

Harefield History Society

NEWSLETTER No 9

September 1983

Chairman: Bill Faithfull

Secretary: Stan Kempster
268 Northwood Road
Harefield
Harefield 2445

Editor: Deirdre Whiteman

Contributors: Mrs L Piercy
Mrs V Hardey
Mr B Faithfull
Mrs E Cuthbertson

Editorial

Looking back to the Summer Programme

The Society has had another very successful summer programme of coach trips to exciting places for which we are indebted to Lorraine Piercy our Programme Secretary, she has kindly given me details of the first two as I was unable to be at these.

Lorraine says "Summer '83 will be remembered by Harefield History Society members for the diverse nature of our activities outside the village. We were received as welcome friends at Arbury Hall, home of the Newdigates - Elona Cuthbertson prepared a fact sheet for us, this was enthusiastically pounced on by the official guides for their own future use.

Stoke Bruerne Waterways Museum gave an insight into the industrial past of Harefield. The wide range of exhibits, particularly the photographic collections, awoke memories for many of us, our packed lunches were eaten with a generous helping of reminiscences. Harefield's agrarian past was recaptured amongst the Bantams and Tamworths in the farmyard at Cogges Manor Farm Museum. Inside the farmhouse there were cries of recognition at seeing utensils used by parents and grandparents. The contents of the laundry basket came under close scrutiny!

Littlecote House gave us a glimpse of life with a Cromwellian garrison. The atmosphere of the Haunted Landing was well stage-managed. We could easily image the new born child being thrown into the hungry flames.

The Roman Villa at Littlecote gave many members the chance to display their aquatic prowess! Lets hope that the photographs did justice to the occasion and that the trout recovered from the shock!"

(What did you all get up to when I was'nt there? ed.)

Our last outing will be fresh in everyone's mind and happily for me, I did make this one, as my family like the swallows have flown off once more.

We have never before had an afternoon and evening excursion (no mad dash to wash up and make the beds!)

Wycombe Chair and Local History Museum We were conducted around by Mr Mayes the founder, an extremely knowledgeable guide with a wealth of very amusing stories of the old Chiltern 'bodgers' told in a delightful Buckinghamshire dialect. I'm sure we could have listened to him for hours, but it was soon time to go on to

Milton Manor House near Abingdon. It was certainly our day for meeting delightful people, because after a stroll around the walled garden we were taken in for the advertised refreshments which turned out to be a real buffet supper presided over by the Cook, she had made everything herself and all delicious.

We then went into the house and met our charming hostess Mrs. Motler who took us around her lovely 17th & 18th century home. She obviously loves every stick, stone and blade of grass and the house responds to her loving care. It was a beautiful and tranquil place to spend a few happy hours. Thank you Lorraine for this one.

We had two local events in the summer. Harefield House. Our thanks are due to Val Woodwards for organizing our tour of Harefield House and to those whose permission was sought and given.

On Monday 6th June a group of members visited Harefield House and here Vi Hardey takes up the tale. "Almost obscured from the road one hardly knows it exists unless one works there in it's present capacity of the offices of the Aeronautical Quality Directorate.

Built in 1750/52 it was owned by Sir Roger Newdigate, until 1936 when the estate was broken up and offered for sale it had seven owners, one of the most famous being Count Bruhl whose scientific pursuits attracted the attention of Georgell who visited the house in 1782.

It was an interesting evening although the efficiency of a modern office was evident, there were still many relics from the former grandeur of a comfortable private residence. Lovely mahogany doors, beautiful staircase and alcoves etc. One can trace part of the fine landscaped garden, some of the trees remain including a magnificent cedar.

The copies of the booklet "Story of Harefield House" compiled by our old Harefield friend Mr L Donald Jarvis and Mr Meekoms together with a separate leaflet listing the previous owners were received with enthusiastic thanks by us all."

To conclude the history of the summer activities Bill Faithfull writes this account, "The Open Days on June 11th & 12th at Park Lodge Farm and Knightscote Museum attracted a large number of people on both days.

Once again the Society played it's part by providing members as stewards for the Museum in addition four members from Ruislip, Northwood & Eastcote History Society acted as stewards on Saturday.

A great deal of interest was shown by people in the Exhibition on display, and from conversations with some of them we learnt that they came from all over Greater London as well as from Hertfordshire and Buckinghamshire. There were questions such as "How often was Park Lodge Farm & Knightscote open to the public?" "Did schools have the opportunity to visit them at any time?" "Why did it not open more often?" We found ourselves referring them to the G.I.C. all through the two days, in addition many questions on the Exhibits themselves were answered.

For the first time we were joined by Northwood Historic Engine Society who not only brought along their own collection of historic engines but had been busy since last November in bringing to life many of the farm machines at Knightscote. Peter Pocock and his wife Susan and the other members provided an added attraction to the Open Days, their refreshment tent was a great success. We were all very pleased to have them with us and to witness some of the fine old tractors from the Museum looking most attractive and cared for, in good working order after many years. We all agreed that it had been a most satisfying and interesting two days".

The Society wishes to say a special thank you to the following members who acted as stewards at the Museum; Margaret Evans, Eileen Meads, Maisie Marjoram, Edna Bishop, Gay King and Elizabeth Faithfull, Howard Swain, Bert Meads, John Rooke and Bill Faithfull.

Winter Programme in the Library

All starting at 8 p.m. The committee hope you will agree that we have an interesting Winter programme.

Monday September 26th

Mr J N G Rowland will give us a talk on "Acton as it was" he is especially interested in the origins of street names Lorraine tells me.

Monday October 10th. - Extra Meeting.

There will be an Evening of Photographs. Many members have been quietly busy taking candid camera shots at some of our outings so come along then and remember some of the beautiful places and re-live some of the more hilarious moments of our trips together (perhaps I will find out what you were up to at Littlecote! ed.)

Monday October 24th

Mr D Twedell whose subject is "Herbs, Myths, Magic and Physick in the Middle Ages"

Monday November 28th

Mr D F Edwards will be visiting us to tell us about "Swakeleys House" one of the most historic mansions in the district, Samuel Pepys in his diary writes of his visiting there.

No Meeting in December

Wednesday January 4th

We have another Social Evening at Harefield Cricket Club with refreshments this time the theme is "Highdays and Holidays"

Monday January 23rd

Mr G C Tyack "An oral History of Harefield before the 1st World War" Mr Tyack is an old friend of ours and it will be a pleasure to welcome him back once more. Many of you will know that he was our lecturer for the W.E.A. class that ultimately produced and published "Harefield at that Time of Day" the class 'grew' into our Society so we can really look on Mr Tyack as our 'Founding Father'

Monday February 27th

Mrs. V. Woodward will be talking on "Tracing my Family History" Val has done a tremendous amount of research into her quest and this promises to be an extremely interesting evening.

Monday March 26th

Mr L J Mayes is coming, we now will count him as one of our old friends he came last year to talk to us and of course we went to see him at Wycombe very recently, his talk this night will be "Chair Makers of the Chilterns".

Monday April 30th

Our A.G.M. followed by more reminiscences from Lorraine's scrapbook and news of Members projects.

Christian Names Three Hundred Years Ago by Elona Cuthbertson.

In 1699 Gregory King, one time Lancaster Herald and a pioneer of population studies, set out to make a list of the inhabitants of Harefield parish. He counted 567 people, husbands, wives, children, servants, visitors, and the Christian names of most of them appear in his list, now in the Public Records Office (1), or in a notebook of his which survives among the Greater London Records (2).

It is interesting to see the names which were chosen 300 years ago. Compared with today the range was very limited, partly because it was normal for a child to be called after a parent and for a new baby to be given the name of a brother or sister who had died (this often happened unfortunately).

There were only about 30 different girls' names amongst the parishioners. Elizabeth was the most popular. Nearly a quarter of the women and girls were Elizabeths. Mary came a close second (20%), Sarah and Anne following behind. In fact nearly two thirds of the names were Elizabeth, Mary Sarah or Anne. It must have been confusing. Hannah and Martha, Susan (or Susanna), Dorothy, Frances, Catherine, Judith, Alice, Margaret, Jane and the (to us) unfamiliar Grisell cropped up several times. Priscilla, Pleasant, Love, Grace and Angelet were less commonly chosen and other names unusual in 1699 were Agnes, Audrey, Barbara, Ellen, Hesther, Joan, Lucie, Rachel, Rebecca, Ruth and Ursula.

Masculine names came in 42 varieties, but John was the favourite (over 25%). Thomas and William were next, followed by Richard, James, George, Henry and Edward, with Robert, Joseph and Ralph, Charles and Francis behind. Among the less popular names 300 years ago were some which we would meet today: David, Luke, Mark, Matthew, Martin, Philip, Peter, Roger, Stephen, Simon. Others are not in fashion now. There was an Ambrose, for instance, also Abraham, Abel and Attaway, Elias, Isaac, Jesse and Nathaniel.

It seems likely that the selection of names in other parts of the country followed a similar pattern. A Study of the Christian names of people born between 1650 and 1749 and buried in an Oxfordshire village shows that William, John, Thomas and Richard, Mary, Elizabeth, Anne and Sarah were the most common just as they were in Harefield. The author suggests that the limited range must have encouraged the invention of nicknames (3).

References: (1) T64/302 (2) 1085/EM 11 (3) Fran Stewart "Life and Death in an Oxfordshire Churchyard" The Local Historian Vol 13 No 3

I am most grateful to the people who sent me contributions for this newsletter, please keep sending them and the newsletter might grow up to be a magazine!!

Deirdre Whiteman.