

## HAREFIELD HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter No. 11

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### Editorial:

It is with the deepest regret that we heard of the death on the 5th August of our newly appointed Chairman, Stan Kempster. A tribute will be made at the first Society Meeting on Monday, 24th September. Meanwhile Guy Allen has kindly agreed to accept the position of Acting Chairman until the next AGM to maintain the continuity of the coming year. Stan's contribution which has been included in this newsletter, was read for Radio Hillingdon Hospital awhile back, when some of our members were asked to record something about the history of Harefield.

### NOTE FOR NEWSLETTER from Margaret Evans

Harefield History Society's documents, transferred from the Harefield History Group, (which published the book 'Harefield at that time of day') are now filed, labelled and indexed and lodged on permanent loan in the care of the librarian. These documents will not be moved from Harefield. A copy of the index is with the files and we hope members will use these archives and possibly add to them. Any items added should also be added to the index.

A grant of £50 applied for several months ago by the History Society, has been granted by the LBH Leisure Services and this money can be used to help with any project or general work of the Society.

### LOOKING BACK TO THE SUMMER PROGRAMME

Once again we have Lorraine Piercey to thank for our Summer visits. As Programme Secretary last year our visits were not Lorraine's only 'project'. While we were enjoying the fruits of her labours (ooh!) Lorraine was busy producing Stuart, now four months old. Mother and baby doing well....Lorraine and Keith would like to take this opportunity to thank the people who sent cards. Our best wishes to all three of you.



Saturday 5th May - Jane Austen's Home and the Gilbert White Museum

May 5th was a really worthwhile day when we visited Jane Austen's home and the village of Chawton as well as the Gilbert White and Oates Museum at Selborne. Early May can be tricky weatherwise, but we had a brilliant day for this outing. The party split up so that not too many of us crowded into the house at once. In fact it was a joy to be able to wander around Chawton Cottage that must still be so like the home that Jane knew. We saw her small table that she used for her writing, her bedroom with the patchwork quilt made by her mother for herself. The garden was, it seems, very much as she had known it, including the oak tree just over the garden wall that she planted herself.

The Village couldn't be so different either, she would be able to find her way around still and probably be able to recognize the beautiful white and mauve Fritillaries by the path to the Church.

After lunch we set off again for Selborne and the home of Gilbert White the Naturalist. This houses the museums of the 18th century naturalist and, on the first floor, Captain Oates the very gallant gentleman. The garden of the house has been restored and plants which would have been in Gilbert White's day are growing there now, especially the sweet peas known as Painted Lady, plants of which could be purchased, many of which have found their way back to Harefield.

Diedre Whiteman.

Saturday 9th June - Witney and The Manor House, Stanton Harcourt

Our coach rolled out of Harefield at 9 am. First stop Witney, ancient wool town with long main street, church and green, and market. Across the Windrush in the hamlet of Cogges, we explored the Farm museum and watched the Morris dancing on the lawn.

After lunch, to Stanton Harcourt to be welcomed by the lady of the house who had 50 cows to milk but enthusiastically showed us round her house, owned by the family since C13. The medieval kitchen with ovens set in its walls, is reminiscent of the Monks' Kitchen at Glastonbury. Popes' Tower, above the family chapel was lent to Alexander Pope to work on his Homer translation.

This enjoyable day was not yet over as we returned via Newbridge and had tea and cakes in the garden of the "Rose Revived" beside the River Thames.

Margaret Evans.

Saturday 15th September - guided tour of Highgate Cemetery and Saturday 22nd September - Broughton Castle and the site of the Battle of Edgehill will be covered in the March newsletter.



The period to which I am going to refer belongs to the more recent history of the village, and covers the early 1930's.

At that time Harefield boasted 12 pubs, 13 Policemen (somebody had to man the Police Station) and approximately 18 farms. It is the farms of which I would like to speak. The farms were pretty evenly spaced around the village, some were worked for crops, such as wheat, barley and of course hay for the winter feed for any cattle that they may have kept. No doubt any surplus would have been sold off to neighbouring farmers, at a very hotly contested price.

Several of the farms kept quite a lot of cattle primarily for milk production. In those days the sale of milk was not virtually monopolised by the big combines as they are today. Each farmer was allowed to sell either direct from his premises or deliver to the home. They would be responsible for their own bottling, generally in a wide topped bottle with a thin cardboard cap pressed into the top of the bottle. Although there must have been some sort of hygiene regulations, they were nowhere as stringent as they are today. One or two farmers delivered around the village by means of horse and cart, some of the milk being bottled and some carried around in churns. It is interesting to note that the bottled milk was sold in 1/2 pint, 1 pint and quart bottles, as opposed to the standard 1 pint bottles of today. One of the farmers also had a Dairy shop in the village which was another outlet for sales of his milk and also of butter and cheese. As children, some of us used to love to meet the milk cart when it came around and whilst the farmer was doing his deliveries we would argue as to whose turn it was to drive the horse and cart. It was one of the highlights of the day. One milk farm I remember in particular was Brown's farm, situated at the end of the road in which I lived. Morning and late afternoon my mother would send me off to the farm, complete with milk jug, to purchase our milk. Two qualities of milk were available, the "skimmed milk" had had the cream taken off it and cost one old penny per pint. The other milk complete with that beautiful golden cream cost two old pence per pint. The milk was served from very large steel bowls (presumably stainless steel) by means of 1/2 pint or 1 pint measures. (The EEC would shudder at the level of hygiene).

Some of the farms kept pigs, cattle and poultry and whilst there may have been proper "slaughter houses" as they were known then, I have no doubt that much killing took place at the farms. A lot of the meat found its way into the local butchers' shops, of which I can remember three in the village itself. However it was not either of these that took my interest, so much as one which was sited opposite the "White Horse" P.H. in Church Hill. This shop was nothing more than a corrugated tin shed but was, oddly enough, one of the most popular. Again, the standard of hygiene has to be questioned.

Perhaps the most fascinating farms as far as I was concerned, were the ones that kept pigs. They certainly were not top of the league for smartness or pleasant smells, but they are still among my favourite farm animals. Unlike today, when they are reared in very intensive units, and are purely a business proposition, the pigs were kept in stys and usually had a

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paddock to roam in. They used to turn the ground over like a plough would, by "rooting" with their snouts, and sometimes the farmer would put a metal ring through the snout to prevent the pig from rooting. What finer sight than to see "an old sow" with as many as ten little piglets squealing along behind her. Like most babies they thought that it was always "tea time" and would suckle their mother constantly. But it was only when mum was ready that she would lie down and call them to her, and when they had had their fill, there was a large heap of full, tired, pink little bodies soundly asleep.

Although these events only occurred some fifty years ago, the change in the pace of life has been, to say the least, dramatic. We here constant reference, during our everyday life, to the "good old days" but to me they will always remain just that.

Stan Kempster.

### HOLIDAYS 1983

This year we had the unexpected opportunity to spend a week in the village of KILHAM in the Yorkshire Wolds. Gordon noted that Kilham was not too far from COWESBY Hall, where he was stationed at the beginning of the war, and looked forward to revisiting old haunts. What a delightful village Kilham is; and as we discovered, the perfect centre for a kind of 'busman's holiday'. A busy five days saw us visiting SLEDMORE HOUSE, the Yorkshire home of the SYKES family; CATLE HOWARD of 'Brideshead Revisited' fame; the DRIFFIELD SHOW, the biggest one-day show in Britain; the MOORS RAILWAY; BURTON AGNES HALL, a very beautiful Elizabethan house remarkably well preserved after 374 years.

How I loved the judging of animals at the Driffield Show! The badge and sash of 'Supreme Champion' was awarded to a beautifully groomed, benign looking young bull, with large appealing eyes, who accepted, with seeming nochalance, the embrace and kisses of his young female handler as she wept with pride and delight.

I enjoyed every minute of that week but poor Gordon never did get to Cowesby Hall.

Two weeks later we headed northwards again - this time NORTHUMBERLAND being our destination. It was our first visit to WARKWORTH where Eileen & Bill Brownlow have just bought an early Victorian house. Our bedroom overlooked the ruins of Warkworth Castle, while a few yards along the banks of the River COQUET, which flows past the front of the house, took us to the Hermitage and Chapel of Holy Trinity. This was hewn in the cliff-face and is a very peaceful spot only reached by ferry.

Northumberland is very much overlooked by Southerners and few people seem to be aware of its rich historical heritage or its magnificent scenery. (I make no apologies for sounding like the Tourist Board). We have made yearly visits for the past 13 years and this year one of our outings was to CRAGSIDE.

'CRAGSIDE' was the dream of the first Lord ARMSTRONG inventor, engineer, industrialist and armament king (VICKERS-ARMSTRONG).

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The estate is over 900 acres in which were planted several million trees. Some of these trees have grown into the tallest in Britain and include Douglas fir, hemlocks, pines, spruce, larch, sequoia, yew, beech, oak, rowan etc., etc.

The house has a wealth of interest and was the first house in the world to be lit by electricity, generated by water power by means of one of Lord Armstrong's own inventions and the co-operation of Sir Joseph Swan. It was certainly a National Trust property with a difference and I would recommend a visit as a 'must' to anyone visiting Northumberland.

During all our holidays in England we enjoyed the most beautiful weather in this lovely summer of 1983 - quite the opposite to the dreary weather we experience in the Rhine Valley in September - but that is another story!

Valerie Woodward.

#### WINTER PROGRAMME 1984

##### TRACING MY FAMILY HISTORY

We had a record audience to hear Val Woodward talk on how she set about the quest for her Mother's Family History. She chose her Mother's rather than her Father's because a more unusual name obviously narrows the field and makes it all a little easier. While not minimising the difficulties, she did make it seem as if it was not an impossible task as long as one family were not too foot loose by nature. The pleasure of her talk was increased by Reg Neil's excellent colour slides. Thank you both for a most enjoyable and entertaining evening.

Diedre Whiteman.

##### CHAIRMAKERS OF THE CHILTERN

We looked forward to Mr. Mayes' talk in March with keen interest and that delightful gentleman did not disappoint us. Those of us who visited the Wycombe Chair Museum at Wycombe last September, immediately recognised the model of the pole lathe with which the Bodgers made the turned parts of the Windsor chair. The simple wooden lathe is indeed a very ingenious device.

The origin of the word 'Bodger' is somewhat obscure but today's meaning certainly does not apply to those very hard working men. Mr. Mayes described how they had to turn a gross of chair legs for the magnificent sum of sixpence, and incidentally, supply the wood.

Mr. Mayes related many amusing tales, often lapsing into the lovely old Buckinghamshire dialect. He must be unique in his knowledge of, and dedication to, this craft.

Valerie Woodward.

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WINTER PROGRAMME in the Library - all meetings start at 8 pm.

1984

Mon. 24th Sept. Mr. M. Holmes to give a talk on Highgate Cemetery. Those members who visited on the 15th will find this a bonus.

Mon. 22nd Oct. Mr. Keith Piercey will be telling us about project. 'Early maps of Harefield'.

Mon. 26th Nov. Mr. C.C. Stanley will be with us again showing his aerial views of 'The Thames and it's place in history'. Remember the 'Aerial Photographs of Historical Sites'.

1985

Wed. 9th Jan. Social Evening at Harefield Cricket Club.

Mon. 28th Jan. Mr. D. Edwards - 'Metroland'. A previous talk by Mr. Edwards was 'Swakeleys House'.

Mon. 25th Feb. Mr. K. Kirkman - 'Pinner Chalk Mines'. A very deep subject I gather.

Mon. 25th Mar. Mr. M. Cornell - 'A History of Brewing and Breweries'. No comment.

Mon. 22nd Aprl. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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Last but not least 1984 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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