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Editorial:

Again we start another year of the Society when we can look forward to some interesting indoor meetings and look back to our Summer visits, for which we owe a vote of thanks to Pat, our Programme Secretary. The Annual General Meeting was held on the 22nd April and was well attended, It presented an opportunity to thank Guy Allen and Valerie Woodwards for stepping into the breach. We welcomed our new lady Chairperson, Lorraine Piercey and John Rooke to the Committee. The evening ended with Guy showing and narrating on his collection of transparencies. Look out Reg!

WINTER PROGRAMME 1984/85 contd.

PINNER CHALK MINES

To those of us not born and bred in Harefield and with scant knowledge of the wealth of history on our doorstep it sometimes amazes us when various speakers at our meetings reveal places and events which lie hidden in the area.

Such a speaker was Mr K. Kirkman who, with the aid of his excellent slides, disclosed the existence of the Pinner Chalk Mines which lie beneath our feet 50-60ft. deep as we walk or motor along the Uxbridge Road. Begun in the 17th Century and reaching its peak in Victorian times they are still in a marvellous state of preservation and until recently open to viewing by the public.

The network of galleries stretching for miles and reached by narrow shafts 5ft. in diameter showed up in the slides like works of art and at times looked for all the world like the interior of a cathedral.

Working for long hours and in semi-darkness miners spent the whole of their lives hewing out the chalk with nothing but a pick and shovel and by the light of candles stuck in alcoves by their sides. The initials of several generations of the miners have been traced in candle-soot on the roof of the galleries, and this in itself makes an impressive study. From these initials, dates and various tally-marks much knowledge of how the mines were worked was gleaned.

It was a most interesting talk which we all thoroughly enjoyed.

Harry King

BREWING AND BREWERIES

On 25th March, we had a most unusual but nevertheless most interesting talk given by Mr M. Cornell, a Herefordshire man. He commenced with the manner in which the various stages of the basic ingredient - barley - was treated, before the yeast was added. This started fermentation, during which carbon dioxide was given off as the alcohol was created, The difference between ales, beers, lagers and stouts was explained, as was the wide range of colours seen in the many products.

He then traced the original making of the alcoholic beverage from the early Egyptian times, through the pre Roman era; the Dark Ages, and in particular the 18th and 19th centuries. While the original brewing in this country was to supply probably a dozen people, breweries then sprung up over the country to supply licenced houses in a particular area; there was in Park Lane, Harefield a brewery. Now, only six major breweries provide the wide variety of beers for the whole country, plus a large export trade.

Enid Neave

LOOKING BACK TO THE SUMMER PROGRAMME

Saturday 4th May - Stamford and Rockingham Castle

STAMFORD is in the County of Lincolnshire on the River Welland. It is an ancient and historic town which achieved special importance during the coaching boom from its position on the Great North Road and retains a large number of 17th and 18th century houses. Today Stamford is a Market town of some 16,000 inhabitants, a town where thriving modern commercial activity goes hand-in-hand with ancient charm, without despoil to either. (I must say I was a little taken aback when I headed towards a church in the shopping precinct to find it occupied by the Anglia Building Society). Despite this there are still 600 buildings of Archaeological or Historic importance plus Burghley House and the grave of Daniel Lambert who weighed 52 stone 11 pounds. Sir Malcolm Sargent who was a Freeman of Stamford is buried in Stamford Cemetery. (All the above was gleaned from the Tourist Information Centre leaflet issued on the coach). ROCKINGHAM CASTLE one of the charming family homes, looks out over the Welland Valley (a little misty as I recall). The Church lies outside the Castle walls and overlooks the Village, one path leads from the Castle to the Church and then continues down to the Village which lies in a hollow below. The Watsons of Rockingham can trace their ancestry to William the Lion, King of Scotland in the 13C. In the brochure there is a photograph of the present family standing at the front entrance all of whom take an interest in the running of the Castle and the Estate which supplies the wherewithal for the upkeep of the Castle and grounds. Anyone who invested in a copy of the brochure has, I would say, a Collector's item. It is by far the most attractively presented one I've seen.

Maisie Marjoram

10th June - Guided tour of the War-time Operations Room - RAF Uxbridge.

15th/16th June - Open Days Park Lodge Farm and Knightscothe Farm Museum

I am not able to comment on these two items, if anyone would like to make a contribution to the next Newsletter, it would be welcome. The Newsletter is open to All members of the Society.

13th July - Winslow Hall and time in the Town

(We again) A very pleasant coach ride through the Bucks countryside brought us to Winslow Hall built in 1700. A typical Wren design it was built for Sir William Lowndes, one time Secretary to the Treasury and originator of 'take care of the pennies' etc. or so it was suggested by the lady who gave us a very detailed and interesting talk about the house and its occupants. The present owners, Sir Edward and Lady Tomkins were away but it really did seem like 'open house' to the Harefield History Society. Our eyes were greeted with a brilliant display of sweet peas grown in the garden there. As we passed through the rooms, which were not large by comparison with some houses, there was a 'lived-in' feeling, especially when we were allowed to visit the bedrooms, one of which I remember had a charming four-poster bed and the decor was blue and white. The displays of 18th century furniture and the Chinese Art was a real feast. An interesting feature of the house was the four chimneys through the centre which supplied all the fireplaces, some of which were in the centre of the larger rooms and in the corner of the smaller rooms, a Wren type of central heating along with the light from many windows. My fascination is always the curtains with their drapes and swags. We didn't have too much time for the village of Winslow (especially those that were busy devouring a cream tea) but we did make a visit to the Parish Church of St. Lawrence where we were received by the Vicar who told us of some of its history. It was a hot sunny day and we enjoyed very much the tea in the garden at Winslow Hall and were able to walk round the gardens or visit the Chapel until it was time for the coach.

7th September - Guildford and nearby Loscleigh House Yet to come.

19th September - Our W.E.A. Local History Class should be underway, but there is still time to join. Thursday evenings in the Library 8-10pm.

B.B.C. DOMESDAY PROJECT

During June and July some members have collected information for the above project, which is a nationwide plan to record current information to form a computer disc available to universities, schools and libraries for the use of students. The work in Harefield area is being done by Dennis Trebble, Head of Geography at Merchant Taylors School; (Harefield schools, we were told, were unable to undertake it). A good deal of work had already been done by the boys when our offer to help was made. We then collected details and facts under various headings and this was put into the computer. Copies of the print-out for Harefield will be available for members to read later on.

SURVEY OF ANCIENT BARNs

We were asked by the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings to complete a questionnaire on each of the barns in our area built before 1830, this is part of a nationwide survey.

Gwen Thomas proceeded to contact farmers and owners to get permission to examine and measure their barns, along with any other old farm buildings there might be nearby. Not once were we refused access. Some we were able to do on foot, but David Neave drove us to more distant ones, so cutting down the effort and time. Cripps and Colney barns were surveyed by Lorraine and Keith Peircey. Reg Neal accompanied us on one trip.

The barns surveyed were-

Highway	Bourne	Springwell	Cripps	Colney	Shophords Hill
Old Clack Farm		St. Leonards	Langley	Knightscotho	
Dairy Farm					

Some barns were in good condition. though these were the ones owned by people not involved in farming as a career. Most farmers told us they could not face the costs of repair, even with grants, and the best they could do was to shore up decayed beams and put on alternative roofing merely to keep out the rain. Most barns were missing some timbers, some were replaced with iron brackets or nailed up planks. Some roof bearing timbers were shored with concrete. Sad to see, but the only way the farmer could keep his barn in existence. Two of our barns have, we learn, just been pronounced 'beyond repair', and will therefore fall down. On some visits we were welcomed into the house and in two instances were shown ancient open hearths, one with bread oven and two with salt cupboards. In almost every case we were able to chat to the owner about their farm. Some barns were originally threshing barns with a high entry porch on one of the bays through which the horse pulled the wagon piled high with the corn. A smaller exit opposite allowed the horse to be unharnessed and led out. In a few cases we found remnants of the stone threshing floor. Granaries were smaller buildings usually placed high on stone staddles. One of these has just been placed at Langley Farm, it can be seen from the road. This granary has been rescued by the GLC. and transported whole on a lorry from Denham. Work is now in progress to repair its roof etc. and to make some new staddles to replace those missing. At the last visit we made we were followed closely on our way out by three straggly looking goslings, and we had to go back to deliver them to their owner.

Gwen Thomas and Margaret Evans

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

1985

- September 23rd Mrs P Chance - 'Smithfields'
- October 28th WEA Members - A look at Harefield's past
- November 25th Mr Hinchliffe - Gilles, Master Cutler of Uxbridge
- No meeting in December

1986

- January 8th Annual Social at Harefield Cricket Club
- January 27th Mr Hommings of British Waterways - Canals in Britain

WINTER PROGRAMME contd.
1986

February 24th	Mr Roome - Conservation and Ecology
March 24th	Mrs Dufton - History of Pottery and Porcelain
April 25th	Annual General Meeting

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1985 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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<u>COMMITTEE MEMBERS</u>	Vi Hardey 23 Hall Drive, Tel: Harfield 2288	John Rooko 14 Springwood Close Tel: Harfield 3426
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Pat Ashby is still our representative on the Conservation Panel and reports back to the Committee when any relevant matters arise.

N.B. I accept all responsibility for typing errors. M.M.