

# Harefield History Society

NEWSLETTER NO. 28. AUTUMN 1994.

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THE 11th. LOCAL HISTORY CONFERENCE, 26th  
FEB. 1994 - 'A ROOF OVER YOUR HEAD'.

This conference was attended by members of the Committee, who also set up a display representing Harefield History Society, and one or two other members. About 200 people come to these conferences from all the History Societies in the surrounding area. It can be a day of rest and interest as there are several speakers, some of whom use slides to illustrate their subject. Coffee or tea and biscuits are provided free as you arrive, followed by the Welcome to the Conference given by the Chairman of the host Society.

The first speaker was Mike Hammett of the Brick Development Association, a very interesting illustrated talk on the making of bricks and their popularity in modern times. Pat Clarke spoke on Timber-framed buildings, and Dorothy Winton talked about the history of some Harefield cottages. The lunch break, with more free tea and coffee, gave time to look at all the displays. Terry White's talk on Dawley House and estate, 1700, followed, and Life at Swakeleys in Victorian Times by Eileen Bowlt; two short talks on Estate Cottages and Railway Cottages, then time for tea (still free). The final talk, on Metroland - Suburban Development, was given by Marion Ball, spoken with her delightful Canadian accent. The Conference closed at 4.30 pm.

Maisie Marjoram.

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## LIFE IN HAREFIELD COTTAGES.

Looking at the history of almost any village it seems it is relatively easy to picture how the great lived - they may have played a role in the national life, or entertained those who did; they kept estate records, ran the local courts, left wills when they died, and above all lived in great houses which are much more likely to have survived than the cottages of their tenants.

We are particularly fortunate in Harefield in two ways. Firstly, Gregory King, a well-known surveyor and pioneer statistician, visited Harefield in 1699 on behalf of the Lord of the Manor. For two months he walked the fields, highways and byways, making notes and little sketch maps in his 'foul book' as he called it, and that notebook still exists. He also attempted to record names, ages, and occupations of all the 570 inhabitants in their 117 houses. This unique survey remained largely unexplored until 1990, and this was Harefield's second piece of good fortune. Elona Cuthbertson, then our Chairman, identified the cottages or their sites, so that we now have a comprehensible view of our village in 1699, long before the census returns of the 19th. century made this kind of information generally available.

Harefield had then as now an area of common land, but much more extensive, stretching North along Tostreet Lane (Northwood Road) and East, with only a bridle path to Ruislip. A good third of the villagers lived along Harefield Street - the way to Uxbridge. There were cottages from the White Horse to the crossroads at the Butts, each in a plot of land with fields behind.

There were two blacksmiths - John Baily lived in a biggish timber-framed house, now No. 140. His family numbered 13, with 10 children still at home. He also kept a shop selling ale as well as iron objects. Higher up was a wheelwright, and a thatcher, suggesting that the lowlier cottages were still thatched though by this time large houses would be tiled. Slates did not appear until the arrival of the canal in 1795. There was also a weaver. These were well-off tradesmen, but there were many poor families. In one house lived several poor families, 21 people in all, some of them on parish relief.

On the other side above the church were, as now, the Countess of Derby's Almshouses - six little cottages each with its fireplace and staircase, housing a widow often with children, or grandchildren. There was also a wash-house, bakery and school room. Above were 3 cottages, then five dwellings spaciouly set out. One of these, 'Ferranders' (where the Prince Hotel now stands) was home to Thomas Bateman, butcher and his wife Anne and 4 children. Their main room was the kitchen where they lived and cooked and ate. The shop adjoined this room and there was also a drinkhouse where Thomas sold beer. The house had three bedrooms with 4 beds in each. Thomas unfortunately died in 1696 leaving Anne to fend for herself and the children. She seems to have let some of her accommodation to Stephen Taylor, shoemaker, with his wife and 3 children.

In collecting material for this little survey of Harefield Cottages at the end of the 17th. century I have relied on Elona Cuthbertson's book, Gregory King's Harefield. This is available through the Society, and I am sure you will enjoy reading it.

Dorothy Winton.

#### IMPRESSIONS OF A DAY WITH THE HISTORY SOCIETY TO MICHELHAM PRIORY AND BRIGHTON.

It was a day of contrasts. The irritating traffic hold-ups were counteracted by the pleasant soothing green of the lovely countryside.

The first stop was Michelham Priory and as we walked through the 14th. century gatehouse a peaceful scene confronted us. It is surrounded by the longest moat in England. The gardens are extensive and very beautiful. One member said she could have walked round them for hours.

Some of the highlights of the Priory House, which is home to an array of collections and exhibitions, were the grill in the wall through which counsel was given; the tall water stoup and the high backed settle in the kitchen illustrating its original meaning - having at the rear the cupboard where the meat was hung in order that it could 'settle'.

In the Tudor Room was the uncomfortable looking wooden chair used to watch cock-fighting. Human legs poked through the sides and arms resting on the back. Lovely wall hangings,

some just the cartoons, and others beautifully woven specimens..

Upstairs, a child's room with old cribs and baby clothes. A wonderful collection of miniature musical instruments in various woods, precious metals and mother-of-pearl. Did the elves and fairies come out at night and play them when the mere humans were asleep?

The Great Barn hosts exhibitions, and can be hired for weddings and other functions. 'She Stoops to Conquer' is coming for three days soon.

There was not enough time to explore everywhere, although there was rope-making, a blacksmith, a wheelwright and a water-powered mill grinding corn. As we left one member was heard to murmur 'We leave an oasis of tranquility which has whetted our appetite for another visit.'

So, on to Brighton, busy, crowded Brighton, London by the sea.

A ride on the old miniature railway to Peter Pan's Playground, past the Nudist Beach (too cold to indulge) and at the end of the line a walk to the Marina Village which proved too far for elderly legs.

The 'Lanes' were fascinating - hours could have been spent there, and amongst the antiques, a shop that sold natural perfumes. Some visited the Royal Pavilion. One member was speechless with the enormity of the ornate brashness, yet found it fantastically beautiful.

A truly wonderful day came to an end - after more stop-go on the M25 the party arrived home at 7.30 pm. Thank you, Margaret for all your hard work. Thank you, Reg, for the sweets.

Vi Hardey.

#### SECRETARY'S REPORT.

Thinking our Winter meetings were over so we would have a quiet time was a mistake. In the Spring the Annual Conference reared its head again. No Society was prepared to take the responsibility of organising it for 1995. It seemed impossible to let the custom drop after carrying it on for 11 years, so when the Ruislip Chairman asked if Harefield and Rickmansworth would share the job, we looked at each other and said 'yes'.

We have in the Rickmansworth Chairman a very active and innovative colleague, bringing his knowledge of computers and 'desktop' printing into use. The Conference Committee is meeting regularly through the Summer and things are slowly taking shape.

Following on the 'Roof Over Your Head', the title 'Families, People Great and Small' seems most appropriate and the revelation of a domestic murder in Harefield in the 18th. century gives us an unusual opportunity! You MUST come to the next Conference in February 1995 when these mysteries will be revealed. We want to make it an AI success, and for that we need our members to be there. £4 is not too expensive for a whole-day entertainment with free tea and coffee and lots of displays to look at.

Our June outing was enjoyed by 40 members and friends, and on July 23, as hot as any July day can be, Maisie and I set out with members of Rickmansworth Society, down Church Hill to St. Mary's Church. We looked at the Anzac cemetery and the memorials in the church. We then climbed through the woods, passing the

ancient fishponds which used to provide the Friday fish for the Lord of the Manor; over the fields to Breakspear House which is closed and is for sale by Harrow Council. This house was mentioned in 1376 when William Breakspear lived there, but it has been considerably altered over the centuries. We returned past the Old Workhouse, to a very welcome tea and cakes provided by Reg Neil and Iain Liddell at the Village Centre.

Sorry it's such a long report this time. This is the important bit:- Has any member an idea for a 1995 Summer Outing ?? If so, please let me know soon so that we can investigate its possibility. We don't get many suggestions from our members - it would be so helpful and interesting to know what you all want from your Society !!!

Margaret Evans.

#### EXTRACTS FROM ELONA CUTHBERTSON'S PAPERS.

25 July 1800. Agreement between C. Baynes of Harefield Place, and Elizabeth Partridge, widow, that the Church Path can be used FOR CHURCH ATTENDANCE ONLY, and not for the purpose of carrying or conveying any funeral or corpse to the church for burial, or to use it as a thoroughfare. The Church Path is only to be repaired with the consent of Mr. Baynes. The gates are to be locked.

William Sedley married the Countess of Derby's heir, Jane, widow of Lord Chandos. Sir Charles Sedley, his brother, married Katherine, Jane's sister.

Sir Charles was credited with the burning down of the Manor House, Harefield Place, in 1660. He was said to have smoked in bed. While he could well have been in Harefield at that time since the Manor belonged to his sister in law, there is no documentary evidence so far, as to the cause of the fire.

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE MIDDLESEX GAZETTE.

1888. April. Letter from a Tradesman. A plea for carters and carriers against the proposed Horse Carriage and Wheel Tax in the Chancellor's Budget. Carts over 10 cwt. with 4 wheels or more 20/-.

1890 Jan. Jubilee of Penny Postage. In old times there were 3 pages to a letter and different charges for varied distances. There were no envelopes. Each page was written closely, and often crossed twice. The direction was on the outside page. The Post Office is now a wonderful institution, though not perfect. It occurs to us that instead of making the earning of revenue the principal object, efficiency might come first. Special envelopes at 1/- each were issued.

#### NAMESEARCH.

Reading in the last Newsletter Dr. Cuthbertson's article 'What's in a Name ? Elona', I was reminded of another Christian name that I found intriguing. I first came across the name Veere Woodman some years ago. This Veere married Elizabeth Henry in 1829 and raised seven children on Holborn Hill.

Some time later I came across Veere Musgrave Woodman of Harrow, who died in 1975. He wed Doris Larter and raised two children, Susan Nina and David Veere. Veere Musgrave was the son of Edward John Woodman born 1868, Nurseryman of Eastcote

and Pinner. I decided to try and trace back the name of Veere to its origin, and found that Edward John was the son of Edward Woodman born 1838 at Whitchurch, who among other children had a son William Veere born 1861 at Stanmore. William Veere also named a son Veere.

A Veere Woodman was born in 1842 at Kingsbury and later lived at Leighton Buzzard and Hendon. Veere Woodman born 1830 at Holborn Hill turned out to be the son of the first-mentioned Veere, and this son named two of his own children Veere Treacher and Walter Veere Woodman, both born at Stanmore. One of the daughters of the first-mentioned Veere married a Veere Palmer, possibly a cousin.

The first-mentioned Veere was the son of Henry of Edlesbrough. Yet another Veere was born in 1779 at Horton Hall to a Very Woodman who was the son of Henry Veere Woodman of Crofton. whilst another Veere was born in 1760 to another Henry, of Wing. We should be getting close to the source.

Henry of Crofton was the son of Henry Woodman born 1699, of Crofton, and his wife Agnes (nee VEERE). Here at last was the origin of Veere. I wonder if Veere is still continuing as a Christian name.

Ron Harris.

### CORNISH VILLAGE.

To live beside a harbour is never to be bored. There is always a boat moving out or in, someone loading or unloading, scrubbing or painting, or mending nets or sails, and when the fish is landed, there is a long queue on the quay.

We stayed in a cobbled lane between the Sharks Fin and the Harbour Tavern, just wide enough for one vehicle with about 18" for a pedestrian. We had a view of the jetty.

St. Meva and St. Issey make up the name, first recorded in 1313 and now only having 2800 inhabitants. Fishing for pilchards was the backbone of Mevagissey, but today wreck-fishing and trawling have increased. The fish congregate in ancient wrecks and these provide rich hauls for the nets. Smuggling was carried on well into the 19th. century, trade being mainly with Brittany. Many houses have secret rooms where men could hide from the Press Gang.

There were 10 inns, one, the kings Arms, stood on the jetty but was burnt down in 1858. Mevagissey had its own power station in 1895, and electric street lights. The local museum was a boat building workshop originally. Its roof is supported by three masts. There is still boat building in an adjacent building, and of course a harbour full of small boats, with the houses climbing the steep hills on either side.



Margaret Evans.

### NEWS FROM HAREFIELD VILLAGE CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY PANEL - MANOR COURT.

Members may have noticed that the stable block adjacent to this listed building, currently undergoing renovation and conversion into flats, appears to have been partially

demolished. When it happened I attempted to speak to the Borough's Historic Buildings Architect on behalf of the Society to find out what was happening, but he failed to respond to my message. When the matter was raised at the subsequent CAAP meeting, members were told that the end gable had accidentally collapsed when the roof tiles were removed.

All the materials are said to be stored safely on the site awaiting reerection. The panel has been assured that what has happened will not be accepted as grounds for further alterations to the building, and that planning officers are monitoring the site closely. The panel was unanimous in expressing concern that the work at Manor Court should be carried out to the highest standards. I am sure members will agree.

Pat Ashby.

WINTER PROGRAMME. 1994/'5

(for members who were unable to attend the A.G.M. and so did not collect their Spring Newsletter)

- Sept.26      Bats by Dave Cove.
- Oct.24      R.L.Stevenson, his Centenary Year, by Iain Liddell
- Nov.28      Saints in Hillingdon by Sir John Dewhurst.
- Dec.          No meeting
- Jan 23      A History of Infant Feeding in the Last 100  
Years by Dr. W.Cuthbertson
- Feb.27      Home Printing Presses, and some of their Interest-  
ing Owners. by David Chambers.
- Mar.27      Glass Paper Weights by Richard Taylor
- April 24    A.G.M. followed by The Old Workhouse by Dorothy  
Winton.