

# Harefield History Society

NEWSLETTER NO. 29. SPRING 1995.

COMMITTEE: T.Hillier, Chairman  
M.Marjoram, Treasurer  
M.Evans, Secretary  
R.Neil  
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L.Piercy  
A.Batchelor  
B.Dungey.

## Newest Jackets



Bon Marché  
Uxbridge  
October 1895

## FASHIONS - a hundred years ago.

Thinking about our 1995 Local History Conference we might consider the changes in clothes over the centuries. One could say that in some measure the fashions reflected people's attitudes to life, or maybe they sometimes indicated a rebellion.

In October 1895 the above sketch appeared in the Gazette, at a time when there were few illustrations in the paper.

In 1886, Coad's Drapery of Uxbridge were offering Dress Materials at 4½d. per yard to 1/3½d. per yard - Zephyrs, cambrics, sateens, gingham. Also Bead Trimmings, Straw hats with double loops of ribbon. and bright red bonnets, small, cut up at the back and puffed over with crepe and ornaments of jet.

How dull we are today !

M.Evans.

## MANOR COURT.

An Archaeology report states that there have been several extensions to the house. In the South there are chalk and clay-stone foundations being investigated which are probably 19th. century. All pottery discovered is believed to be 12th/13th century. A possible medieval chalk lined well has been discovered in the North, and is being investigated.

dated 6 Dec. 1994.

## HAREFIELD HOUSE.

Late in November Country and Metropolitan Estates invited members of the Conservation Panel to view Harefield House, as restoration was almost complete. I was especially interested, having spent several years working in what had been the main reception room - incidentally the room in which it is reputed George III had a mad fit while visiting Count Bruhl.

We were met by the Managing Director and ushered into the lobby, which immediately gave me some idea of what had been achieved in the restoration. As we went from room to room it was obvious that no expense had been spared. All windows have been replaced by exact replicas and it is now safe to walk into the upper rooms where the floors were previously in danger of collapse. Rain no longer pours through the roof, and damp areas have been dealt with.

The house is carpeted throughout, mainly in a muted shade of blue - quite appropriate really as all the work performed on the A.Q.D. site was for the R.A.F. In a little room used

for filing cabinets during my day, a beautiful brick fireplace was discovered and restored.

We had sherry and mince pies in what was once the main bedroom, now the Company Boardroom. The adjoining dressing room is the Managing Director's office.

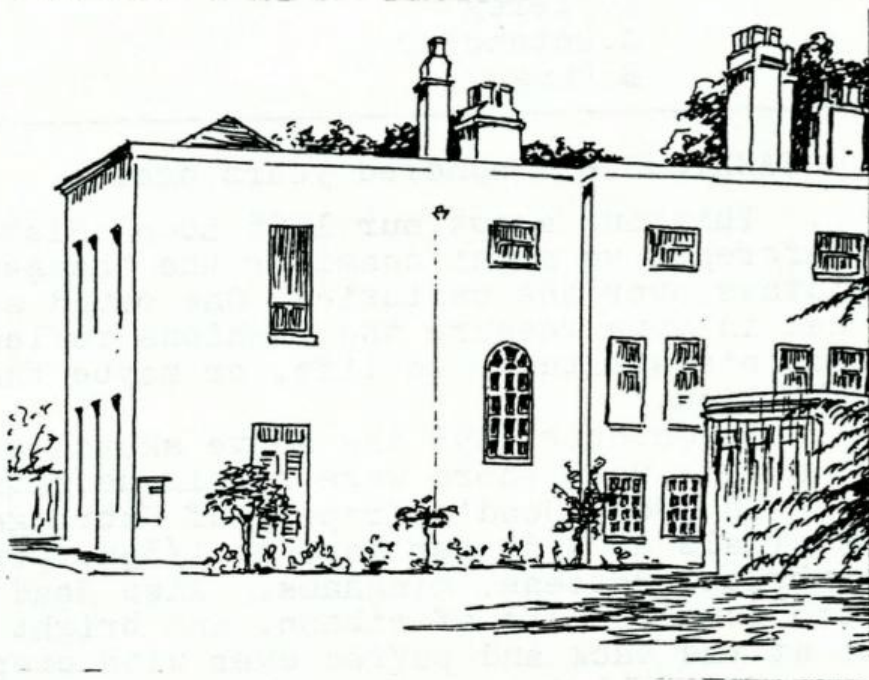
It seems churlish to offer any criticism, but I must say I was sad to see all the doors and staircases, beautifully made of rich mahogany had been painted. The Managing Director explained that painting was necessary due to asbestos panels having been fitted in the early days of Air Ministry occupation to minimise fire risk when the rooms had been used for laboratory work.

I was not convinced by his explanation being unable to remember any asbestos panels.

It was also said that many Australian soldiers had died in the house during the war. It came as quite a surprise that this was not the case.

The transformation of the building from shabby MoD offices to something like it must have looked in the days of Count Bruhl and his wife the Countess Egremont, after they purchased the property from Sir Roger Newdigate in about 1765, is quite outstanding. Country and Metropolitan Estates are to be congratulated on their dedication in preserving this part of Harefield's rich heritage. We are extremely lucky that two, the first being The Grove, of our big houses are now safe from destruction. Let us hope that the development of Manor Court will be equally successful.

Val Woodward.




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### FAMILIES - People, great and small.

The 12th. Local History Conference, held at Winston Churchill Hall on 25th. February, jointly organised by Rickmansworth and Harefield Societies, was very successful, largely as a result of a great deal of work done by the two Chairmen, Geoff Saul and Tom Hillier.

There was a varied programme of talks on different aspects of family life, from the heraldry of the great to the sorrow of a family split by emigration, and including a dramatic presentation of the inquest following a domestic murder in Harefield in 1784.

We were able to offer only a limited number of display tables for the Societies owing to the space taken up by new raised seating, which was, of course, a great improvement and very comfortable.

H. Evans

## OLD EASTCOTE.

Old Eastcote, where the evenings have magic  
 Hung with half-memories of the past,  
 Of happenings happy and tragic  
 And somehow they linger and last.  
 There's a magic pervading Old Eastcote  
 Enhanced by the towering trees  
 From where murmurings of an earlier folk  
 Can be heard in the evening breeze.  
 There's a feeling that both past and present  
 Intermingle somehow in the air.  
 A sensation both eerie and pleasant  
 That those from the past are still there.  
 You can half see the dawdling cattle again  
 Off up Fore Street to graze on Haste Hill  
 And then hear the creaking of wagons of grain  
 Through Well Green to Pinner Green Mill.  
 At one time the Pinn was more than a stream  
 With old Grimms Dyke to marshal its course  
 And there's sometimes a feeling, almost a dream  
 Of regret, but it hasn't a source.

Ron Harris.

Ron Harris is a keen historian and has a very extensive index of families in the Northwest Middlesex area. Anyone researching their family history would find him very helpful. The Secretary would be glad to forward any queries you may have.

## HARROGATE

During a stay last Summer in Harrogate I was able to explore some of this lovely town, famous for its spas and springs. The Royal Baths (1897) soon grew to be one of the best known hydrotherapy establishments in the world, offering treatments ranging from sulphur baths to poultices of local fango (hot mud). The Royal Hall opened in 1903 as the Kursaal - a name still visible in the stone, a fashionable German term for a spa assembly hall (the name was changed during the first World War) and it is now a theatre.

A more modern building in red brick is the Harrogate Centre (1981) used for conferences, trade fairs and exhibitions. The Royal Pump Room (1842) built over the old sulphur well is now a museum and samples of the water can be obtained from an outside tap. People come from far and near to take away samples of the water once known as 'The Stinking Spaw'....Whooh!

The valley gardens, a pleasant haven retaining the appearance of a natural dell, has been the venue of the celebrated Spring Flower Show since 1947. In the centre of the gardens there is an area known as 'Bog's Field' containing a total of 36 mineral wells - all different.

Apparently Byron stayed in the nearby Crown Hotel in 1806. (I stayed there in 1994).

One of the most impressive areas in Harrogate is known as 'The Stray'. This is a unique area of Common land about 200 acres lying between the ancient villages of Low and High Harrogate, 'open and unenclosed' in the 1770 Act of George III. I was fascinated by the plaque on which it says 'The 200 acres shall forever and hereafter remain open and unenclosed and all persons shall and may have free access at all times to the springs - and enjoy full and free ingress, egress and regress

in, upon and over the said 200 acres'. What a lovely sense of freedom. On this note I will end, but I can say that Harrogate is well worth a visit even though the guide told me it is one of the coldest towns in the North. Nearby Knaresborough is also worth a visit.

M.Marjoram.

#### VISIT TO ST. MARY'S CHURCH.

On October 20th 1994, Val Woodward and three other members of the Society showed a party of National Trust members round St. Mary's. Mrs Hawkins led the party, and the visit was organised by Val.

A brief history of the building was given, and the visitors then looked round inside and outside. They were very interested in the various historical anecdotes we could give them, and especially in the Newdegate family and in our Australian connection, and they were very appreciative of the help given by the Society.

N.Evans.

#### GLIMPSES OF NEW ZEALAND, N.ISLAND and ADELAIDE, S.AUSTRALIA.

We arrived in Los Angeles at 11.15 pm after a very comfortable flight to find our on-going aircraft was overloaded and we had to wait until next evening. A slight problem here - no American money and nowhere to sleep! Thanks to a splendid arrangement between hotels and the voluntary Travellers' Aid Society, our problem disappeared with a minimum of fuss. Next day, sight-seeing in L.A. was impossible thanks to cyclonic weather and we thankfully climbed aboard a delayed W.Z. aircraft late that evening. During the flight we crossed the International Dateline and Thursday vanished into the brilliant sunrise.

Our first introduction to life in Auckland was a shopping expedition. Our eyes were goggling at the amazing array of produce in the local Shopping Mall. The Food Hall of Olympic proportions had us gasping at the quality and quantity, to say nothing of variety on offer, at prices we can only dream of. New Zealanders certainly live well!

One Tree Hill is regarded by the Maori with much the same awe and respect as we afford Stonehenge, but with considerably more reverence. One Tree Hill, in Auckland, is part of the largest ancient Maori Pa in North Island. Known as Maungakiekie, it was the ancient Maori Capital of Auckland - covering some 45 hectares and containing three volcanic cones with four summits. It typifies a defended town, with outer and inner defences, the largest surrounding the most important summit, the 'Piki' of the Pa - the highest and most sacred site. Archaeological digs have revealed terraces and housing units where a self-supporting township existed. One Tree Hill is so called because of the sacred Totara tree that grew on its summit. Now a monument stands there, built in 1948 - with a single tree beside it.

The Hauraki Gulf surrounds the Auckland Isthmus and contains many islands, 47 of which are in the Hauraki Gulf Maritime Park. The two harbours bordering the Isthmus are completely contrasting in style. The smaller Manakau Harbour on the Tasman Sea, is used by fishermen and is frequently deserted, while the Waitemata Harbour is the Commercial Centre and a hive of activity. Spanned by the Long Harbour Bridge, it is home for thousands of yachts of all sizes, ferries, catamarans and many trading vessels.

We were lucky enough to see the Canberra when she docked for 24 hours. A voyage on a ketch-rigged deck scow built in the Maritime Museum, was a lovely experience, and a trip to Kelly Tarlton's Underwater World gave an insight to some of the beauties of big fish. Imagine an acrylic tunnel under the sea which one could wander through at ones own speed, with sharks, stingrays, schools of huge fish gliding over your head and on either side, only centimetres away! Many yacht races are held in the harbour and these have given rise to the Kiwi name for Auckland - The City of Sails, while the Maori name Waitemata means Sparkling Water.

A drive through the East of Auckland brings us to the Waitakere Ranges, a large area forested with rich natural vegetation. Today it is a protected area with outdoor centres, nature trails and Education Centres. It is also the main water catchment area with reservoirs and dams.

Moving South from Auckland, through Hamilton and Cambridge to the famous Glow Worm Caves at Waitomo, and even more famous thermal region of Rotarua, we descended into the wonderland of the cave system. The beauty of the pure crystalline formations, stalactites and stalagmites, and the sheer size of the caves were overwhelming. Down and down we went until we reached an underground river. Here, in almost complete darkness, we were helped into a boat and glided silently into blackness, but looking up, the roofs of the tunnels were bright with millions of glow worms. Although our boat was full of people, no-one made a sound. It was a beautiful moment.

Cynthia and Reg Neil.

(This account will be continued in the September Newsletter.)

#### CONSERVATION REPORT.

Since the last Newsletter members of the Conservation Area Advisory Panel have had plenty to occupy them in their efforts to ensure that any changes in the Village will help to preserve or enhance our architectural heritage. There is space here only to summarise those proposals that directly affect the historic buildings of Harefield.

**MANOR COURT.** When the roof of the stable block to the South of this Grade II listed house collapsed during building operations, Panel members were assured that the old tiles would be re-used, and missing or damaged ones replaced with similar tiles, in accordance with the original planning permission for conversion. Now the whole roof has been re-tiled with new tiles, which, in the opinion of the Panel, have completely spoiled the look of the whole site, especially the approach up the High Street from the South. Apparently the Borough's Historic Buildings Architect Mr. Finney, is quite happy with the bright orange tiles. Mr. Buxton the Planner currently attending CAAP meetings in Harefield, cannot see why the Panel should not prefer new tiles to old ones. An opening has evidently been left in the stable roof for the restoration of the decorative cupola that used to adorn it, but how this will look against the new finish remains to be seen. The Panel Secretary is to write to Mr. Finney requesting an explanation of his views.

**BREAKSPEAR HOUSE STABLES.** There is a proposal current to take Breakspear House Stables and 2.44 acres of adjoining land out of the Green Belt, to enable a Housing Association to convert the stables to residential use. A 'swap' of other land into the

Green Belt has been proposed, but the Panel understands that this land is already under an alternative form of protection, so they are sceptical about any gain arising from such an exchange. Any 'swopping' of land in the Green Belt has to be submitted to the Department of the Environment, as does any development which has been advertised as a 'departure' as this site has. The Panel is very concerned about any threat to the Green Belt, whatever the alleged gain, and has written to the Department of the Environment to express its views.

OLD COACH HOUSE, HAREFIELD HOUSE. An application has been received for listed building consent to demolish this building, which is said to be beyond repair. English Heritage have been consulted and the Panel feels they must accept their ruling. The proposed new building, a Dental Surgery with offices above, and adjacent parking, is nearer to the main road than the old coach house, but will be partially screened by a preserved lime tree.

COLNEY FARM BARN. The latest of a long line of applications for the conversion of these barns and the adjacent 'agricultural buildings' (actually former pigstyes) has just been received. The Panel is concerned about the impact on the view from the Colne Valley of the long barrack-like building which is proposed to link the styes (transformed to garages) to the barn adjacent to Park Lane. Some of the details in the plans, including triangular windows appear to detract from the simple lines of the original barns. Details of these and other planning applications are available for the public to consult at Harefield Library.

Pat Ashby.

PROGRAMME 1995 - 1996.

Planned by Tom Hillier.

1995.

September 25.	GEOFF SAUL ESQ.	WEBSTER ON WATER.
October 23.	DR. IVAN JOHNSON	WELLBEING AT WORK.
November 27.	MARK HOOPER ESQ.	STONE MASONRY
NO MEETING IN DECEMBER		

1996

January 22.	BRIAN ADAMS ESQ.	LOCAL INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY.
February 26.	SIR JOHN DEWHURST.	ROYAL BIRTHS IN BRITISH HISTORY.
March 25.	GEOFF SAUL ESQ.	PUNCH ON SEWAGE.
April 22.	ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING followed by REG NEIL ESQ	
		THE SEVEN ROADS INTO HAREFIELD (PART I)

## FAMILIES - People, great and small

1995 is the International Year of the Family, and quite by coincidence the Local History Societies chose the theme 'Families - People, great and small' for the 12th Annual Local History Conference. It was held at the Winston Churchill Hall, jointly organised by Harefield and Rickmansworth History Societies. Geoff Saul of Rickmansworth, Chairman of this year's Conference, welcomed the audience of approximately 250 people. Those who had attended previous conferences were impressed by the new and comfortable tiered seating, a sound system, and general improvement of the Hall.

Professor John Burnett of Brunel University spoke on Victorian families, describing the differences between the middle and lower classes, how they viewed each other, the beliefs and the realities. He went on to outline how the different classes lived, worked and survived in sometimes very harsh conditions. The contrast between the middle class families aiming to increase their wealth, and the often desperate work of the poorer families just to survive was emphasised by the Professor.

The eventual emancipation of women, with the coming of the factories and education for the lower classes provided by the state, the decline in religious life with the improved standard of living all were highlighted in this very lively, often humorous talk.

A result of eavesdropping on a conversation at a Record Office was the subject that led well-known Uxbridge Historian Ken Pearce to amuse the Audience with a few revelations of the Mother of Four Different Names. These revelations would provide some surprises for the descendants of the family alive today.

The fortunes of a yeoman family, 1471-1709, who by education, hard work and loyalty to the crown resulting in a knighthood, were brought to life in Adrienne Jaques' talk on the Fotherleys of Rickmansworth. Many places of local interest were mentioned, including St. Mary's Church which was destroyed by fire in 1522 and took 15 years to restore.

The second half of the Conference took us back to 1784 with a short and humorous play written by Dorothy Winton on the murder of Anne Walker in Hill End Road in George III's reign. An enactment of the Coroner's Inquest was performed by our Harefield Drama Group H.A.D.S. and kept the audience enthralled and entertained. The costumes and the behaviour of the witnesses was very authentic and well-presented and came to an end all too soon.

I must mention the dedication of the play's producer, Jennie Seymour, who, after an accident while on holiday in Cyprus was in a great deal of pain, but still managed to be in attendance.

A hard act to follow, but Middlesex Heraldry Society soon held our interest with the colourful shields and coats of arms of some local men of rank.

The Family Tree and the connections which led to 'The Convict, the Conscript and the Clergyman' as revealed by Bill Firth shows how researching your family history can produce some surprising secrets.

Finally, Jim Golland, a popular and well-known speaker, read the letters written by a mother to her son in Australia in 1883. These were 'The Langthorn Letters'. They revealed a great deal about life, the struggles, anxieties and problems at that time.

One letter described how the mother lost her home due to compulsory purchase by the Authorities to make way for the Metropolitan Railway. With homes being lost to the proposed Channel Link in the 1990s, it makes one wonder does life really change.

The conference, due to the hard work of the organisers and their helpers, was a great success.

Anne Batchelor.