THE HAREFIELD HERALD

2016

The occasional Magazine of
Harefield History Society

6th Issue

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

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EDITORIAL

The cover will tell you that this is the sixth edition of this magazine.

I just cannot believe that I started this all that time ago, where does the time go? Well someone said 'time flies when you are having fun' so that must be the answer, for it is fun to put this tome together especially now that so many of the members are contributing in various ways. Pictures, sketches and articles and always with the safety blanket of knowing that Rosemary and Philip Causton will produce a finished product the Society should be proud of.

This year's edition is a case in point with practically the whole issue being created from members' contributions for which I thank you very sincerely. This year's Society Award 'Keeping History Alive' was won by a 'Watford scholar' as Rob Brown, Head of History, at the Academy described him and worthily so. What is unique is that the winner attends the Academy as an embryonic Watford F. C. footballer.

Edition number seven will be upon us before we know it, so keep those contributions rolling in and the editorial staff can do it all over again. No rest for the wicked!

Gordon Isaacs

History Society Award Scheme for HAREFIELD ACADEMY

The sixth **'Keeping History Alive'** Award was won this year by Edward Cook pictured below with the Head of History, Rob Brown, and the Chairman.

This student recently took part in a History and Ethics department trip to Krakow, Poland to learn more about life for Jewish people under the Nazis. There, he had the opportunity to meet with a 'Member of the Righteous', an award bestowed by Israel to those who helped Jewish people flee and survive the Holocaust, who had lived through the Nazi occupation of Poland and had helped a Jewish person flee what was almost certain death. Edward's grandfather was also a Member of the Righteous and Edward took it upon himself to search out the speaker to discuss his own grandfather's experiences and the possibility of forging links between surviving members. In addition to this he has worked tirelessly from Year 9 to 11 to make himself the best Historian he possibly can be, he is an example to his other classmates and is a model 'Watford Scholar' at The Harefield Academy.

THE HAREFIELD LIGHT RAILWAY

by Keith Piercy

The drive for the railway came from Bells United Asbestos Company (BUAC), who had prospered at Harefield Mills during World War 1. But the poor roads of Harefield hindered the motorised transport of their raw materials and finished products. Most goods went by road between the Bell Works and Rickmansworth, much transported there by the Metropolitan Railway Company (MRC). In 1921 BUAC informed those concerned, including the MRC, that they were switching to transport by canal and would use the Great Western Railway (GWR) for carrying freight via the Great Western Great Central Joint Committee (GWGCJC)) line.

The goods were transported by canal to Uxbridge, and on to the GWR Uxbridge to Denham Loop to the GWGCJC railway. Bell approached Sir Alexander Gibb, of the Light Railway Investigation Committee, whose enthusiastic support interested the GWR in construction of a light railway. The Local Development and Light Railway Company (LD&LRC) was set up to design and build the railway. One advantage of a light railway was that it could be built without an Act of Parliament. The cheapness of the option meant a lower level of structure and facilities was required.

The *Middlesex County Advertiser and Gazette* on May 26th 1922 published a notice detailing the plans to build the Harefield Light Railway, to be considered at a Public Inquiry in Uxbridge on July 14th 1922, which would recommend whether the railway should go ahead. A letter on May 22nd from the Ministry of Transport gave notice to the affected landowners. By May 31st the scheme and its plan had been placed with relevant councils for interested parties to look at and to register any objections by the end of June. If the Inquiry reported in favour then the Ministry of Transport would publish an Order authorising construction of the line.

Figure 1 shows the plans were for three railways to make up the Harefield Light Railway. **Railway 1** (2 miles 5 furlongs and 3 chains) would go from a Harefield Station along the east side of the canal. It would pass by Harefield Sewage Works and the British Portland Cement Company (BPCC) works (in the chalk quarry on Church Hill). Crossing Broadwater Lane by a level crossing it would skirt Moorhall Farm, and go under a bridge carrying Moorhall Road. Rising on an

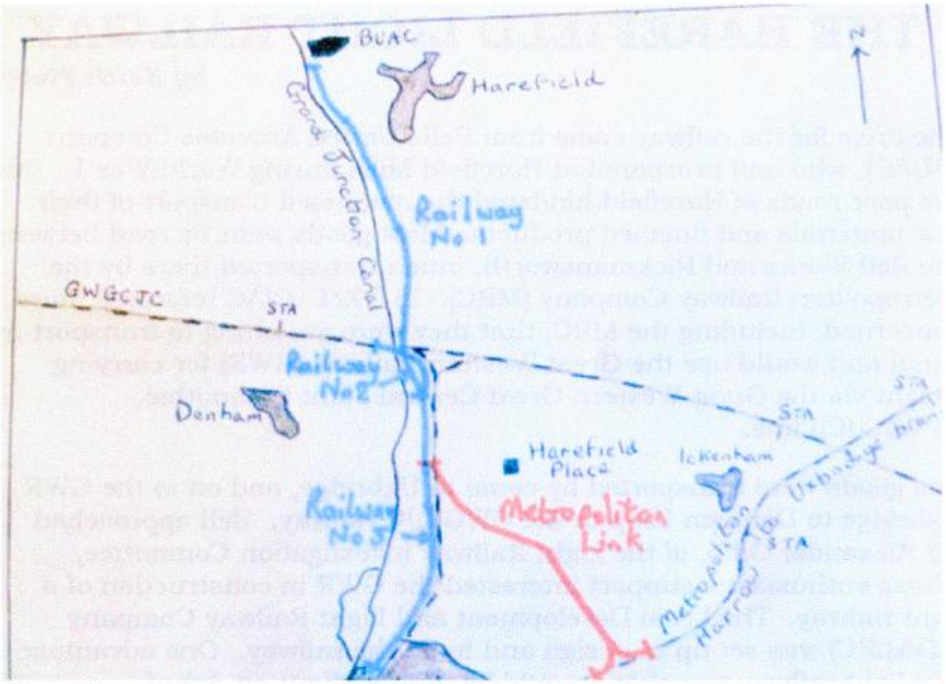


Figure 1

embankment it would pass through an arch of the viaduct carrying the GWGCJC line over the canal, and reach its terminus where it had a junction with the Uxbridge and Denham Loop. **Railway 2** (5 furlongs and 2.8 chains) would go from east of Denham Station across a newly constructed viaduct on the south side of the existing one, and link up with **railways 1** and **3**. **Railway 3** (1 mile 4 furlongs and 6.6 chains) would follow the Uxbridge to Denham Loop from the terminus of **railway 1**, going parallel to the existing single track on the bed for the original second track which had been taken up and sent to France in the war. Total expected costs were £90,753 and 10s. The expected income for the line would have depended on freight traffic, with BUAC bringing over half the income. An annual income of £13,000 less handling costs of £5,000 would give a net revenue of £8,000.

The objections, except in one case, were to aspects and not the overall scheme. Most objections came from the Uxbridge Rural District Council(URDC). A key concern was that the railway would cut off the sewage works by blocking the pipe bringing the effluent down from the village. Another objection was with the proposed bridge carrying Moorhall Road over the railway, which was seen as too narrow with too

steep slopes. A final concern was that the railway would cut through two footpaths coming down from the village to Black Jacks Mill. The BPCC objected, because of the perceived effects on their works and access from the canal via the dock. Finally Sir Francis Alexander Newdigate Newdegate had been upset to find plans for a railway crossing his land, but his objection was reduced to a protection for the historical chapel ruins at Moorhall Farm.

The objection to the whole scheme came from the MRC. They were motivated by the loss of the BUAC freight traffic because of the decision to switch to canal and GWR rail. The Harefield Light Railway would make this loss of traffic permanent. The MRC were determined to prevent the GWR gaining their lost freight and income. They submitted a ten-paragraph petition to the Public Inquiry which argued the Harefield Light Railway would fail economically and financially They did not expect this argument to succeed because the petition stated the Harefield Light Railway would be 'much improved' if there was a link to the Metropolitan's Harrow-Uxbridge branch and proposed that if the Harefield Light Railway were approved the Order should contain a clause allowing the link to be built, guaranteeing the MRC access to the Harefield Light Railway and the BUAC freight traffic.

The MRC lobbied every organisation, (except the LD&LRC), involved with the Harefield Light Railway to push for the proposed link line. They allowed the development of ideas of a fast electric rail link from Harefield to Central London. Access to Uxbridge would be easier because of the link's triangular junction with the Harrow-Uxbridge branch. This lobbying was successful, and at the Public Inquiry all organisations concerned, except the URDC who did not commit, were in favour.

The Public Inquiry considered the case for the railway. It was now proposed to build **railways 2** and **3** only if **railway 1** proved profitable. The LD&LRC were prepared to change their plans to satisfy the objecting parties. The MRC got agreement that a clause would be put into the Order for the Harefield Light Railway, which gave them the right to build their link from the Harrow-Uxbridge branch.

The Public Inquiry recommended that the Harefield Light Railway be built. During the autumn of 1922 the agents and engineers worked successfully to resolve the various objections. In December 1922 the *Harefield Light Railway Order 1922* (a final draft) was published, with the Metropolitan's link included as clause 28. The final *Harefield Light*

Railway Order 1923 was issued in February of that year. The LD&LRC had five years to build the line.

In April 1924 the MRC received a letter from the LD&LRC asking if they would object to the rights, granted by the Order of 1923 to build the Harefield Light Railway, being passed to a third party. This meant that the railway was not going to be built. Of course there was no objection: the Metropolitan had achieved their aim of stopping the **GWR** getting the BUAC traffic permanently.

Why had the LD&LRC given up? The Order required them to spend up to £90,000 to construct the railway and get it working. If the MRC built the link to the Harrow-Uxbridge branch they could take the BUAC traffic and most of any passenger traffic, leaving the LD&LRC inadequate income to cover the costs of running the line, let alone recovering the costs of the capital invested.

Photograph of a Light Railway train from the 1920's era

The right to build the Harefield Light Railway expired in February 1928. By their enthusiastic lobbying the MRC had created expectation of rail travel from Harefield to Central London. In 1927 Harefield Parish Council wrote to the MRC asking whether they planned to build their railway. They received a reply that the increase in railway construction costs meant it was not currently possible, but if things improved a railway might go ahead. In 1928 the soon-to-be-combined Uxbridge Urban and Rural District Councils tried, but the answer was that the costs of railway building and lack of development in the Harefield district ruled out future railway development. A final inquiry by the Uxbridge Urban District Council in 1929 met with clear refusal.

But for the Metropolitan intervention the Harefield Light Railway is the nearest that Harefield village has come to being on the railway: the

capital was available and the objections resolved, and it would have been built. Would it have been successful? All light railways in Britain have either been closed or survive, whole or in part, as heritage lines. Two lines in the Colne Valley which were built, the Uxbridge to Denham Loop and the line from Watford to Rickmansworth High Street, both failed to attract sufficient passengers and freight, so closed. The Harefield line would have surely met the same fate, leaving only a path or trackway following part or all of the line's route, and possibly the remains of a railway bridge at Moorhall Road and a platform in Jack's Lane. BUAC closed down its Harefield Mills site in 1932. The closure came at a time of economic depression, but the lack of good transport links must have had a part in the decision.

In stopping the Harefield Light Railway the MRC seem motivated by spite, and not economic rationality. Their actions help explain the exclusion of Harefield from the suburbanisation of north-west Middlesex. In 1922 they were very occupied with development further into the centre of London. They owned no land in Harefield to sell to developers, and understood the lack of potential in the area for growth of population and industry, making a railway unviable.

For a fuller version of this article please contact Keith Piercy at keith.piercy48@gmail.com who will email you a copy.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

25th April 2016

Nothing much happens at these events that is worth reporting but this year's meeting was rather more significant. The Society is in good health. Financially sound with a membership touching on 50 which is probably as many as we have ever had. After serving as Chairman for the last 12 years Gordon Isaacs decided to stand down and Lorraine Piercy was elected as chairman, woman or person whichever she prefers. Charles Hampshire steps into her shoes as Secretary and the slightly expanded committee consists of Robert Goodchild as Programme Secretary, Andy Harris is the Webmaster plus Trevor Williams, Peter Clare and Richard May. Janet Williams continues as Treasurer. Lee Hermitage proposed from the floor via his proxy Helen Conchar that Gordon should be elected as a Life Member in recognition of his work for the Society and this was approved.

Editor

THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

Report of the Society visit to the National Memorial Arboretum in April

Article by Ann Spencer
Photographs courtesy of Charles Hampshire, John Parkinson, Philip Causton
Sketch by Will Spencer

The coach left Harefield at 8.36 am. We were expecting to arrive at the National Memorial Arboretum by 11 am, in time for the short daily service in the Chapel, followed by an introductory talk, but due to traffic congestion we were delayed, and this did not happen.

Entry to this unique Memorial is free and the site covers 150 acres right on the edge of the National Forest in Staffordshire. The site, which used to be a quarry, was leased in 1994 for a peppercorn rent of £1p.a. for nine hundred and ninety nine years from what was Redland Aggregates. This very large area is divided into various zones which all segue one into the other so you can wander around at will, drawn to whatever takes your interest that you can glimpse in the distance. Most of the Memorials are directly or indirectly connected to our own armed forces, Commonwealth forces, allied forces, and to specific conflicts, but there are some which are not, such as the Stilbirth and Neo Natal Death Charity (SANDS). Private individuals can also dedicate a tree to a loved one.

Being an arboretum trees play a major part. Planting began in 1996 and the site was officially opened in 2001. The trees have yet to achieve anything like maturity and, being a very cold spring, some only gave subtle clues as to what species they were. This made it difficult to appreciate some of the thinking behind some of the choices, as for instance, one or two memorials had been planted with a particular dominant colour. But lines of horse chestnuts are clearly delineated, their heavy wood ideal for use as truncheons. The Douglas Skene grove has some very interesting specimen trees, for instance Sweet Buckeye from S. E. USA and the Barberry from Chile. There's a

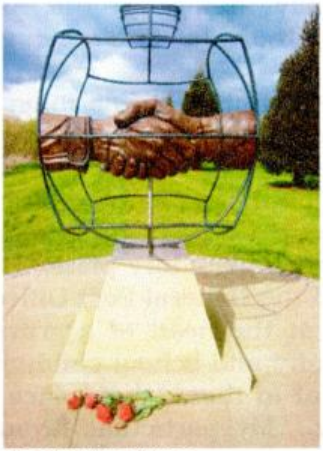
Children's Wood with a play area, and the Allied Special Forces Association Grove which is sub-divided into seven garden areas

The memorial which cannot help but be the main focus, because it is so large and erected on a hill, can be viewed from almost every corner of the Arboretum, is the Armed Forces Memorial. This is undergoing repairs and improvements at the moment and will be re-opened in November this year. But there are over 300 others, most consisting of a statue or sculpture with an explanatory plate, or a walk-in memorial such as the one dedicated to the General Post Office workers which has a small post box standing at the head of a grave filled with stones. Stones are a symbol of eternity and school children bring their stones, dedicated to someone special to them, then place them on the grave-like surround in perpetuity. My particular favourite was The Naval Service Memorial – a glass sculpture with five panels in various blues and greens depicting the five oceans and two other panels representing sunrise and sunset. A separate sculpture shows a young sailor, standing in the 'at ease' posture with head bowed. When the sun's out and for a time each day the glass sculpture's shadow suggests the silhouette of a war ship.

A land train ride after lunch enabled us to visit the far corners. We saw the original track and sleepers from the Burma and Sumatra railways, and nearby the Far East Prisoners of War Memorial Building. The British Legion have a plot where you can dedicate an Everlasting Poppy to a loved one, and the Showmen's Guild of Great Britain have a fun fair horse, commemorating the travelling entertainers who have died in conflict. There are just too many memorials to list. But one of the most poignant memorials is Shot at Dawn which commemorates 306 British and Commonwealth soldiers, shot for alleged cowardice and desertion during WW1. Situated in the eastern corner which catches the first rays of the rising sun, it is a sculpture of a blind-folded young man dressed in trench coat, stripped

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

A few of the poignant Memorials sited in the ARBORETUM



The Christmas Truce
(A Game of Football)

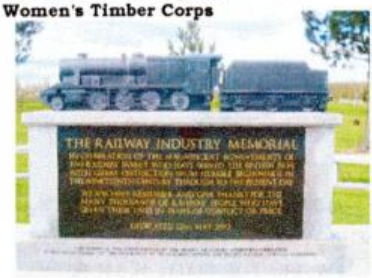
Royal Army Ordnance Corps

Bevin Boys

RNLI

The Post Office

Women's Lane Army and
Women's Timber Corps



The Railway Memorial

Enlarged copy of Information on the
Dunkirk Memorial

3 Elements of the Shot at Dawn Memorial

Gallipoli

LEST WE FORGET

Paratroopers

Burmese Railway

DUNKIRK Memorial

SANDS

NATIONAL MEMORIAL ARBORETUM

of all identification, his hands manacled behind his back and a spot marked in the middle of his chest for the firing squad to aim at. In 2006 they were all granted a group unconditional pardon.

It's too large an arboretum to see all in one day and well worth returning to at a different season. A new Visitor Centre is being built now, to accommodate the increasing number of people, including school parties, who are coming here. One must remember that it is not only an Arboretum in memory of those whose lives were lost or those who sustained injuries in defence of our and our allies' countries, but it is a Memorial Arboretum for everybody who would like to tangibly remember a loved one.

We arrived back in Harefield round about 7 pm after a smooth and uneventful ride home in the coach driven by Patrick. Uneventful, apart from spring hail, thunderous clouds, a duck shepherding her flock of tiny ducklings across the road, and shafts of bright sunshine promising empty promises, but good.

OUR LOCAL HERO – Robert Edward RYDER VC

The story of Robert Edward Ryder is well known to Harefieldians, and a much wider community, but it is very apposite to recall it at this very moment in time. He was born in the Old Workhouse in 1895 and was just 20 years old when he was awarded his Victoria Cross. He was a Private in the 12th Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment when on 26th September, 1916 in Thiepval, during the Battle of the Somme, his company was held up by heavy enemy fire and all his officers became casualties. Without clear leadership the attack was lagging. Private Ryder realising the situation and without any thoughts for his own safety charged the enemy trench and by skilful use of his Lewis gun succeeded in clearing it.

This very gallant act inspired his comrades and made the subsequent advance possible turning what looked like failure into success.

AN IMPORTANT ANNIVERSARY

Commemoration of the Battle of the Somme

Have you noticed the date of the action? **26th September, a century ago.** There was a small ceremony on The Green at the War Memorial at 7pm on that day this year to mark the event. Robert survived the war and served in WW2 as a sergeant. He died in 1978 and lies in a simple grave in St Mary's churchyard.

Gordon Isaacs

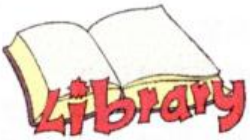
This photograph was taken On the 1st July, 1966 - The 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Somme

From L to R: **Corporal Veal VC, The Reverend Proctor VC, Colonel White VC, Sergeant Ryder VC, Private Hutchinson VC, Colonel Adlam VC**

They all won their Victoria Crosses on the Somme.

In April 1977 Sgt Ryder and Corp Veal were the only two surviving.

Editor



The History of Public Libraries

A talk given to Harefield History Society by Lara Marshall and Len Barron of Harefield Library

Myself and Lara were very lucky and honoured to be invited to give this talk, especially in these days of cuts, closures and redundancies.

With the imposing threat of the ultra modern, staffless, internet-driven 'information hub', it is perhaps important to remember, assess and value the traditional and historical development of the library per se, and also to realise the particular role which one's own local, community resource continues to play in the here and now of book and information provision.

This talk was to be in two parts. The first, by myself, a trot through History in respect of some of the major epochs in relation to libraries; the second, Lara to talk through various pictures and salient dates in Harefield Library's history. The aim of this approach was to display and link the bigger picture with the smaller, i.e. give a sense of Harefield's place in the scheme of libraries' development.

Hence, I began with pre-literate times and the open question of 'Why libraries at all?'. Mesopotamian clay cuneiform tablets were obviously central to the idea of a genesis of archiving/information storage/cultural transmission, and most of the audience, I felt, would be familiar with this as an inception of Western literacy.

However, I was also at pains to stress immediately that history and civilisation are by no means entirely 'linear', permanently progressive and continuously evolving towards more and more 'democratic' ideals; it is the absence of public libraries as we know them which marks the succeeding millennia until the relatively-recent 'right' or desire for them. Hence, my somewhat arbitrary choice of historical periods-Beignnings, Late Antiquity, Byzantine, Constantinople, Islam, The Middle Ages, Renaissance, The Eighteenth Century Enlightenment-stressed that each saw a different emphasis on various types of library and information activity.

For instance, the monastic libraries with their chained books. The Papacy's attitude towards learning and progress in general, and the splendid private libraries of monied individuals down the ages are all

very much at odds with the Victorian and modern notions of public dissemination of learning.

Yet, these private 'learning enterprises' preceded and underpinned-evolved into, if one will - the larger, public domain in time, of course. Having stated this 'chequered' or 'multi shades of grey' aspect of libraries' development, my part of the talk culminated with a recognition of the 1850 Public Libraries Act. A classic piece of mid-Victorian legislation- with its pre-Parliament chicaneries about advisory boards, working committees and drafting of reports-, this empowered local authorities to raise funds legally via 'the penny rate' to provide public libraries.

This was not a binding duty, however, but an option: there was no central government edict to install nationwide public library infrastructure overnight, nor over the decade/s.

And, again, this urge did not come from the working classes or socialist idealism but from the patronage of the middle and Establishment classes, which had a vested interest in protecting their own property and rights against the continuing threats of 'The Mob', 'The Great Unwashed', 'The Swinish Multitude', Chartism, trades unionism, and even revolution, of course!

In this sense, it was hoped that public libraries might meliorate social tension rather than abstractly educate the uneducated.

Finally, a passing mention was given to the philanthropic heritage of Carnegie and others, the capitalist tycoons who likewise saw the need for more public libraries, and who cunningly built their own lasting memorials to themselves in the act of selflessly giving away millions to public concerns.

Here, Lara and I switched over, and she led a talk through a series of photographs related to Harefield Library itself, building in dates which the audience could relate to themselves. She pointed out that the library was opened in 1951 and that this means 2016 is its 65th year! It is likely that a celebration will be held in October as part of the Borough's CultureBite arts and literary festive activities, too!

In 1958, there were plans for a new adjoining health clinic to be built which is now the Park Lane Village Centre (PVLC). Some of the

audience could remember these developments, as could they the library's 25th anniversary in 1976, plus key names like Mr Colehan (Borough Librarian) and Deirdre Whiteman (Harefield's librarian-in-charge).

Moving on to the 80s, a library boat trip on the canal and children's activities in 1989 reminded us that libraries are not always just 'books, books, books', but are hubs of social activity and learning development centres in broader ways, too. From 1991, there was a lovely picture of the children's library decorated for Christmas, including lots of snowmen and hanging snowflakes!

Interestingly, computers would have come in for use by counter staff by this stage, probably since the late 80s, but perhaps not for the public. None is featured in the children's library area, anyway! 'The Information Highway', as it was then known, had still to be fully unfurled in the UK and its public libraries!

Slipping back in time again to the spring quarter, April-June 1958, Lara discussed the relevance of a sheet of statistics for issues of adult fiction and non-fiction. The figures themselves were rather quaintly typed by an 'old school' manual typewriter, with fountain pen corrections and rubber stamping to boot!

Again, this is a reminder of the pre-computer age, and also of how numbers of transactions have risen immensely over the decades; how on earth would we cope today with the tray and ticket system of yesteryear, especially if we dropped them clumsily?!? Computers do have their good points, after all!

The last two slides were also poignant, instructive and nostalgic: a 2002 image of 'The A team', Eileen Smyth, Marjorie Ward and Ruth Lindsay, followed by 'Harefield Library Now' in the 21st century, its newer staff and activities emphasised here.

Lara then wound up proceedings with a reminder that libraries have grown and changed to both fit and be moulded by community needs, leaving us to ponder what the future holds with an 'Any Questions?' coda. The idea of 'Use it or Lose it!' came obviously to the fore here and we trust that Harefield library will continue to evolve positively for many decades to come.

Len Barron

SOCIETY VISIT to the **HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT** **10th November, 2015**

Article and Sketch by Will Spencer

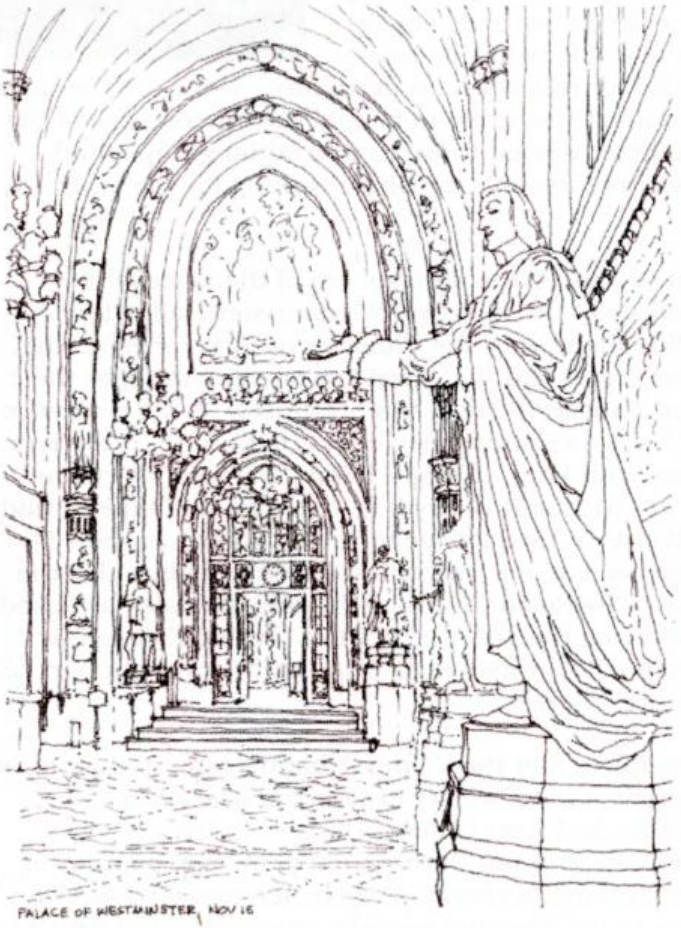
Our early morning tour was jeopardised by the vagaries of our public transport system. The first group to arrive were closely cross examined by The Gatekeepers, but grudgingly allowed through to the severe security check-in procedures for visitors. My penknife was taken away and labelled for collection on departure. Gone are the days when one just strolled in off the street to behold the proceedings of the Mother of All Parliaments. At least those in this initial group could enjoy a coffee in the visitors' restaurant whilst waiting for the others to arrive.

It also gave a moment to absorb the atmosphere of the place whilst standing in the vast space of the medieval Westminster Hall, which survived the fire of 1834 along with the Cloisters of St Stephen's, the Chapel of St Mary Undercroft and the Jewel Tower. It is thought that the site, then safely on Thorney Island, has been used as the residence of royalty from as far back as Canute the Great (1016-1035). However, the original palace was built later during William II's reign. Part was destroyed by the fire in 1512, and Henry VIII, the then incumbent, had to 'borrow' Cardinal Wolsey's York Palace to set up home. In the 13th century the Old Palace became not only a royal residence but also the Parliament of England. The Royal Courts of Justice were also attached around this time. Following the 16th century fire the Old Palace was rebuilt with Westminster Hall at its heart. The Hall is the main part which survives to the present day.

Our party was now complete and the Visitor Administrator gathered us together, provided a guide and off we set to tour the New Palace. Following the second fire, Architect Charles Barry won the reconstruction competition with his Gothic Revival design, popular at the time. This fellow, although a classicist by preference, was put on the list of entrants due to his previous records, one building of which was King Edward's School in Birmingham located in the city centre. The building has been demolished apart from the chapel, which was

taken apart stone by stone and incorporated into the rebuilt establishment next to Birmingham University Campus. I only know this because I went to the school and helped make the chapel furniture in stout English oak.

Barry's design for the new Houses of Parliament included 1100 rooms, 100 staircases and 3 miles of passages grouped round many courtyards on part reclaimed land between Westminster Hall and the river. The Thames frontage is particularly impressive, culminating at the bridge end with Elizabeth Clock Tower, more usually known as Big Ben for its 16 ton bell. Having won his £1,500 prize, Barry set to, joined by Augustus W. N. Pugin, an architect of similar style, who designed much of the Gothic stone detailing and most of the interior decorations and furniture. Work started in 1840 and with many delays and cost overruns took 30 years to complete the major part of what we see today, by which time both architects had died, Barry with a Knighthood. Ohers took up the cudgels and bits and pieces have been added through the remaining 19th century and on into the 20th century. Major restoration works are now underway



WILLIAM PITT (THE ELDER) WELCOMES HAREFIELD HISTORY SOCIETY

at staggering cost. The complex was listed Grade 1 in 1970 and it became part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.

Our tour first took us up two large staircases into St Stephen's lobby and then up another into St Stephen's Hall, the sides flanked by many statues of past Prime Ministers (see sketch). This led us into the pivotal Central Lobby, with one side leading to the House of Commons and opposite on the other to the House of Lords. We were steered down Peers Corridor into the latter complex, circumnavigating the Chamber to the Victoria Hall and Royal Gallery beyond. On the return we were allowed in The Lords itself, and sat on the red leather seats whilst learning more of its arcane procedures evolved over the centuries. The Commons chamber was not available during the tour, so we were brought back to Central Lobby. This was originally called the Octagon Hall due to its shape, where our guide released us to pick up the next group.

Those in the know advised that if we stayed among the gathering crowd we would be witness to the Speaker of the House with his clerks and entourage making his stately progress through the Hall to the Commons, which duly happened and was most impressive. Nick Hurd, our MP joined us at this point, looking very presentable in the House's formal dress code of shirt, tie and suit.

He kindly helped in our quest to join a time slot to access the Visitors' Gallery. At the appointed time we climbed yet more stairs under the watchful eye of the Ushers and took our places, gazing down through bullet proof glass to the green leather seated Chamber below. Proceedings for the day were already underway, which were clearly audible through the speaker system. MP Anne Soubry, Conservative Minister for Small Business was putting the Government's case across to only a modest collection of her fellows. The Frenchman with his family sitting next to me was bemused by Members on all sides of the House standing up for a few seconds and then sitting down. My explanation that they wished to make comment and the up-down motion registered their wish and the hope that the Speaker would call them to contribute seemed to satisfy him. For then he was keen to know if I wished to remain in the EU or not.

The morning concluded with lunch for some in the Visitors' Restaurant, having already tasted the way we are governed, followed by a walk round the small exhibition area and a visit to the shop. The homeward journey proved less traumatic.

Winter & Spring Programme 2016/2017

26th September 2016
Professor Dany Nobus
The First 50 Years 1966 – 2016
The Story of Brunel University

24th October 2016
Ian Smales
The Middlesex Regiment (the Die-Hards)

28th November 2016
Nick Hardey
History of the Orchestra

2017

23rd January 2017
Andy Harris
Harefield – a personal perspective

27th February 2017
Justine Bayley
The Great Barn at Harmondsworth
Past, Present and Future

27th March 2017
Professor James Knowles
Alice, Countess of Derby and Harefield
Myths, Marriages and Milton

24th April 2017
Annual General Meeting
Followed by something interesting

"OUR VISION IS YOUR VISION"

We are David and Elizabeth Baddeley, a husband and wife Optometric team with more than 40 years of combined expertise. Simply: our vision is your vision!

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HAREFIELD HISTORY SOCIETY

Meetings on the fourth Monday monthly from

September to April (except December)

at the

Park Lane Village Centre, Harefield,

commencing at 8pm.

Chairman: Lorraine Piercy, (01895 822371)

Secretary: Charles Hampshire (01895 821351)
4 Barrington Drive
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Treasurer: Janet Williams, (01895 820304)

Magazine Editor:
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