our coal ration. I also remember collecting wild rose hips from the

hedgerows which we handed into the local WVS and I believe they went to make the first of the Rose Hip Syrup which was then distributed to Welfare Clinics.

Our Milkman had been called up into the army and his place had been taken by two ladies. I loved to help them deliver the milk on a horse drawn milk float. Sometimes it was very cold and I had to get up early in the wintertime when it was still dark. In the summer, Bob the horse wore little ear caps to stop the flies bothering him.

When I walked to school on the morning of 6th June 1944, I could hear planes overhead. It was a sunny morning with clear blue sky. I looked up and saw many planes each towing a glider. I realised this must be the 'second front' that we had been waiting for. As I looked up I said a little prayer "Please let them be safe", but of course at only 13 years old I knew that many would not return. We heard on the news later of the D-Day invasion.

At this time we were not getting air raids as before as Allied Forces were fighting in France and on into Germany. Suddenly, without warning, raids started again. This time it was the 'Doodle Bugs'. They flew over making a buzzing sound; when the engine stopped we got down under our desks waiting for the explosion. V2 Rockets came later - with them, no warning, just the big bang.

In July 1944 I left school aged 14 years old and began working at Denham Film Studios as a Junior Clerk. It was a wonderland after my village school to see all the famous film stars walking around and being able to watch films being made.

One evening in early May 1945 I came home from work. As I approached my house I saw a man standing in the garden next door. He looked old and grey and was wearing an Army Uniform. I realised that it was my Uncle David. I said hello to him, but felt shy. He looked at me puzzled, as I turned into my gate he came over to me - 'Hello' he said, 'I didn't recognise you!' Of course, we

had both changed in the past 5 years. He had been a Prisoner-of-War for those 5 years, captured in North Africa by Italian Forces. Then when Italy came out of the war he was sent to Germany. He had been released by Allied Forces and flown home to England sitting on the floor of a bomber plane. It was a complete surprise home-coming. I was so happy to see him safe and sound; I had been a little girl when he left, and a young lady then, working for her living, when he returned.

Just a few days later we celebrated VE Day. A huge bonfire was lit on the green opposite the Vernon Arms which scorched the paintwork on the front of the building. When the flames had died down the adults celebrated inside whilst we youngsters sang and danced around until well into the night – next day was a holiday.

Just one of our neighbours was not with us. He was still a prisoner of the Japanese so it was some months later before he could return home. Life had changed so much for us all during the past six years.



The Vernon Arms



The CENTENNIAL Anniversary of the beginning of the Great War in 1914.

To commemorate this anniversary a poppy field has been created in the grounds of St Mary's. One area adjoins the Anzac Cemetery on the south side and the other area surrounds the rowan tree facing the main entrance to the church. A good friend of the chairman donated a large quantity of first-class red Flanders poppy seeds and with the advice and help of Richard Ives, assisted by Mark Dalton, the ground was prepared and the seeds planted early in October. If all goes according to plan we should have a good display next year.

History Society Award Scheme for HAREFIELD ACADEMY



The third **'Keeping History Alive'** Award was won this year by Bobby Moore and the presentation took place at the Academy's Annual presentation Evening in January. The picture below shows him with the award, standing between the chairman and Helen Walls, Head of History.



We are happy to continue our association with the Academy and glad that it is producing such worthy winners.



Another page from the Sketch Book of
Will Spencer

and a reminder
of our trip to
The Royal Estate
of
Sandringham.

STOP PRESS

I have arranged an outing for members and friends to visit the Bentley Priory Battle of Britain Museum at Stanmore on Thursday, 6th February 2014, starting at 2pm. It will be a guided tour that will probably take a good two hours and the cost for all of us old concessionaries is £7 per head. Full details at the November and January meetings.

Bentley Priory dates back to 1775 and it was a grand house, still is, designed by Sir John Soane who also designed, amongst many things, the Bank of England. He rose to the top of his profession and became Professor of Architecture at the Royal Academy. In its heyday as a great private mansion it welcomed visitors like Lord Nelson, the Duke of Wellington, Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The Royal Air Force acquired it in 1926, after its time as an hotel and a girls' school, and it subsequently became the Headquarters of Fighter Command in WW2 under the command of Air Chief Marshal Sir Hugh Dowding. It was from here that the Battle of Britain was engaged and won. Visitors during wartime included King George VI, Winston Churchill and General Dwight Eisenhower, who monitored the progress of the D-Day landings from the underground bunker, which I am sure we will visit on our tour. A Spitfire and a Hurricane are situated in the front of the building and a remarkable make-over of the building has taken place with much of the interior appearing as it did in wartime.



I know that at least one of our members served there, as a WAAF plotter, and maybe others too. I need ten people for this tour and I will be very surprised if a much larger contingent does not sign up for it. I signed up, or was rather called up, into the RAF for National Service and I will finish as if I was still on Pay Parade.

3118629 LAC Isaacs G. Sah!

The Coronation of King George V June 22nd 1911

'Every Parish has had rejoicings and feastings as hearty and sincere as the greatest in the land and credit must be given to those numerous committees that have worked with such cordial good will in order that this Coronation Day may be memorable to young and old alike.'



(From: *Middlesex and Bucks Advertiser June 24th 1911*)

"A Grand Day at Harefield"

The day began with a procession led by Tower Hamlets Military Band to St Mary's Church for a service of Thanksgiving

conducted by the Reverend Harland. Afterwards everyone assembled at the Village Green where the Union Jack was raised.



DINNER on the Village Green,
AT ONE O'CLOCK

On THURSDAY, 22nd JUNE, 1911.

Every person is requested to bring a Knife and Fork.

THIS TICKET MUST BE PRODUCED FOR ADMISSION

A feast of cold meats, cheeses, salads, plum

pudding and cake was served to about 2000 people. 120 gallons of ale and 100 of beer were drunk! Each child was presented with a medal, orange and a bag of sweets.



CORONATION DAY 1911 Harefield villagers celebrating on the Village Green

Entertainments began with a parade of local tradesmen's horse drawn vehicles, decorated bicycles and pedestrians in comic costumes.

The baby show drew 23 entries all one year old and under. Only '19 sat to be judged! One of the judges was Nurse Ratcliff of the London Hospital.

The youngest school children danced round the maypole. Older children performed Morris dances. Boy Scouts gave a display of physical drill and First Aid.

Both adults and children were able to enter the sports competitions for cash prizes. There were children's races over 100 yards for boys and for girls up to the age of 14 years. Boys could take part in the three-legged race, girls in the egg and spoon. Adult events included a veterans race for men over 50 years, a men's hurdles race and a race for married women! There was a 100 yards ladies' and gentlemen's backward race! The winners were Mr L and Miss Stedall.

Dancing followed on the Village Green and the day concluded with Mrs Freemantle lighting a huge bonfire and Mr Lever provided a fine fireworks display clearly visible at Uxbridge!

"God save the King"

(From: Middlesex and Bucks Advertiser July 1st 1911.)

WE ARE ON OUR WAY TO VISIT NEW BROADCASTING HOUSEAT LAST!



You may remember that we had a tour booked for the Society to visit last March but this was cancelled because of strike action by BBC staff. Not actually cancelled, rather postponed, as we are now visiting on Thursday, 7th November and at the time of writing we have 30 people signed up.

I suppose we take broadcasting, radio and television very much for granted these modern days and probably don't appreciate the constant news and entertainment delivered into our very homes. It was not always so, of course, and we should be grateful to pioneers like Guglielmo Marconi for his research into radio waves and John Logie Baird for his genius in the field of television. It was as far back as 1901 when Marconi made his first transmission of radio waves from the Isle of Wight to Cornwall. Marconi is generally credited with the invention of radio but there were several other prominent scientists also involved in the background work. The BBC started making daily transmissions in 1922 from Marconi House in the Strand and then moved to better facilities in Savoy Hill, just off the Strand, in 1923. It was in 1924 that Baird first demonstrated a television transmission.

Then in 1932 the original Broadcasting House in Portland Place was built and became the first custom built broadcast centre in the UK. It is an iconic building, nine stories high and three stories deep and it survived being bombed twice in World War II. The New Broadcasting House that we are shortly to visit was only opened earlier this year and it is the vision that is shown before all the news broadcasts. Should be an interesting few hours. The original building has now survived for 81 years which is quite something for the BBC. The Television Centre that the Society visited three or four years ago is now defunct having only had a life of just over 53 years. It seems to be very much the

pattern for many modern buildings to be constructed only to last for such a relatively short period and in many ways it is a shame. The TV Centre was very distinctive in design but that did not save it and demolition is now due. For what? More houses, more shopping malls?

Buildings in the Victorian era were quite different; they were built to last. Take the Ally Pally – the Alexandra Palace in North London which, of course, has a connection with BBC broadcasting. It was built in 1873 and first opened as ‘The People’s Palace’ providing Victorians with a great environment



Alexandra Palace

and recreation centre but was destroyed by fire just sixteen days after its opening with 120,000 visitors already having crossed the threshold. ‘Never mind’ said the ever redoubtable Victorians, ‘We will rebuild’ and they did. Less than two years later, on 1st May, 1875 a new Palace opened and has remained so to this day. What has this to do with the BBC you might be asking. Well in 1935 the BBC leased the eastern section and it was from there that the first public television transmissions were made in 1938. The Ally Pally remained the main transmitting centre for the BBC until 1956 when it was used exclusively for news broadcasts. Remember those news transmissions with the news readers very formally attired; the men, like Alvar Liddell, attired in dinner jackets and the ladies, like Sylvia Peters, in evening dresses. Bit different nowadays, innit!

So that is a bit of BBC background and history to prepare us all for the trip on 7th November. I always think knowing the history of something deepens and colours one’s enjoyment.

Hope you agree.

Gordon Isaacs

BATH BUNS

Chris Emerson has written a lovely piece on the Society's trip to Bath. We finished up the day having a cup of tea and a Bath Bun in a nearby church. I for one would not have recognised a proper Bath Bun, thinking it probably looked like a Belgian or a Chelsea bun, and I was not alone in possibly never having tasted such a confection. The buns we had were rather nice and I wonder whether any of our members or readers fancy having a go at making some. It would be nice if we could finish off our November meeting with some Bath buns especially as it will be our last get together before Christmas and the New Year.

Anyone willing to give it a try? Ladies or gentlemen.

I am sure it would make a fitting climax to our activities in 2013 and annotated below is a recipe for guidance only.



As they say on another channel...
.....**'Ready, Steady, Bake!!!'**

Bath Buns were originally made by Dr W. Oliver, an eminent 18th century physician who treated many of the Londoners visiting the Spa at Bath to take the water. He invented a rich, sweet bun that his patients adored. Unfortunately, they ate too many and undid all the good of his treatment. Being a good business man, he then cunningly invented a plain biscuit for his patients, which was not as fattening as the buns. These are known today as Bath Oliver biscuits.

The crunchy sugar scattered over today's Bath buns is a last remnant of the crushed caraway seed comfits which were used to flavour buns as late as the eighteenth century. Comfits were made by dipping aromatic seeds over and over again in boiling sugar until they were thickly coated. There is a recipe for making them together with a list of equipment in Sir Hugh Plat's 'Delight for Ladies' of 1605. Sugared almonds are made in the same way. You can still eat Bath buns at Bath, one of the best known places is in the Pump Room.

Ingredients - Serves 12

- **Batter** -

150 Gram Plain flour (6 oz) - 1 Teaspoon Caster sugar
2 Teaspoons Dried yeast (or 15g fresh yeast)
150 ml Milk, hand-hot (warm if using fresh yeast) (¼ pint)
150 ml Water, hand-hot (warm if using fresh yeast) (¼ pint)

- **Dough** -

275 Gram Plain flour (11oz) - 50 Gram Butter (2 oz)
2 Eggs, beaten - 75 Gram Caster sugar (3 oz)
150 Gram Sultanas (6 oz) - 50 Gram Cut mixed peel (2 oz)

- **Egg glaze** -

1 Egg - 1 Teaspoon Caster sugar - 1 Tablespoon Water
40 Gram Sugar lumps, crushed (1½oz)

Method

Place the batter ingredients in a large bowl. Beat with a wooden spoon until smooth, then leave in a warm place until frothy for about 20 minutes.

For the dough, place the flour in a bowl and rub in the butter until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs.

Add the rubbed in mixture, eggs, sugar, sultanas and mixed peel to the batter. Beat well for about 10 minutes.

Cover and leave to rise for about 1½ hours, or until the dough has doubled in size and will spring back when lightly pressed.

Pre-heat oven to 220°C/425°F/Gas 7 and lightly butter 2 baking sheets.

Beat the dough well for a few minutes. Place tablespoonful's of the dough on the baking sheets. Cover and leave in a warm place for 30 minutes until doubled in size.

Place the egg, sugar and water in a bowl and beat until well mixed.

Uncover the buns and brush with the egg glaze and sprinkle with crushed sugar. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes.

Leave to cool on a wire rack.

Winter & Spring Programme 2013/2014

23rd September 2013

Ian Smales

The History of the Army Photographic Unit in WWII

28th October 2013

Geoff Donald

London's Eccentrics

25th November 2013

Nick Hardey

A Potted History of the Motor Industry

27th January 2014

Martin Davies

The History of Oxford University

24th February 2014

David Scroggie

The City of London; A Century of Change

24th March 2014

Keith Piercy

The Harefield Enclosure of 1812 and 1813

28th April 2014

Annual General Meeting

Followed by something interesting!

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HAREFIELD HISTORY SOCIETY

Meetings on the fourth Monday monthly
from September to April (except December)
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