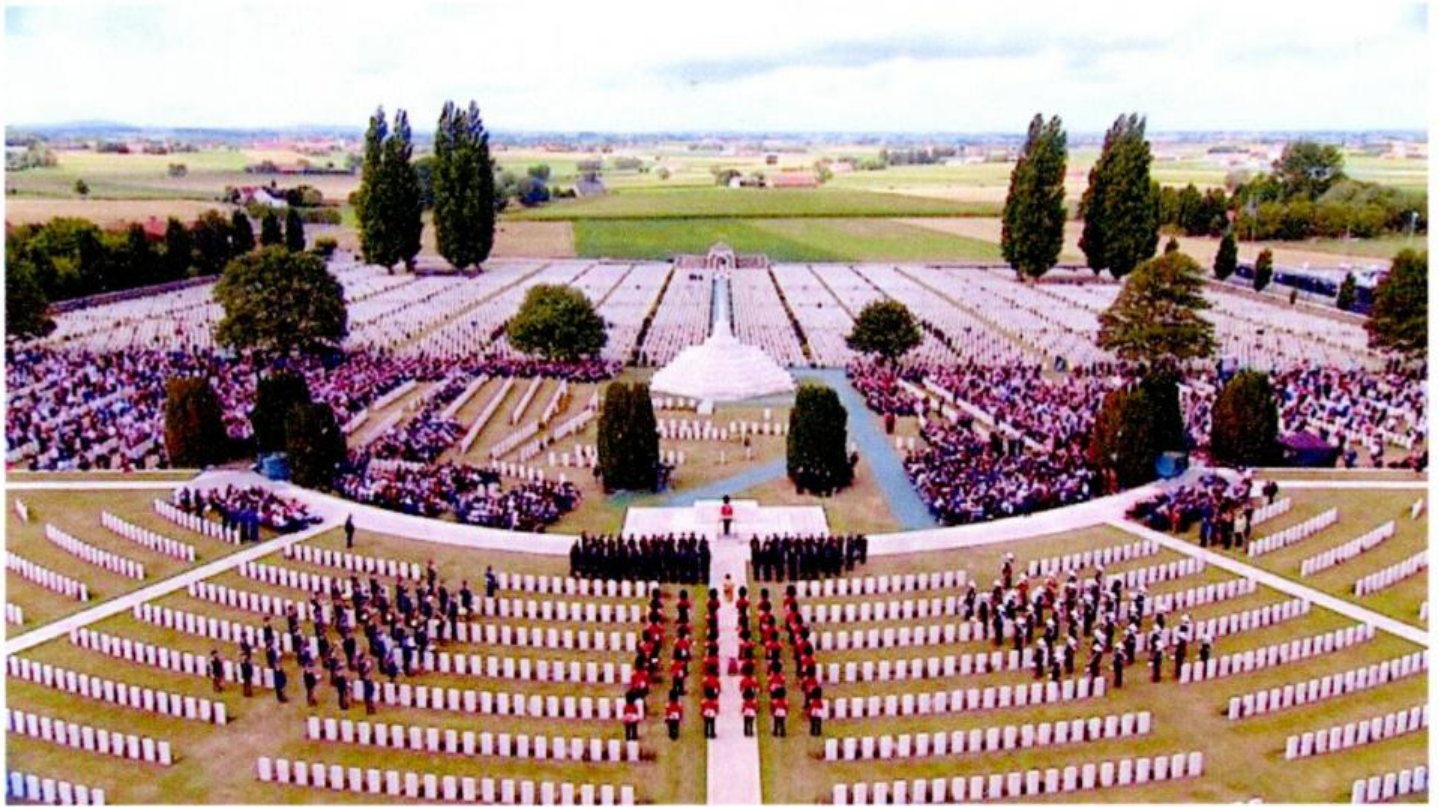


# THE HAREFIELD HERALD



## 2017

The occasional Magazine of  
**Harefield History Society**

7th Issue

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



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# EDITORIAL



Where does the time go? Here we are again with the seventh issue of the 'Herald' and many thanks to all who answered my call for articles and sketches, I apologise for the slightly later publication than usual due to the heart surgery I underwent. Please forgive me! I hope you find the contents interesting and informative and I sincerely thank all the many contributors for their co-operation.

I asked Andy Harris to write a piece explaining the workings and contents of our website which I think has been rather a dark secret to many, certainly to me. In conjunction with Lyn Gadd I introduced the 'Keeping History Alive' award to the Academy in 2011 to spread the Society's image and involvement in the village and to encourage students to read history here and in higher places. Despite somewhat less than total support from the committee – at that time - the Award has survived and Rob Brown, the current Head of History, writes in this issue of the good effect it has had on his students.

No editorial would be complete without expressing our thanks to Rosemary and Philip Causton for their wonderful work in actually putting this magazine together and producing the finished article. We are very much in their debt.

Keep your contributions coming in which are always welcome and without them this would be a much slimmer 'Herald'.

I hope you read and enjoy and don't forget your 'Letters to the Editor' are always welcome.

**Gordon Isaacs**



## **Growing up along the Canal in Harefield, from 1944 onwards.**

*A personal account  
from Sue Seward.*

As a family we didn't have much to do with people who lived at the top of the hill or down towards the other side where ACROW's used to be. At my side were the Bell Works and Cape



Asbestos Pipe factory, Winston's also. Most of the menfolk worked in one of these factories. Our houses, then called Riverside Cottages, used to belong to the Bell Works. As my dad used to be a welder there he was able to rent one of the cottages.

Something that I remember quite vividly is at times in the day a very loud hooter would blast. It may have been a siren during the War. We had a great deal of flying bombs landing in the lakes. If we were on our way down the hill we would be met by hundreds of men, all looking exactly alike with brown caps, brown suits and bikes, on their way home.

There was a veranda beside the canal alongside the factory (where the new houses are now). The men used to sit and smoke, and even have their sandwiches, in the sun. I used to be so frightened to walk past along the tow-path I'd not go home sometimes. The reason for this was the wolf whistles that used to ring out. It wasn't called sexual harassment then just good fun, for the men anyway.

Back to childhood, we were not in much. The things my brother and I got up to were mostly water related. We had a tin bath that the family used to bathe in; however we used it for much more exciting things. Keith is seven years older than I am and taught me all about boating and fishing. We used to put the bath into the river or the canal and paddle all over the area. Often taking it, over the small part of land, that divides the river and lake, into the lake.



When my brother wanted to get out and hunt or do whatever boys do, he used to turn the bath/boat upside down so it wouldn't float away. Our dad went looking for him, after dark, often only to find the bath overturned with no sign of my brother. My dad taught me to swim in the lake. He would stand in the freezing cold water while I doggie paddled round him and back to the bank. (I had to didn't I?) The water was always black and full of weeds. Large ants crawled all over the bank. I did learn to swim but have never liked not being able to put my feet down onto something solid.

Another trick we had was to befriend the "Bargees" and they would throw out a rope and we would hang onto it till we reached the next lock. The boats were sometimes still being towed by beautiful, strong horses but also by engines that had been introduced.

There was a great sandy landing area, just like a beach, which had formed when the ballast dredgers were cleaning the gravel as it was graded ready to sell. All these places were reached by a set of canoes my brother made. He had a workshop and made them with canvas while using the "shed" for his skiffle group. Lonnie Donegan was all the vogue then.

Both the lakes and canal had loads of fish in them then. I do remember one year (which one I'm not sure) when most of the fish were killed, all at once, and floated to the surface. It was a poison put into the water by one of the factories. On the whole the water seemed quite clean and clear. Sometimes we would see a dead dog or cat floating by as people then used to keep the domestic animal population down by drowning the extra ones. Vets were not often used to spay animals.

Our parents must have been in constant fear that either one of us would fall into the canal and drown, even though we both learned to swim at a young age. My mother was standing at the kitchen sink where we all washed, looking out across the river and the lakes when she spotted a dark figure in the middle of the lake. After a few minutes she realised that it was my brother sitting astride a railway line sleeper, using it as a boat to explore the lake. Not sure if he could swim at that time.

He often came home with a dead rabbit or large fish that we ate. People ask me if I was ever hungry, as the War had only just ended, but we were not. Dad had a beautiful allotment as well as a



large garden. As well as all our vegetables he kept loads of chickens and at one time even had ducks they were free range with all the water. Keith used to go out shooting pigeons and tried to show me how to ambush them as they flew over crops and trees. When we took them home they were always full of lead pellets. It was not unusual to bite into our lovely pie onto a nasty piece of lead.

Dad also used to cut wood up into logs in a large log shed in the garden. He would put a whole tree trunk into a hole at one side and push it through cutting it into logs as it went. The fire in our living room was the only heating. Fires were not often used upstairs although the fireplaces were there. Mum had a copper in



the corner of the lean-to or kitchen, which we had to light a fire under to heat the water for washing. Because it was boiled it was always dazzling white.

*The Coy Carp Pub* used to be called *The Fisheries Inn*, which it was while I was growing up. I can remember a family living

and running it as an Inn and Pub. Although never allowed into the Pub area I did go into the Living area, as the girl who lived there, called Susan, used to be my friend. Outside and across the river was what used to be called the *Fisheries Field*. It was home to one of Harefield's four football teams. While my brother was growing up, before he went into the National Service, he used to play for one of them. Dad used to play dominoes too. Quite a lot of social activity was housed in the pub.

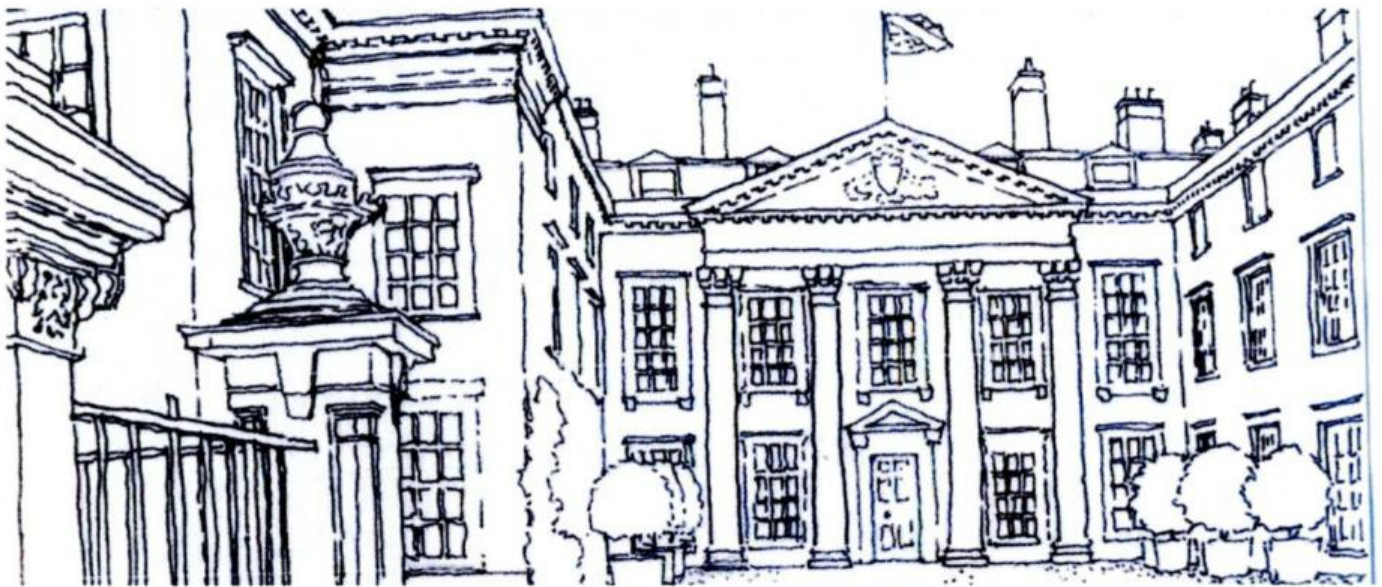
There is still a tunnel of water which runs from alongside the Bell Works and other buildings. It may have been some kind of sluice gate. It was used to generate electricity for the factories there, its used for canoeing now. The many boats which used the canal while we were children were horse drawn and carried coal. It always fascinated me that the boats were low with not much visible above the surface of the water when they were full, but high and showing their true shape when empty.

**Sue Seward,  
29<sup>th</sup> January, 2017.**



**Harefield History Society's visit to  
THE ALTHORP ESTATE,  
Northamptonshire.**

*Saturday 29 th July 2017*



***Althorp House***

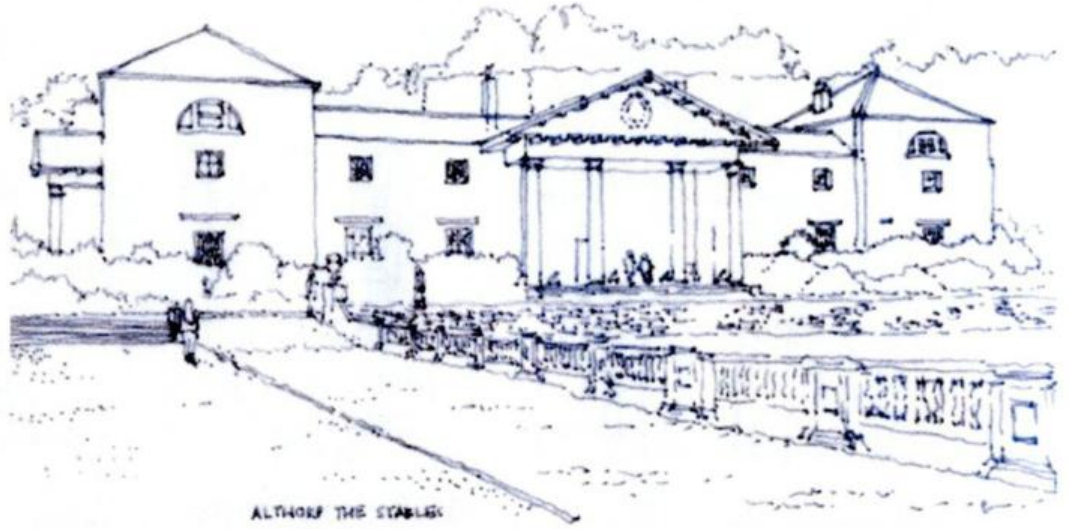
The coach picked us up at the usual place, the Harefield green, on a rather blustery July day. Our first stop was at the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Great Brington, close to the Althorp Estate. We had been invited to coffee and a talk about the connection to the Spencers and also to George Washinton, the first President of the United States.

The Church was 300 years old when Althorp House was built by Sir John Spencer in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, and warrants a visit on its own account. He also built the Spencer Chapel within the Church in which 19 generations of Spencers are laid to rest amongst a unique collection of heraldic blazoning. However, its connection to George Washington is flimsier and is made more of by the Americans than by us. As far as I can tell, the connection is thus: "The patriarch of the early Washingtons in Northamptonshire was Lawrence Washington...and, through his mother's brother, first cousin to Katherine Kitson, wife of Sir John Spencer." \* One of Lawrence's sons emigrated to Virginia in 1656 and became great great grandfather to George Washington. That, in a nutshell, as I understand it, is the Washington connection. Sir John Spencer built Althorp House in 1508 which has given his family, through 5 centuries and 19 generations, firm roots and a home which has gradually accumulated great treasures, including art, porcelain



and books. Sir John was a wealthy man through successful sheep farming, and already had friends in high places. His subsequent family seems always to have occupied secure positions in the upper echelons of society and to have mixed easily with those in high political and social positions. But the marriage of one of its daughters to the Prince of Wales is certainly the high point of the family's lineage.

The estate consists of twenty-eight listed buildings and structures, plus farms and surrounding hamlets. The main House is enormous and may not appeal



to everybody. The entrance hall is rather dark and dismal and dominated by a staircase rising to the second floor which includes an art gallery. Over the centuries many of the valuable collection has had to be sold, but it still contains works by Van Dyke, Rubens, Stubbs and Joshua Reynolds amongst many others. Most of the paintings are portraits, and my main impression of them was one of traditional ancestral gloom. This was somewhat lifted when peeking into some of the guest bedrooms and dining rooms which looked beautifully maintained, extremely House and Garden'ish, lived in and – grand! Another covetable room is the main living room on the ground floor. This seems to be where the family spends a lot of its time, and is a delight.

The space is vast but elegantly divided up into smaller, intimate areas of various activities. There were at least two fireplaces with comfy sofas; a corner containing a generous-sized working desk with reference books scattered about; another corner containing a table with stacks of the usual family games, scrabble, monopoly etc; and a drinks trolley. But what a trolley! Not the usual half drunk dusty bottle of port opened a few years ago. Nor the garish colours of souvenir liqueurs of some dubious provenance from past holidays. But shining bottles of welcoming refreshments, beautiful decanters, neat little tins and delicate crystal glasses lined up



hospitably, waiting to be used. I liked the room because it could accommodate lots of people doing different things at the same time. Spacious but intimate too.

The gardens round the house are mainly lawn with a few borders; perhaps there are some elsewhere in the grounds, but 13,000 acres is a lot to cover in a day. Diana has been interred on a small island in the middle of the Round Oval Lake and her burial place is marked with a white memorial plinth and urn.

Diana's life and charitable work has been commemorated in its own space. A small room off the stable courtyard leads into a passageway along which one long side is entirely taken up with a glassed-in wall-cabinet. Inside this are an unbelievable number of tomes which are books of condolences from all over the world. Books came in from governments, embassies, schools, private individuals, companies, and organisations from every walk of life. And those on display here are only a fraction of the total. Beyond this room is another with enlargements of Mario Testino's famous portraits of her. And beyond this is a room with videos showing some of the young people who have benefitted from her charity work. It all brings her very much to life.

If it were not for Diana's marriage to Prince Charles, I doubt that Althorp would register very much on the nation's consciousness, unlike the way that Blenheim Palace or Chatsworth does. The Spencer family, firmly rooted in their Northamptonshire Estate, have quietly got on with living their lives as a backdrop and major support system to royalty and distinguished politicians, buying and selling their valuable collections as their fortunes waxed and waned. Whilst we were there, two book-signing sessions were held by the present Earl Spencer who writes books on Althorp and associated history; but, as with most great houses, one was aware of the financial struggle to keep such a place going as a viable family home and business.

The journey home was uneventful and we arrived back at Harefield, driven by a careful and excellent driver.

*\*from the booklet "The Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin, Great Brington".*

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# 1917 - 2017

There are many centennial anniversaries that fall this year, some of momentous importance and everlasting effect. The Russian Revolution started in November; the USA at last entered the Great War in April and they were quickly embroiled on the Western Front particularly in the Ypres salient. The remarkable Vera Lynn was born in East London, and this small selection just goes to show what diverse events took place that year. But perhaps the most important of all was the battle of Passchendaele, also known as the third battle of Ypres in Belgium which started on the last day of July and continued until 10<sup>th</sup> November.

Earl Haig was the overall commander-in-chief and his plan was to reach the Belgian coast to destroy the German submarine bases which were home to the U-boats that had caused so much loss of lives, shipping and supplies in the Atlantic to the Allied convoys. Earl Haig's campaign commenced with a very heavy artillery barrage along the front but it failed to destroy the German fortifications. It was a repeat of the Gallipoli error when Churchill thought they could break the Turks down by a heavy opening bombardment. That did not work either. So the infantry started an attack on the last day of July but nature was against them. The heaviest rain for thirty years in that area turned the battlefield into a quagmire. The land was heavy clay and the mud just got thicker and thicker. Tanks were immobilised and horses were sucked into the morass and drowned.

Stalemate occurred for two to three months. British and Canadian troops captured what was left of the village of Passchendaele and soon afterwards Haig called off the offensive. 325,000 Allied troops and 260,800 German casualties were the result of this nugatory campaign. Haig's tactics were deeply controversial but it was this last battle that ultimately led to the armistice. 90,000 dead were never identified and 212,000 were never recovered. The Tyne Cot War Cemetery (see front cover) is the last resting place for so many lives lost in a futile campaign.

The Prime Minister, Lloyd George, was very much against the campaign and wrote in his memoirs 'Passchendaele was indeed one of the great disasters of the war. No soldier of any intelligence can now defend this senseless campaign'.

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Many people are of the opinion that Earl Haig was so smitten by his conscience over the dead and wounded that he started the Earl Haig Fund which led to the Poppy Appeal and the British Legion.

War solves nothing and the Great War – the war to end all wars - certainly did not

**Gordon Isaacs**



**Earl Haig**

**Tyne Cot War Cemetery**

## Vera Lynn Quiz

- 1 What was Vera's surname when she was born?
- 2 What is the date of her birth?
- 3 In which district of London was she born and brought up?
- 4 At what age did she make her first public performance?
- 5 Name the musician she married in 1941?
- 6 They met whilst both appearing with whose famous dance band?
- 7 She has one daughter. what is her name?
- 8 In which year was she made a Dame of the British Empire?
- 9 She has only ever had one No.1 in the UK singles chart. What was it?
- 10 True or false. She has a steam locomotive named in her honour?

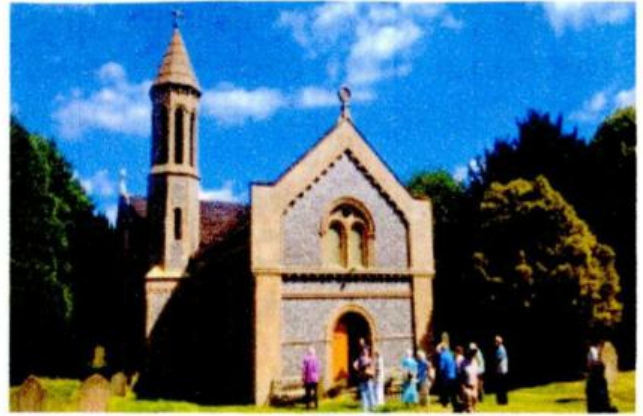


### ANSWERS:

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Vera Welch                                  |
| 2  | 20 March 1917                               |
| 3  | East Ham                                    |
| 4  | Seven                                       |
| 5  | Harry Lewis who died in 1998                |
| 6  | The Band of (Bert) Ambrose                  |
| 7  | Virginia                                    |
| 8  | 1975  |
| 9  | 'My Son, My Son' - 1975                     |
| 10 | It is true and is housed in North Yorkshire |



## A visit to St Thomas of Canterbury Church at West Hyde.



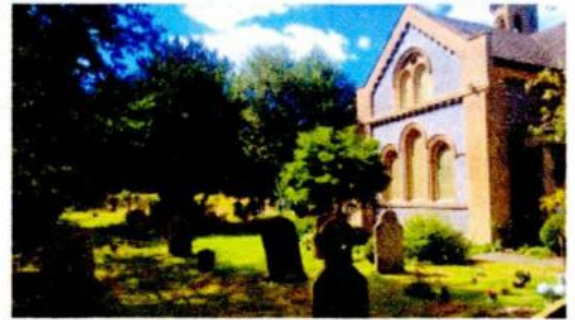
It was a sunny August (2016) day and our tour began in the churchyard where we were able to



admire some of the best knapped flint walls in the country. (see picture to the left) The Church also boasts an unusual open tower with gargoyles looking down.

The Churchyard is quite peaceful, apart from road noise from the A412, mostly

grassed and with some splendid trees.



The Church was dedicated on 6 May 1845 and cost £1,800. Local worthies having decided in 1842 that West Hyde needed its own church instead of being dependent on the good offices of the vicars of Harefield, Rickmansworth, Denham and Chalfont St Peter. It was recorded that "The nearest place of worship was three miles distant meaning that a considerable proportion of the inhabitants never attended a church service and were precluded from doing so in wet weather".

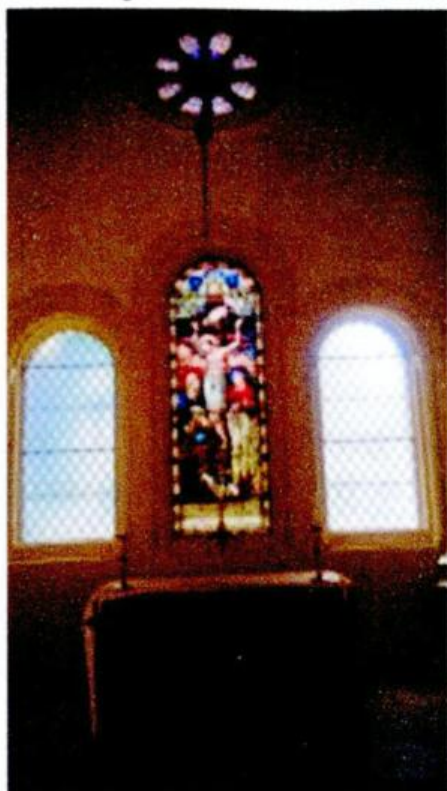
Money for the church was raised by public appeal and included £20 from Queen Victoria's mother. St Thomas's Hospital owned all the surrounding farmland and offered an acre of their Further Bottom Field as a site.

Around this time, West Hyde had a population of c 400 people, mostly farmworkers, although a few grew watercress, quarried lime or shod horses. Over a quarter of the population lived in thirty houses alongside where the Royal Oak now stands.

In 1852 the Church was transferred from the Bishop of London's Diocese to the Diocese of Rochester, and in 1877 to the newly formed diocese of St Albans.



We then had a tour of the Church's interior, heard a talk about its history and were able to ask questions. We were then invited to have tea and cake, a welcome feature of any History Society trip.



The interior is relatively plain with some pleasing stained glass windows, and angelic ceiling mouldings.



West Hyde remains a very small community and the number of parishioners attending services is typically about 30. St Thomas's is one of three churches in the Parish of Mill End and Heronsgate with West Hyde, and it is the only parish in the diocese with three churches.

Further pictures of the church can be found at:

<http://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/98113>

*Charles Hampshire*

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## **AUTUMN 2017 EVENTS in Harefield Library**

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October  
Village Scrapbooks Day**

10am to 4pm at Harefield Library. Refreshments available

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October  
Culture Bites Event  
Hillingdon's Heritage**

**The New RAF Bunker Museum**

11am to 12 noon, Dan Stirland, Senior Curator  
Refreshments available

**FREE. Book now on 01895 558184 or speak to  
Harefield Library Staff**



# **The Harefield History Society Website**

*by Andy Harris*

I am sure that members will be well aware that the society has had its own website on the internet for well over a year now. But I wonder how many members have actually had a look to see what it's all about. In this article I will try to explain why we have a website, what sort of information can be found there and how you can access it yourself.

There are really two reasons why it is a good idea for an organisation to have a website. The first is to provide a central place where information relevant to members can always be found. Examples include the date and subject of the next meeting, the full programme of events for the current season, booking details for outings, etc.. The second reason, equally important, is to provide a way for anybody, wherever they are in the world, to find us and make contact. They may be researching their family tree, or looking for information about our church or the hospital. The website provides details of who we are, what we do and enables them to make contact with us. The process has already enabled us to link up with several interesting people who, without the website, we would never have known.

So, now to some specifics. Obviously, if you are not currently a computer user then some of the following might not be very interesting. However, here we go.

The official internet address (known technically as the URL), is as follows.

[www.harefieldhistorysociety.co.uk](http://www.harefieldhistorysociety.co.uk)

Alternatively, you can use Google to search for Harefield History Society. (You may see the URL written as – [www.harefieldhistorysociety-webplus.net](http://www.harefieldhistorysociety-webplus.net) . This is also correct but could change in the future. The official URL will never change.)

Shown on the next page is the HOME screen. Here you will see some pretty pictures, a welcome message and at the bottom, current messages for members.





Welcome to the Harefield History Society

If you live in or near our lovely village and are interested in history, (local, national or international), then why not come along to one of our meetings and see how you find us (we definitely don't bite!). Our forthcoming programme of meetings can be found by clicking the 'Programme' link at the top of this page.

Alternatively, you can phone our Chairman or Secretary whose details you will find by clicking the 'About Us' link.

**21<sup>st</sup> October 11am - noon**  
 Talk at Harefield Library on the  
 New RAF Bunker Museum (Click for info)

**Next meeting - 23<sup>rd</sup> October: A talk entitled**  
**The History of Harefield Hospital**  
**by Andrew Willis**

All the rest of the stuff, and there is a lot of it, is hidden behind the six menu items along the top of the screen. They are :- **Home, About Us, How to join, Programme, Resources & contacts**

**Home** – brings you back to the Home page from wherever you are.

**About Us** - has information about the society. There are also three other buttons which you can click to see the committee members, our meeting place & a map.

**How to Join** - is fairly self explanatory.

**Programme** – has an up-to-date list of society meetings plus other society activities, outings and other village events which may be of interest to members.

**Resources** – This is the big one. Here you will find the following:-

**Harefield Herald** – all past issues.

**Society Newsletters** - from 1980 (just a few missing issues).

**Harefield Essays** - written by Margaret Evans in the 1980s.

**Local History Books** – a long list of interesting books.

**Publications by Society members** – just a couple at the moment.

**Miscellaneous** – all sorts of interesting things here.

**Links to Harefield Organisations** – eg churches, schools etc.

**Links to other web sites** – other societies, national archives etc.

**Contacts** – this is the link through which anyone can contact the society.



# History Society Award Scheme for HAREFIELD ACADEMY



**The Keeping History Alive Award 2017 winner was Amber Harvey, in Year 11. Pictured with Rob Brown, Head of History and Lorraine Piercy, History Society Chairman**

Amber was chosen due to her deep rooted passion for the subject and her resolute application in her studies.

Since winning her award in February of 2017, Amber has gone on to receive an A\* in her History GCSE examinations, as well as achieving 7 A's in other GCSE subjects and was awarded a level 9, the top award for the new GCSE, in Mathematics. She is currently studying both History and Classical Civilisation at A-Level at The Harefield Academy.

Amber said of the award 'I was really pleased to be nominated and receive the award. It was nice to receive recognition for the hard work I had put in.'

Of all the previous winners of the award over the last few years, the recipients have all been proud to receive their awards and have gone on to study history at A-Level and beyond. The award is a fantastic way to promote the study of history and to truly **keep history alive.**

***Robert Brown, Head of History, The Harefield Academy.***



# **Commemoration of the Centenary of the Battle of Passchendaele & Cecil John Kinross, VC**

**Monday 30 October 2017  
7:00-7:30pm**

**War Memorial, Harefield Green**

**A short commemoration will take place  
on the centenary of Cecil John Kinross's action at the  
Battle of Passchendaele, Belgium, on 30 October 1917  
for which he was awarded the VC**



**Cecil John Kinross 17/02/1896-21/06/1957**

**Cecil John Kinross was born at Dews Farm in Harefield. He moved to Loughheed, Alberta, in 1912 with his parents and siblings. He recovered from his wounds at Passchendaele and returned to Canada where he died and was buried in 1957.**

**It is appropriate to remember the WW1 Battle of Passchendaele (also known as the 'Third Battle of Ypres') on its centenary. It lasted from 31 July 1917 until 10 November 1917.**





# **Winter & Spring Programme 2017/2018**

**25<sup>th</sup> September, 2017**

Richard Farmery MBE  
The Spinney at Harefield Cricket Club

**23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2017**

Andrew Willis  
The History of Harefield Hospital

**27<sup>th</sup> November, 2017**

Dr Brian D'Olier  
Flight from Nazi Germany 1937 to 1942

## **2018**

**22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2018**

Andy Harris  
Harefield Photograph & Postcard Archive update

**26<sup>th</sup> February, 2018**

Beatrice Holloway  
Lifestyle of Boat People 1850 – 1920 Canal History

**26<sup>th</sup> March, 2018**

Father Jim Mulligan  
The Golden Anniversary of St Paul's R.C. Church, Harefield

**23<sup>rd</sup> April, 2018**

Research into your Family History  
Members of Hillingdon Family History Society  
& Harefield History Society

**21<sup>st</sup> May, 2018**

Annual General Meeting  
Followed by Refreshments  
& a showing of our Canal Walk DVD



OUR VISION  
IS  
YOUR VISION



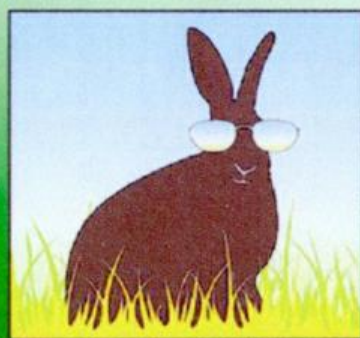
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# HAREFIELD HISTORY SOCIETY

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  
Harefield  
UB9 6RL

**Treasurer:** Janet Williams, (01895 820304)

**Magazine Editor:**

Gordon Isaacs (01895 825501) ) CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOMED

e-mail: [maygor@btinternet.com](mailto:maygor@btinternet.com) )