

THE HAREFIELD HERALD



Arbury Hall

2018

The occasional Magazine of
Harefield History Society

8th Issue

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EDITORIAL



Do you remember Victor Meldrew, that old grump on TV? His catchphrase came to my mind when I realised this is our eighth edition. "I **don't** believe it!" Can it really be that long. Anyway here is the latest offering and I really would appreciate some come back from you, dear reader. Have you noticed how many banks, companies etc ask you to give them a feedback afterwards so I am following suit. In all the preceding years I have virtually received no reactions from you, Not good, Not bad, Not even so-so. Don't you care? Let me know what you think. It says on the back page that contributions are welcome. So contribute.

I am launching what I hope will become a series this month called 'Reliving History' This will only become a series if you come on board and tell me all of your favourite reliving history experiences. My Rorke's Drift recollection starts it off. I know a lot of major battles are filmed and my choice hit the cinemas as 'Zulu'. It is a very good film but it was not filmed where the battle occurred but elsewhere in the Drakensbergs. You cannot beat being at an actual site. So do let me have your contributions. Why are you all so shy?

I must once again thank Rosemary and Philip Causton for their sterling and tireless efforts. We work together very harmoniously: they do not just produce and print but we work together in deciding lay-out, pictures. Everything. We are doing our best for you all. Now is the time for some reciprocation..

Thank you,

Gordon Isaac

Harefield History Society's visit to ARBURY HALL, Warwickshire.

Monday 9th July 2018



ARBURY HALL GARDENS

Wooded walks and lakes provide the visitors with a superb example of the informal style of late 18th century English landscape gardening

It was 9am and already hot while we waited for our coach on the village green, keeping in the shade of the trees. Eventually the coach arrived some 45 minutes late due to a burst water main nearby.

Once on the way, and joined by a group from Denham, Robert handed out copies of the Newdegate Family Tree. Some of us had attended a talk in our village church a few nights earlier to have the Newdegate memorials explained; the earliest dated 1545. All are mounted high on the walls so binoculars would have helped to read them.

Arbury Hall is probably the best house in Warwickshire and is especially interesting with its family connections to Harefield.

A brief history of Arbury Hall

Founded in the reign of Henry II as a monastery (1154-1189).

Confiscated by Henry VIII in 1536.

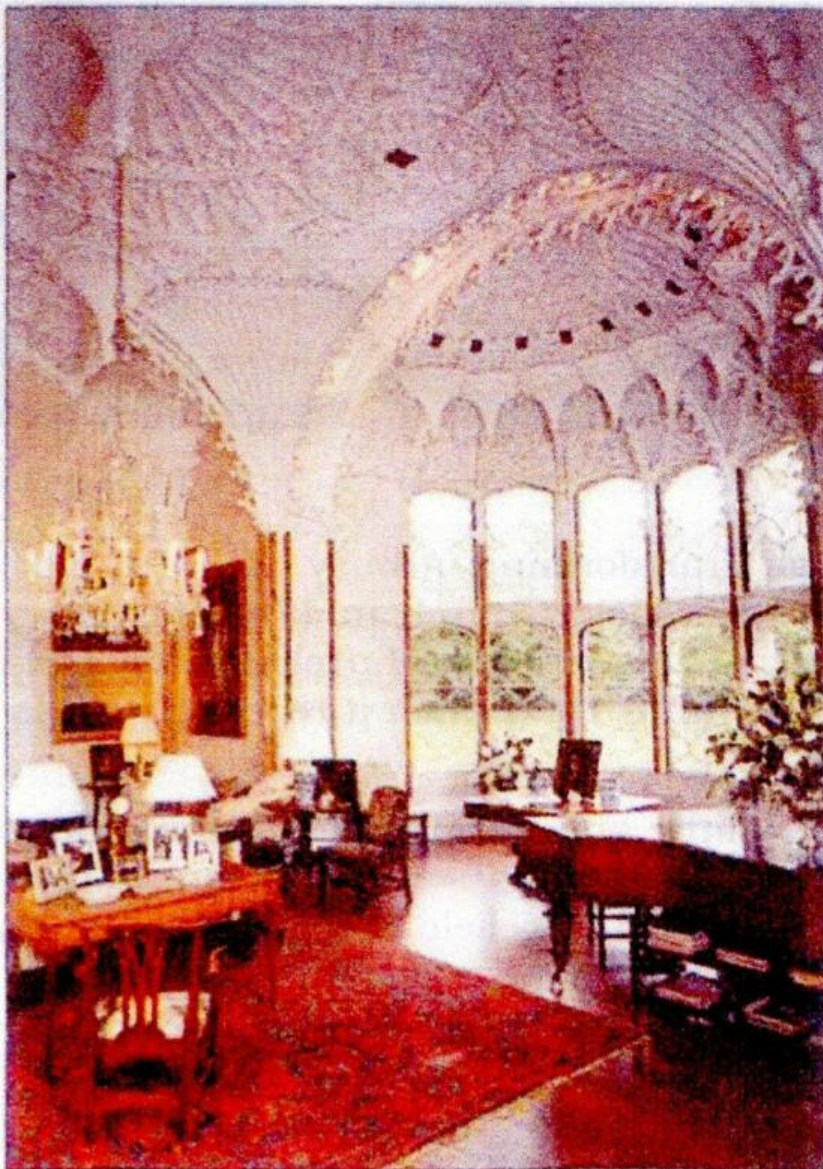
Bought by Edmund Anderson, a lawyer, who totally rebuilt it in the Elizabethan style. Later he needed to live nearer to London when he was appointed Chief Justice of the Common Plea by the Queen and in 1582 exchanged it for Harefield Place owned by John Newdegate. Many years later a descendant of his, Sir Roger Newdegate, after a grand tour of Europe, returned to Arbury and converted it to the Gothic style. This was a major work and took from 1748-1805;

nothing structural has changed since. Having said that the Newdegates moved to Arbury Hall in an "escape to the country" and much later changed it to Gothic, this is now the main attraction. Think of English cathedrals with their unique fan vaulting. There is plenty of that at Arbury.

We arrived at Arbury Hall later than intended and were ushered straight into a large room above the stable block, the entrance to which was designed by Sir Christopher Wren. The tables were set in a 'U'-formation with white linen cloths and we helped ourselves to sandwiches and cakes, tea and coffee, all very welcome.



THE STABLES

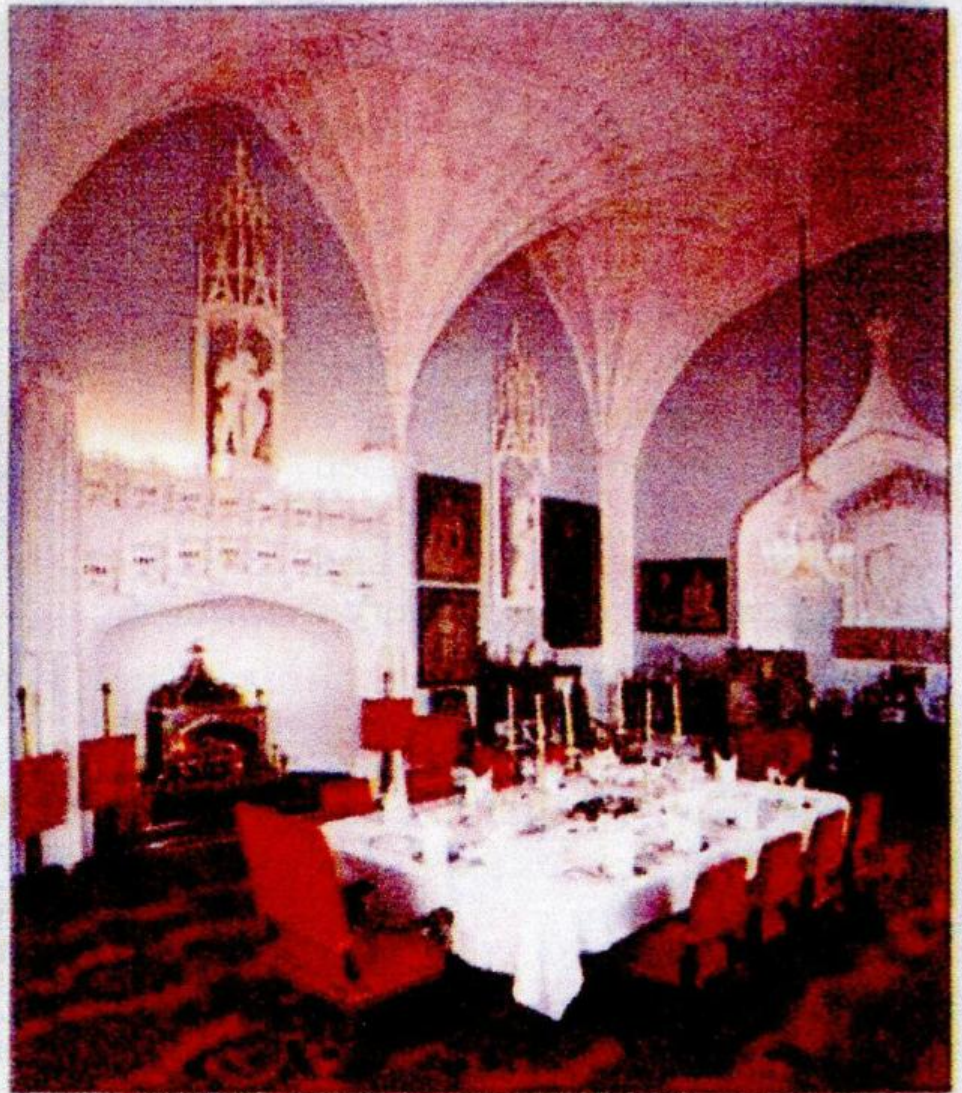


THE SALOON

After lunch we were divided into two groups for the house tours and led from small to very large rooms, all with highly ornate moulded plaster ceilings. One room, in particular, the Saloon, was really beautiful; having a large semi-circular bow window the glazing of which was a delicate shade of mauvy pink framed in elaborately fashioned wood. The fabulous ceiling in this room had been copied from the Henry VII Chapel in Westminster Abbey. A truly stunning room and hard to believe it was occupied by the military and POWs during WW2.

THE DINING ROOM

'It impressed one with its architectural beauty, like a cathedral... richly carved pendants, all of creamy white relieved here and there by touches of gold' George Eliot's *'Mr Gilfil's Love Story'* Chapter II



While Sir Roger Newdigate was transforming Arbury Hall he also extensively altered and improved Harefield Church in 1768 including the Gothic ceiling in the chancel. At this time the church, (a Peculiar), was owned by the Newdigate family until 1898 when it received its title and status of Parish Church.

By 4pm the weather had cooled a little and we returned to the coach, blissfully unaware that an accident on the M40- would bring us to a standstill for a whole hour. We reached Harefield at 8pm! So lots of travel time, but nevertheless a most interesting and enjoyable day.

P.S. The spelling of Newdegate changing to Newdigate happened in the 17th Century.

George Ricketts

HISTORY -

you learn something new everyday

I happened to be at the church one day and saw a gentleman wandering about looking somewhat lost. I asked him if I could help and he said he was looking for the grave of Robert Ryder. He, like me, had a special interest in any aspects connected with the Victoria Cross. It amazes me and most other visitors that two holders of the VC should be buried in a remote village country graveyard. It is truly unique. He had already found the grave of Brevet Major Goodlake (as he was when he won his medal) so off we went to see Robert Ryder's tombstone.

I explained that Ryder had survived the Great War and had served in WW2 and had come through that one as well. My visitor said that he could see that from the design of the headstone which had been placed there by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC). I thought all the CWGC tombstones were of just one design, but how wrong was I?

Whenever I have visited war graves in France, or elsewhere on the Western Front, the stones have been identical and I thought that was normal. If you look closely (see picture) then you think more deeply about it, all the tombstones on the war graves would be identical because they were all casualties of war and died in action. If you look closely at Robert's grave you will see a difference to those of troops killed in action. The top corners have been removed and this indicates death took place after a war.

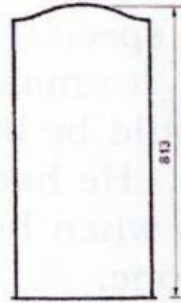
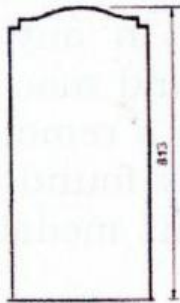
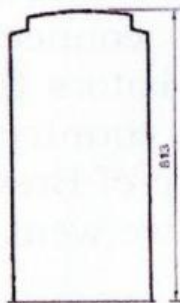
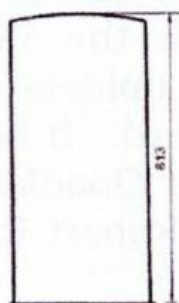


This intrigued me and I contacted CWGC at Maidenhead for information about their gravestones and they very kindly sent me some leaflets showing 13 different shapes for all sorts of deaths and covering many countries. Robert's de-cornered stone is described as follows.... "Used within CWGC cemeteries and plots for non-war and service inter-war and post-war graves."

Table 3 Marker shapes

Note: All markers are 76 mm thick unless otherwise stated.

1 CWGC war graves, and Australian post-war graves resulting from service in First or Second World Wars	2 Used within CWGC cemeteries and plots for non-war and service inter-war and post-war graves, and Australian post-war graves not in shape 1	3 Used outside CWGC cemeteries and plots for Army and Navy graves later than 1948 marked under MOD/JCCC or Admiralty arrangements	4 Used outside CWGC cemeteries and plots for RAF graves later than 1948 marked under MOD/JCCC arrangements
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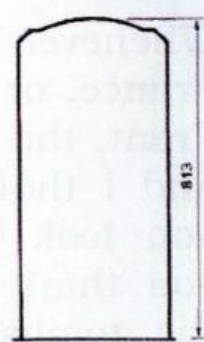
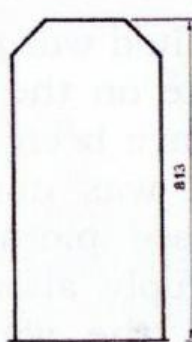
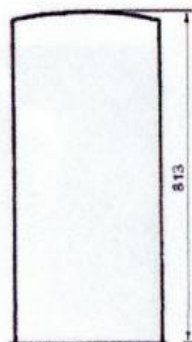
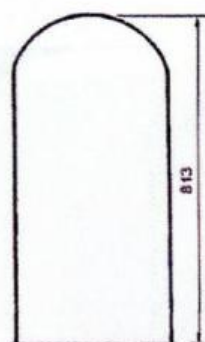


5 Ministry of Pensions

6 New Zealand post-war graves resulting from First and Second World Wars

7 Boer War

8 Belgian



So now you know. It is dangerous to assume, as I did, that all CWGC stones were of one type, but now we know better. Incidentally the headstones in the ANZAC cemetery are pre-CWGC and the scroll shape is unique to Harefield having been designed by the troops and staff stationed in the Australian Field Hospital during the Great War.

Gordon Isaacs

*Fabian Ware was too old at 45 to enlist in the Great War, but served as a commander of a Red Cross unit on the battlefield. He was determined that all the dead should have a grave and their details recorded in archives. This ultimately led to the Imperial War Graves Commission being created on 21st May 1917 by Royal Charter. It became its present title - Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 1960. **Ed***

The McHughs of Church Gardens, Harefield

Editor's note – *The McHughs' garden was open to the public for the first time on the August Bank Holiday under the auspices of the National Garden Scheme, a charity that raises very large amounts for most worthy of causes. I would estimate that at least 500 people must have visited and they would have thoroughly enjoyed the spectacle of Church Gardens. An amazing amount of effort has already been put into the project, obviously labours of love no doubt, and there is still more to do. Will they ever reach a time when such effort will no longer be necessary?*

The following article tracks their progress and is published with the permission of Patrick McHugh.

Kay and Patrick were lucky enough to discover and purchase Church Gardens in 1995. They were living in Uxbridge at the time and their first child had just been born. It took two and a half years of intensive work to make the house habitable.



Unique garden displaying old organ pipes from St Mary's

To start with the house was derelict with no services. It had been converted into a dwelling and stables in the early 1900's for the Johnson family who had worked for the Newdigates, the original Lords of the manor. Connie, their youngest child continued to live in the house in its original state until her death. Everything needed to be done in the house, it had earth floors and the windows, stairs and ceilings were all disintegrating. The house had probably originally been a coach house and we think that the rather grand arched frontage to the house (quite different from the rear) was to link it to the original manor house – Harefield Place. The McHugh family moved into Church Gardens in 1998 when their twin

daughters were four weeks old and their eldest daughter was three. Because this is not an episode of 'Grand Designs', the house was still very basic and the family lived, slept and worked in one room. Even now, many years later, the house is still far from completion. This is probably because Kay and Patrick are rather distracted by their three acre garden. They both love being outside. Patrick was born on a farm in Ireland and Kay has loved all things horticultural since she was a girl.



The gardens at Church Gardens are the original walled gardens of the Harefield Place estate. It is probably amongst the oldest surviving walled gardens in England, with the walls dating from the late 16th and early 17th Century.

The largest part of the gardens comprising of a nuttury/orchard is probably one of the only surviving renaissance pleasure gardens in the country, and includes a unique arcaded wall, a raised terrace

around the perimeter and a narrow stream running centrally along the middle of the garden. In 1995 all of the walls around the property required restoration as some large sections had completely collapsed. Kay and Patrick have now restored all the walls surrounding the



kitchen garden. Interestingly there is no wall at the bottom of the kitchen garden (there is a fence and a yew hedge – installed by Kay

and Patrick) this was typical of kitchen gardens of the period and it was to allow frost to exit the garden. Within the crumbling walls the gardens were horrendously overgrown and full of rubbish and disintegrating outbuildings, polytunnels and ramshackle greenhouses.

As you will see Church Gardens is still a restoration project in progress and despite being on the register of Historic Parks and Gardens there has never been any grant assistance forthcoming from either the local council or historic bodies. Therefore, everything has to be funded by Kay and Patrick who both work long hours as a self-employed architect and musician.

Most of the building/construction work has been done by themselves, more recently assisted by their daughters and all the gardening is carried out by Kay except lawns and hedges which are Patrick's department. Most plants are grown from seed or bought



as tiny plants from the most reasonably priced wholesalers, although the recent closure of Denham Plants induced an influx of cut-price plants.

It is a long journey, but incredibly rewarding

– the garden provides endless creative opportunities, exercise, healthy food and enjoyment. We are very grateful to the National Gardens Scheme for accepting our garden and providing us with a much needed deadline, which has encouraged us to complete at least some of our projects and have a massive 'tidy-up', we hope you will enjoy our garden as much as we do.

Patrick McHugh

THE WAR MEMORIAL

Have you seen the two sentinel soldiers on duty at the Memorial?



Photograph by Denis Hughes

They suddenly appeared in late August and as far as I can establish are part of the centenary remembrances of the Great War (1918/2018) and are part of a national scheme. The two soldiers are full-sized and are in silhouette. They were made by the Royal British Legion Industries and are really quite striking. The Council really deserve congratulations for the way they have upgraded the memorial with the addition of slabs to honour our two VCs and the creation of the Centenary Field. Well done the Borough.

We will remember them.

History Society Award Scheme for HAREFIELD ACADEMY



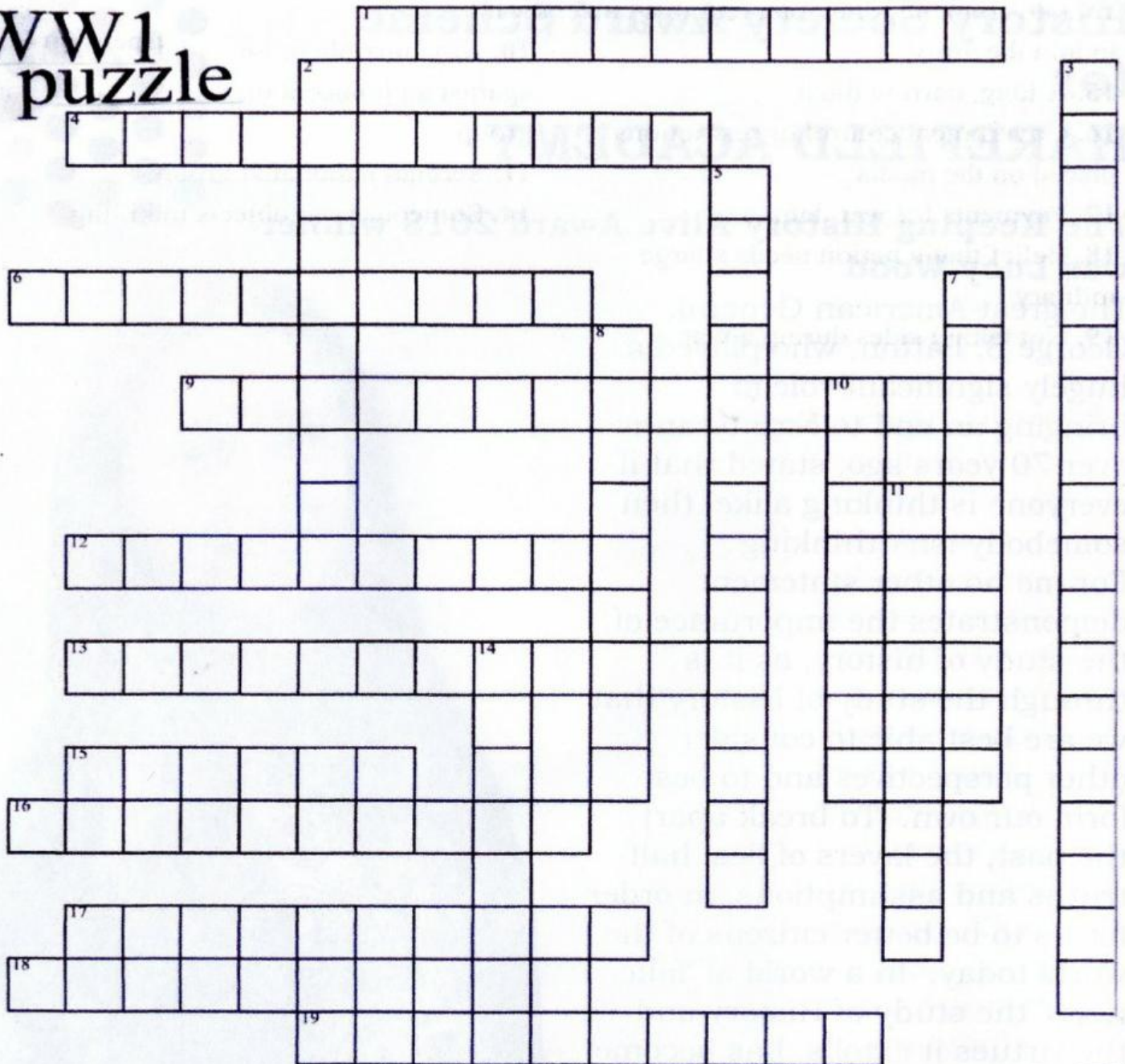
The Keeping History Alive Award 2018 winner was Lucy Wood

The great American General, George S. Patton, who played a hugely significant role in bringing an end to Nazi tyranny over 70 years ago, stated that if everyone is thinking alike, then somebody isn't thinking'. For me no other statement demonstrates the importance of the study of history, as it is through the study of History that we are best able to consider other perspectives and to best form our own. To break apart the past, the layers of lies, half-truths and assumptions, in order for us to be better citizens of the world today. In a world of 'fake news' the study of History and the virtues it extolls, has become ever more important. The winner of this year's Award has consistently shown a brilliant analytical mind, has been able to demonstrate superb subject knowledge through her passion for the subject and has been able to create fantastic conclusions, giving her work a unique style.



For some time it has been clear that the study of History will be this student's future and I am delighted that she is going to continue the study of History at University. This student has consistently shown 'excellence' in History and there can be no more fitting winner of this year's Award. **Rob Brown, Head of History**

WW1 puzzle



Across

1. A strong love for one's country
4. Policy of building up an empire
6. Forced acquisition of a region or territory by a more powerful state
9. Assassination of this man started WW1
12. Term for the total number of people killed
13. Government policy that requires citizens to join the army
15. A long, narrow ditch
16. Government control or restrictions placed on the media
17. Payments for war damage
18. Belief that a nation needs a large military
19. Not taking sides during a war

Down

2. Opinion expressed for the purpose of influencing the actions of others
3. 1919 treaty that ended WW1
5. German military plan on how Germany should handle the threat of war on two fronts
7. Resignation of a monarch
8. Temporary suspension of hostility in a war
10. Any horrible or violent action taken against an innocent or unarmed person or group
11. Serbian nationalist group
14. Someone who objects to killing

See page 20 for answers to WW1 puzzle

RELIVING HISTORY

This is the beginning, I hope, of a new series in the Herald relating your personal recollection of a moment in history at a place you have visited. It has happened to me several times that I have experienced an electric impulse type of reaction at the thought that such and such a thing took place on this site. It has happened to me here in England on the battlefield at Hastings, at the Somme, at Pearl Harbour and specifically at Rorke's Drift in South Africa.

It is this last battle that I want to recall here.

The Battle of Rorke's Drift

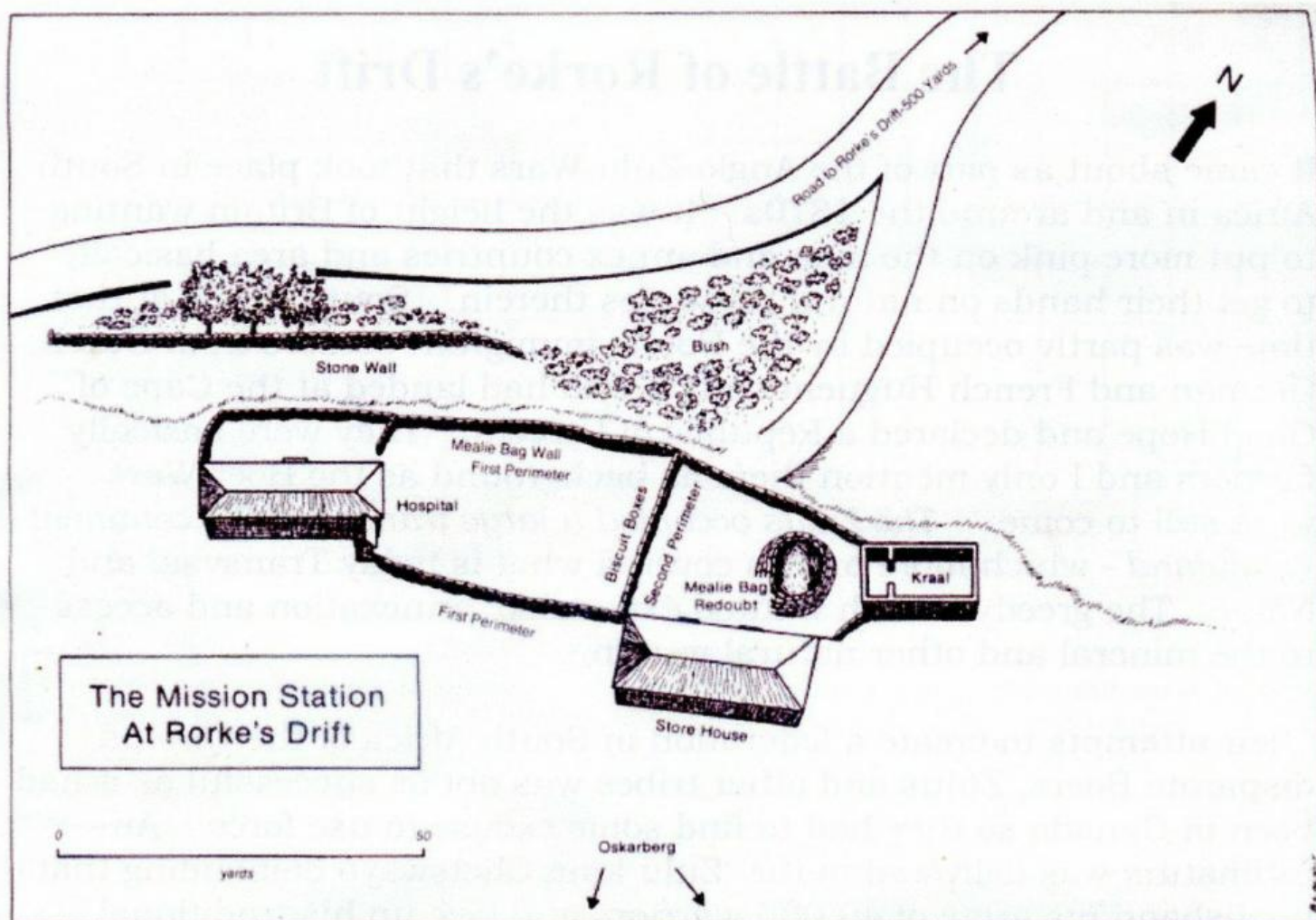
It came about as part of the Anglo-Zulu Wars that took place in South Africa in and around the 1870s. It was the height of Britain wanting to put more pink on the map and annex countries and area basically to get their hands on natural resources therein. South Africa at that time was partly occupied by the Boers, immigrant settlers from Dutch, German and French Huguenot stock who had landed at the Cape of Good Hope and declared a Republic of Utrecht. They were basically farmers and I only mention them as background as the Boer Wars were still to come. *The Zulus occupied a large tranche of the continent - Zululand - which more or less covered what is today Transvaal and Natal.* The greedy British wanted expansion, annexation and access to the mineral and other natural wealth.

Their attempts to create a federation in South Africa of the various disparate Boers, Zulus and other tribes was not as successful as it had been in Canada so they had to find some excuse to use force. An ultimatum was delivered to the Zulu king Chetswayo demanding that he disband his army of 40,000 warriors and give up his traditional culture. Naturally he refused and this gave Britain the excuse to bring in the military under the leadership of General Lord Chelmsford. The first Zulu War proved to be a total victory for the home side. 1-0!

Lord Chelmsford encamped at Islandwana, split his column and went off on a wild goose chase against the enemy leaving his camp at

Islandwana seriously under-resourced. The Zulus attacked and totally wiped out the British. Virtually complete annihilation with a very, very few men surviving.

Rorke's Drift was about 10 miles away across the Buffalo River. When Chelmsford returned from his futile sortie he sent runners out to warn Rorke's Drift of the likelihood of an attack. Rorke's Drift was originally a trading post-cum-small-farm created by John Rorke, an Irishman. It was subsequently purchased by a Swedish church as a mission under the leadership of the Reverend Otto Witt. Chelmsford took it over and posted a small garrison there of the 2nd Regiment of Foot (later they became the South Wales Borderers) and some African troops. There were a few buildings there (see diagram). The thatched



stone built mission house was converted into a hospital and at the time of the Zulu assault had about 35 patients recovering from earlier skirmishes. The chapel became a stores and there was a kraal containing supplies. The whole site was overlooked by a high hill named Ostaberg after a Swedish king. The two officers in charge, Lieutenants Chard and Bromhead, were young and inexperienced and

pretty useless really. They wanted to retreat but an older, experienced soldier, Assistant Commissary James Dalton, said they should fortify the post and defend it which is what happened. Barrier walls were built out of 200lb bags of maize and corn from the stores. A second line of defence was constructed rapidly of heavy wooden biscuit boxes – probablyhardtack - which were not easily penetrated. The walls were at least six feet high and supported against them being knocked down. The wounded in the hospital were called to arms if able and about 130 British troops and a similar number of the Natal Native Contingent (NNC) were in position.

They did not have long to await the arrival of about 4,000 Zulu warriors. It was around 4 or 5 pm on the afternoon of 22nd January 1879. As soon as they saw the hordes before them practically every one of the NNC bolted reducing the defensive ability virtually by half. One or two remained and indeed Corporal Ferdinand Schiess did so and won a Victoria Cross. For the next 10 hours until dawn on the 23rd January hell was let loose.



The Zulus attacked in constant waves in the only way they knew and suffered great losses. They were not trained in the military arts as the British troops were but they were immensely brave and on top of this they were poor shots although their weapons were not the most modern. Bodies piled up at the barricades and the Zulus climbed over them to attempt to breach the defences. The thatch on the

hospital roof was set alight and Private Hook VC considered this was to their advantage as they could see the enemy who were pretty much invisible in the dark.

The fighting grew fiercer and fiercer. More hand to hand, bayonet against spear. Blood flowed. Rifles got hotter and hotter and some bent. After ten hours dawn broke and the British braced themselves for another onslaught but it never came. The Zulus formed a column and trotted away. The defences had held. It was estimated 20,000 bullets had been fired and around 800 Zulus were dead or wounded. British casualties in comparison were minute. When peace settled over Rorke's Drift the British troops crossed their barriers and finished off the badly wounded Zulus. This was a reciprocal 'arrangement' as the Zulus did the same to the British at Islandwana. You must realise there was no Geneva Convention then laying down rules of war. No prisoners were taken. No POWs – where would they have been kept?

Battle at Rorke's Drift will, no has, gone down in history and deservedly so. 11 VCs were awarded and probably many more could also have been awarded. It is the greatest number ever won in one single engagement. Remember it was not until the mid-1920s that the medal could be awarded posthumously.

The British in this battle showed the importance of good training and, by whomsoever it was, good leadership. The officers were in the army for a living. Certainly some of the rank and file were in it for different reasons. There were certainly one or two in for more mundane reasons. If someone committed a felony, a crime, in England and finished up in court the judge sometimes gave them the choice between gaol or taking the Queen's Shilling. But whatever the reason all the troops fought like heroes, which indeed they were.

There are so many tales from Rorke's Drift that they are legion but let me recount just two

Private Fred Hitch was an illiterate and signed his enrolment form with an X. So what, he won a VC. He was a Londoner and when he returned to Civvy Street he became a London taxi driver. Like so

many before him and afterwards as well, he never spoke about his exploits at war, When he died from pneumonia in 1913 the hundred of cabbies who turned out for his funeral were astonished to see the South Wales Borderers parading in full dress uniform as none of them knew he was a holder of the VC. He is buried in Chiswick cemetery and there is today a Fred Hitch gallantry award for taxi drivers.

Not all the survivors had such a remarkable send-off. Private Robert Jones VC suffered nightmares for many years which plagued him continually reminding him of the desperate hand-to hand fighting with the Zulus he endured during the conflict. When it got too bad to bear he shot himself in 1909, thirty years after the war.

May and I stayed at Fugitive's Drift close to the battlegrounds of Islandwana and Rorke's Drift (see picture).

Our host and guide was a Welshman with a wonderful velvety voice very reminiscent of Richard Burton and he was a great narrator and raconteur.



May Isaacs with our host and guide at Fugitive's Drift

Standing in Rorke's Drift he told the story as though it was happening right then and everything came to life.

A wonderful experience. Unforgettable and perhaps you can understand better why I chose Rorke's Drift for my Reliving History article.

Gordon Isaacs

***In the Lamplight* -** **continuing the WWI friendship between Harefield, UK and Australia**

By Dianne Wolfer

Funny - how chance meetings, random connections and serendipity can inspire a book.

In 2013, during a London stopover, I visited the Harefield grave of an Australian soldier I was researching. Confusion with buses led to a conversation with Linda Evans, who kindly offered to show me the Anzac cemetery. As we chatted I learnt that the World War One 1st Australian Auxiliary Hospital was based in Harefield. Then I saw historic photographs and was fascinated to discover that Harefield had also been home to a wallaby mascot. My imagination went into overdrive. After three years of research and writing, *In the Lamplight* was published in April and I was thrilled to return to Harefield in May to launch the book and meet members of the Harefield History Society whose generous (online) advice and photographic permissions added so much to the final story. This help, with particular mention of Andy Harris and Lorraine Piercy, is acknowledged in the book's endpapers.

In the Lamplight is the final title in my 'Light' series. Like its partner titles, the story uses archival photographs, telegrams, letters and evocative charcoal drawings to add layers and hopefully inspire the curiosity of readers. Themes in this book include nursing, resilience, shared war history of Australia and Britain, suffragettes and Spanish Influenza.

In Australia, there's been much emphasis on visiting war graves as we commemorate 100 years since WWI. 'Let us never forget Australia' is written in classrooms at the Villers-Bretonneux school and thousands of Australians visit battle-sites across northern France. However the important role of Harefield and the war cemetery at St Mary's Church is less known. As an Australian I was deeply touched to learn that each Anzac Day, local schoolchildren leave their classrooms to continue the long-held Harefield tradition of walking to the cemetery to lay flowers on the graves of Australians buried so far from home.

I was also interested in other historical links between Harefield and the Anzacs, such as the flag school principal, Mr Jeffries, draped

across the bare coffin of an Australian soldier. How touching that this same flag was gifted to Adelaide High School after the war as a mark of friendship. As your members may know, the restoration of the Harefield flag featured in Australian news articles a few years ago. Other stories such as that of the Harefield Quilt and links between Nancy Birdwood and my home state of Western Australia are equally fascinating.

One of the best things about writing *In the Lamplight* has been forming friendships with members of the Harefield History Society, firstly online and then secondly during my visit in May 2018.

It was wonderful to meet in person after so many email conversations over such a long time. Other community members have also been supportive. I enjoyed visiting local schools to talk about my books and research, the hospital allowed me to view their collections, and library friends and staff helped the History Society provide a delicious afternoon tea to celebrate *In the Lamplight* and the ongoing friendship between our communities.



Dianne Wolfer and Gordon Isaacs in the Village Centre meeting room

I'd like to thank everyone for their kindness and also to acknowledge generous funding support from *Western Australia's Department of Culture and the Arts*. The enduring bond between Harefield and Australia continues to grow and I hope my new book will help both Australian and British readers discover more about our shared connection.

Dianne is an Australian author who has written three books in the 'Lamplight' series. They really should be described as FACTION as a deal of the content is historical fact interlinked with fictional involvement of some characters. Dianne explains her connection with Harefield above and her literary outpourings are well worth reading. I am grateful for her ready and willing acceptance to write the above piece for the journal. Ed

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HAREFIELD HISTORY SOCIETY

Meetings on the fourth Monday monthly from

September to May (except December)

at the

**Park Lane Village Centre,
Harefield,**

commencing at 8pm.

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