

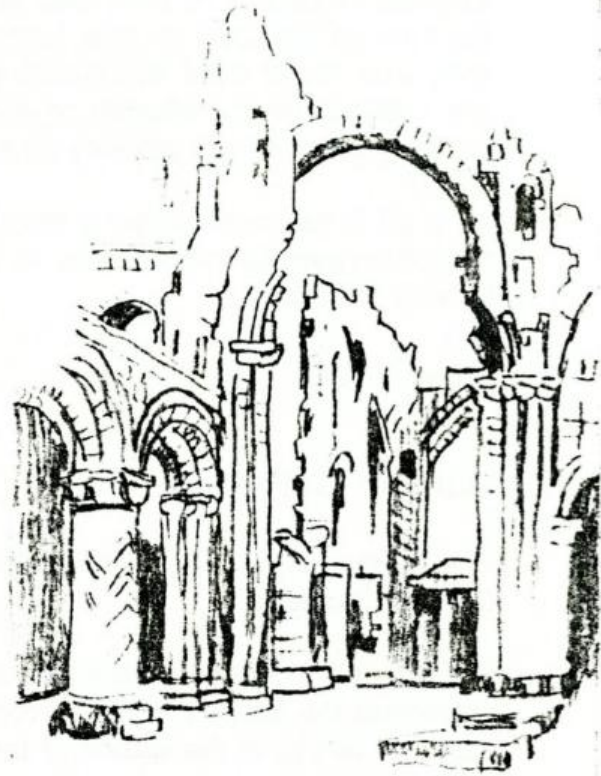
# HAREFIELD HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter no. 33      Spring 1997

Committee:	I Liddell	Chairman
	M Marjoram	Treasurer
	M Evans	Secretary
	R Neil	
	R Goodchild	Programme Secretary
	V Woodward	Conservation Representative

## Programme: *Summer Outings;*

11-16 June	Peterborough
12 July	Singleton Outdoor Museum, and Chichester
22 Sept	John Lugg, "Development of the Permanent Way"
27 Oct	Iain Liddell, "Five Fighting Ships"
24 Nov	Hugh Grainger, "Origins of Manners and Customs"



## Secretary's Report

So, another Conference is over, and a very enjoyable and successful one, organised by the Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Society on the subject of Manors.

Three of our members went on a tour of Northumbria - but more of that from from Vi Hardy.

We continue to have more and more building in the village. The new nursing home rises a bit each time one passes and part of it will be higher than Harefield House when completed. Already the view of the cedar is blocked. The five new cottages on the Mines Royal site fit in very well with the adjoining dwellings. The next thing we are to expect will be the demolition of the old vicarage and the building of eight houses on the site. Perhaps the developers will leave us alone for a bit after that ? !

M Evans

## The 14th Local History Day

There was a full house for the recent Local History Day, held on 22nd February at the Winston Churchill Hall, and an appreciative audience was both entertained and enlightened by a worthy team of speakers presenting various aspects of "Middlesex Manors - then and now".

With David Sullivan, we explored the lives and times of the mediaeval monks of Westminster Abbey, and Eileen Bowlt, assisted by her husband, gave us with her usual expertise glimpses into the lives of tenants of a typical manor.

Graham Elcombe and Jim Golland followed, with interesting and often hilarious features of life as recorded in the Harrow Court Rolls. Most of you will recall Pat Clarke from her recent presentation

at our own February meeting - she was equally rewarding on the subject of "Manorial Buildings", and the Middlesex Heraldry Society gave us an insight into the heraldry of ecclesiastical Lords of Manors.

Ken Pearce had us all enthralled and amused with an account of a minor rebellion in Uxbridge over the right of the Lord of their Manor (at that time, Lady Derby of Harefield) to receive the market tolls, and Geoff Saul concluded the day's programme with a spirited account of the troubles encountered by the citizens of Rickmansworth in pinning down various Lords of the Manor into keeping their bridges properly maintained.

All in all, it was once again a most satisfactory and interesting History Day, and we have now only to look forward to the next one in 1998, which is to be under the auspices of Harrow and Stanmore History Societies.

Betty Dungey

## Durham Cathedral

It is always a pleasure to fulfill an ambition, even a comparatively small one in paying a visit to Durham Cathedral.

On entering it looked at first glance as if some of the pillars had painted stripes, but on closer inspection the "stripes" were carved incised decorations, the depth of which with light and shadow cast on them gave the illusion of being painted. They were quite breathtaking and afforded vistas of great grandeur.



There is a replica of the Sanctuary Knocker on the door of the Cathedral. The original is in the Cathedral Treasury. It is so called because if criminals clung to it they might be able to claim sanctuary in the Cathedral until their offences had been pardoned by the King.

Looking north across the transepts the tower is supported by four magnificent arches, each sixty eight feet six inches in height. The lantern rises to one hundred and fifty five feet.

The view across the nave from the triforium shows how beautifully light the building is.

The Bishop's Throne, said to be the highest in Christendom, surmounts the tomb of Bishop Hatfield - Bishop of Durham 1345 - 81. He built it as his own memorial. Loftiness and soaring lines are obtained in the Chapel of the Nine Altars by sinking the floor below the level of the Church.

The High Altar and Neville Screen given by John Lord Neville about 1380 is of caen stone, wrought in London and brought by sea to Newcastle. The large modern altar encloses a smaller Jacobean one still used occasionally.

Durham Cathedral, from the north

Part of the 17th C restoration were the choir stalls probably designed by James Clement of Durham and are the work of an unknown carver. Under the stalls are five misericords of the 17th C and medieval subjects. The pews in the sanctuary are of the same period.

Charming carved figures can be seen in various parts of the Cathedral.

The font and its elaborate cover were provided in the last half of the 17th C by Bishop John Cosin.

There is a clock in the south transept. Its case is late 15th C and the dials and works were renewed in 1632.

In the Cathedral Treasury are displayed valuable and beautiful objects that are a guide through the 900 years of the Cathedral's history. Here are to be found the coffin that brought St Cuthbert's body to Durham in 995, fine altar plate, richly illustrated manuscripts and Bishop's ring and seals.

The original roof timbers are retained in the monks' dormitory situated above the Treasury and now a library opened to the public between Easter and the end of September.

Durham Cathedral is unique. It is the finest example of early Norman architecture in England and its massive grandeur is enhanced by its magnificent site on a rocky piece of land overlooking and almost surrounded by the River Wear.

*" Grey Towers of Durham,  
Yet well I love thy mixed and massive piles,  
Half Church of God,  
Half castle 'gainst the Scot".  
Sir Walter Scott*

There would not have been a Cathedral had it not been for Cuthbert of Lindisfarne, best loved saint of the north east.

Originally called the White Church in 998, it was built as a shrine for this famous Saint Cuthbert. His mortal remains found their last resting place in Durham and lie under a plain marble slab behind the High Altar. The tomb of the Venerable Bede is also in Durham Cathedral. The White Church was pulled down in 1092 to make way for a new cathedral.

## **Lindisfarne - The Holy Island**

It was fitting that we visited Lindisfarne, the Holy Island, as it is linked with Durham Cathedral.

Lindisfarne, later known as Holy Island, was the site of one of the most important early centres of Christianity in Anglo - Saxon England.

Founded in 635 by St Aidan the monastery achieved international fame as a centre of learning and culture, becoming the pre - eminent cult centre when St Cuthbert's incorrupt body was enshrined in its church.

From the end of the 8th C the monastery on the island was raided by the Vikings, forcing the monks to seek safety on the mainland. They took Cuthbert's body with them.

Monks from Durham re-established a religious community in the 12th C. The priory was built by them and its extensive ruins can still be seen today.

Trained by Abbot Eata, Cuthbert came to Lindisfarne as Prior when Eata became Abbot and later Bishop of the isle. Cuthbert eventually agreed to succeed Eata as Bishop in 685 exchanging a life of solitude on Farne Island for one entailing a heavy burden of pastoral responsibilities. Within two

years he had died and his body was brought to Lindisfarne and was buried in St Peter's Church in 687.

In 698, eleven years later, the monks dug up the remains and were very surprised to find St Cuthbert's body undecayed. It was placed in a wooden reliquary coffin. Substantial parts of that coffin remain and are preserved in Durham Cathedral, his final resting place together with other precious objects associated with the Saint.

Holy Island is still a place of pilgrimage today. It has a small flourishing community obviously not worried by being cut off from the mainland twice in 24 hours by the tide when the causeway disappears under the sea.

Vi Hardy

## A Visit to China

### General Observations

The China tour was very interesting but also disappointing in that it could have been so much better. Accommodation was excellent, some would say unnecessarily lavish, usually at three to five star intercontinental type hotels, with a range of toiletries in the en-suite bathrooms and a choice of European type breakfasts. By contrast the coaches though adequate for the journey had insufficient space for our baggage which had to be carried separately thus leading to long delays at hotel receptions. The China Travel Service - a government organisation, was extraordinarily inept in that the guides seemed to know little of tourists' need or tour management. There were normally two guides - the national guide who stayed with us, and a provincial guide who took charge at each of our tour destinations. Our guides, except in Beijing, had only a poor command of English and rarely volunteered information. These varied very much in ability, one actually spoke excellent English, some were most enthusiastic, but inexperienced, while others were both inactive and incompetent. They usually spoke of the size and population of the province, district or town, its history from neolithic to Imperial times and noted its present level of economic production in terms of Chinese currency, but, because of poor English or ignorance, could hardly ever discuss the geology, scenery, industry, agriculture, arts, education or social structure of the environments we encountered. The guides did not eat at tourist tables so it was very difficult to ascertain what the table manners should be or to identify dishes offered! We learnt much more from our guide books, and from those of us tourists who had previously visited China, or had worked there in mining, business or teaching.

### The First Experience

Our first, and many other impressions were not entirely favourable. We arrived at Beijing Airport after a long journey - the usual hours getting to the airport, waiting for departure and then a ten hour flight through the sleepless night. A rapid transit took us through customs and immigration to meet our National Guide who spoke excellent English and had just passed her examinations, we were her first clients! Nothing unusual so far apart from the Chinese signs and people we could have been at a major airport anywhere in the world! Our guide, a charming young lady, assured us that our baggage would be taken on ahead to our hotel and that we should now carry our hand luggage to the bus which was waiting to take us on a tour of some of the highlights of Beijing.

It was a bright sunny morning. Weighed down by hand baggage ( trolleys were not permitted to enter the car park ) we were guided to our bus carefully located, with its sleeping driver, about a quarter of a mile away at the other end of the airport, the first of many such journeys from distant car parks to sites of special interest!

Though most of us - after some 12 to 14 hours of travelling would have liked to have gone to the hotel for a wash and a moments relaxation - this was not to be!

We soon learnt that we were not going to our hotel but on a cultural tour of parks and temples so that any hope of getting a rest would be delayed until after our sightseeing expedition when the guide would be off-duty from 6 o'clock.

## **Why Is China So Interesting**

China is an extraordinary country, it is vast, about 370 million square miles ( 9,600,000 square kilometres ) - comparable with the USA - it stretches over 30 degrees of latitude from Mongolia to the sub-tropics, and more than 50 degrees of longitude, from Kashgar in the Himalayas to the Pacific. Much of China averages over 4 miles above sea level - Mount Everest is about 5½ miles (almost 9 km) high while the Turfan depression is about 500 feet (154 m) below sea level.

About 1.2 billion people ( 1,200 million ) live in China - 90% of them in fertile plains and river basins making up less than a third of the country's area. The Han Chinese - accounting for about 95% of the population - speak very different languages, while still more tongues are used by the numerous different ethnic minorities. In spite of these differences all literate Chinese are able easily to communicate because the signs used stand for words and ideas - not for sounds - so the sign for the capital city is always the same whether it is pronounced in Beijin ( as in Mandarin ) or Pekin ( as in Cantonese ). In Chinese calligraphy the sign for Germany for instance is the same whether pronounced Deutschland, Allemagne or Germany. This characteristic has led to great problems in translation of Chinese - maps for instance - which language should be employed and which Roman letters should be used to represent the sounds?

Chinese civilisation goes back to about 5000 BC - farming and bronze casting were well established by 1500 BC and records from about 1000 BC. The Chinese made several major technical advances long before the Europeans - notably the invention of cast iron to replace bronze by 400 BC and the inventions of printing, gunpowder and porcelain between 600 and 900 AD ie during the years of the Dark Ages in Europe.

Major engineering feats were carried out by highly developed societies in China - the Great Wall was begun in 221 BC while the Grand Canal begun in the 5th C BC was completed to it's full length of 1100 miles by the 7th C AD to provide reliable transport between the northern ( Beijin ) and southern ( Hangchow ) regions of China.

China is now a communist state devoted to the improvement of living standards by modernisation of production methods and, in time, replacement of the communist by a modified capitalist method of government. Private enterprise is now very evident - small businesses typified by stall holders, are everywhere to be seen, selling everything from fresh ( or not so fresh ) fruit and vegetables to souvenirs, both genuine antiques and modern reproductions. Brisk bargaining is the norm. In most countries the stranger is advised to start by offering half the price demanded - but - in most of China a more successful play is to offer a third or a fifth of the first asking price!

We tourists were shown none of the modern buildings for living accommodation, for public works, factories or farms even though many were to be seen from the coach on our tours. The major emphasis was on the past achievements and present crafts. We were shown numerous religious edifices, pagodas and Imperial palaces as well as excellent archeological displays and traditional activities such as silk production, embroidery and hand printing but no interiors of modern flats or houses and no modern manufacturing establishments.

## **What Did We See ?**

### **Beijin**

The somnolent driver woke up and took us through the crowded streets which we were soon to find typical of all China. While our guide was attempting to teach us useful Chinese expressions such as "How are you?" and "Good Morning" we could not help noticing the immense density of traffic, its noise and confusion. The main streets of Beijin are very wide with two extensive

carriageways which are each divided into an ample pavement for pedestrians, a broad road for mechanically propelled vehicles and another for bicycles and the handcarts which are used to carry enormous loads. At crossings there was usually a general air of pandemonium. Traffic lights and policemen were often both in action, and on occasion, men with red flags would pull a rope up to handlebar height across the road to stem the apparently unending flow of cyclists. We were told that many millions of people live in Beijing, and that most of them own a bicycle. Confusion was increased by pedestrians threading their way through the traffic. Accidents we learnt were not uncommon but, because of the slow speed, and frequent use of the horn, appeared not often to be serious. In Beijing, as we were to find everywhere else, the pedal bicycle is king of the road having precedence in numbers and in priority over all other traffic - small motor scooters and motor cycles are to be seen but only a few of them.

Eventually we arrived at the first of several temples sited amongst attractive parks and gardens. In the streets outside were elegant refuse bins in the shape of large glazed pottery frogs with mouths held wide open to receive rubbish - rather a contrast with municipal dust receptacles in the UK! The streets in Beijing were swept to a much higher standard than that to which we are now accustomed, but - per contra - the public lavatories left much to be desired by way of hygiene and cleanliness.

The communist regime in China has relaxed the rules regulating religious activities, even so it was surprising to see numerous priests officiating in the temples while in the precincts there were crowds of people. Numerous devotees were queuing to add lighted joss sticks and paper money for the dead, to a smouldering but scented pile of ashes and then to offer a short (or long) prayer before retiring to make way for others. These temples, like many other buildings, were guarded by a pair of gilded bronze lions, the male holding a playful cub under its paw while the lioness held a ball. We were taken to the Llama Temple, a major Buddhist shrine with a remarkable gilded statue of the Buddha - over 60 feet high - and carved from a single piece of wood, the trunk of an exceptionally large camphor tree. The walls in this, as in many other temples, were lined with more large painted and gilded statues of Buddha and his disciples. Next we were taken to a temple dedicated to Confucius and noted for the remarkable statue, in white marble, of the philosopher to be seen welcoming us at the entrance. This building is surrounded by stone steles, up to 8 feet high which are not grave stones but were erected as if they were professional certificates, by senior administrators to demonstrate publicly that they had passed the examinations essential for high office in the Civil Service.

We were then, at last, taken to our hotel and allowed to put our feet up after having seen a little of China, past and present, and having noted our guides determination to do her duty before releasing her charges at the approved time and place!

The next day we were to see more of Beijing. First by man-powered tricycle pedicab round the Futong district - two of us sat behind the driver in each of the fleet of little cabs which were hooded, for shelter against the sun and rain. The Futong is a residential working class area in central Beijing where people live in much the same way as in the past, in drab streets of grey brick houses, of only one storey, the ground floor. There were no windows on the street but the occasional open door offered glimpses of the courtyards beyond. We entered one and were shown the facilities which resembled those of English country cottages many years ago, rabbits in hutches, flowers and vegetables in small pots, simple hand tools - and numerous bicycles - it is said there are almost as many bicycles as people in Beijing! In China no chimneys are to be seen on any houses - heating and cooking for the most part appears to have depended on the burning of charcoal and now on smokeless fuel made from coal and burnt in fires without chimneys.

We were not shown any modern urban housing but wherever we went in the country, there were multi-storey blocks of flats both in occupation and under construction amongst the factories and office blocks which seemed to grow round all the towns. We were told all this accommodation was being built by private enterprise and was too costly for ordinary people! After Futong we were taken to Tiananmen Square, a large open space in the middle of Beijing where we were proudly shown the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall, the War Memorial, the Great Hall of the People and a big modern 5 star hotel - but not the spot where the students died! This vast area - of over 60 acres -

was said to have held crowds of over a million people on great occasions but during our visit the small groups of tourists, both foreign and Chinese were lost in the open space where children played and numerous wonderful kites were flying in the breeze.

*Watch this space - to be continued !*

W Cuthbertson

## **Carribbean Holiday**

Last December we escaped the British winter for two weeks and went on a cruise from Malaga to the Carribbean. We flew to Malaga where we boarded the Victoria and sailed through very rough sea to Madeira.

Madeira lies in the Atlantic Ocean west of Morocco and north of the Canary Islands. It is a beautiful green island, full of flowers and friendly people. We had time to visit Fuchal, drive past the vineyards, banana plantations, sugar plantations, mimosa and eucalyptus, visit the 18th C twin spired church of Nossa Senhora, have a ride on the famous toboggan run and sample the wine before boarding the ship to sail for five sunny days, being thoroughly spoilt, until we reached Barbados.

Barbados is the most easterly island in the West Indies, out of the chain of Leeward and Windward Islands and on its own in the Atlantic. It is scarcely larger than the Isle of Wight and boasts beautiful beaches with calm clear waters. The climate hardly varies from 75-80°F tempered by a north-easterly sea breeze and the humidity is low. From its founding in 1627 to its independence in 1966, the island was a British colony. It has an endearing blend of British and West Indian cultures. The ship berthed at Bridgetown and we realised why Barbados is known throughout the Carribbean as "Little England". The market town atmosphere, Georgian houses, Trafalgar Square, neo-Gothic public buildings and cricket grounds all contribute to the impression. The island is of coral formation, the principal industry is tourism, closely followed by sugar and its by products. The island also produces around 60% of its oil requirements. Barbados does not have the striking heights and lush tropical forests but there is plenty of variety. We visited Harrison's Cave and had a trip in a tram through the exciting subterranean passages. We were lucky enough to see a mongoose scuttling through the gardens outside.

The next island we visited was Grenada, the most southerly of the Windward Islands, fifteen miles long by eight miles wide. Columbus named the island Concepción but did not land. Over a hundred years later, 200 British colonists arrived on All Fool's Day 1609, but the warlike Carib Indians gave them such a rough time that the survivors soon sailed back home. Thirty years later a band of Frenchmen arrived but they were compelled to leave even more hastily. Their Gallic pride stung, to the quick more Frenchmen arrived and as the Caribs soon reverted to their ungentlemanly habit of killing every white man they saw, the French had to get rid of them. The British started to flex their muscles here in the mid-18th C, and associated statehood within the Commonwealth came in 1967 and independence was granted in 1974. The "Isle of Spice" as it is known, is a lush green island with extensive forests on its mountainous slopes and its qualities of simplicity and natural beauty make it one of the most attractive islands of the Windward group. It was because of its unspoilt charm that Grenada was chosen for the location of the film "Island in the Sun". We visited the nutmeg centre of Gouyave and in the cooler highlands the forest reserve of Grand Etang centred on a deep green lake cupped in the crater of a long dead volcano.

Our next stop was Guadeloupe, golden beaches rimmed with coconut palms, crystal blue seas and an exotic feeling. This french island resembles the shape of a butterfly with outspread wings. We visited Point-à-Pitre, the largest town, the National Park, a rum distillery and the floral gardens.

We then sailed to St Thomas which is the second largest of the three principle islands of the United States Virgin Islands in the Lesser Antilles. It is an island of volcanic origin, 14 miles long and 2 miles wide. It has a rugged terrain and a deeply indented coast. St Thomas was briefly colonised

by the Dutch and in 1666 was occupied for a short time by Danish colonists. St Thomas was to become the largest slave market in the world and the island was a popular refuge for pirates. Slaves worked on the newly-established sugar plantations until 1848: piracy faded out of the local scene from the mid 18th C. In 1764 King Frederick V of Denmark declared St Thomas a freeport, the island flourished and became the trading centre of the West Indies but the island's fortunes declined dramatically after 1848 when slavery was abolished. The British twice took possession during the Napoleonic wars. On 31st March 1917 the United States finally took possession of St Thomas, buying it from Denmark. Today tourism has replaced the old sugar cane plantations as the big money earner. Although the island is a duty free area, it should not be assumed that everything is a bargain. We decided to go shopping only in the morning and in the afternoon we went on a trip in the Atlantis submarine for an exciting journey through the natural undersea world to a depth of 150 feet and saw sponges, soft corals, coral reef formations, colourful tropical fish and marine life including a couple of sharks.

We arrived at Puerto Rico the next morning. Puerto Rico is the most easterly island of the Greater Antilles, 70 miles east of the Dominican Republic and forty miles west of the island of St Thomas. It is rectangular in shape, 100 miles long and 35 miles wide, bordered on the north by the Atlantic Ocean and on the south by the Caribbean Sea. This is now United States territory, although originally Christopher Columbus discovered it in 1493 and took possession of the island in the name of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. We had time to visit the fort of San Christóbal before we had to depart for the airport in San Juan and fly home just in time to get ready for a family Christmas. It was a lovely holiday.

B Harrold

## **Harefield Village Conservation Area Advisory Panel**

**Harefield House:** Since my last report the building of a nursing home adjacent to Harefield House was approved by the planning authority and this is now going ahead. The developer cleared the project with the residents most affected in Pond Close. Landscaping plans have now been submitted to the Council for the land around the nursing home, but the matter of the village car park does not seem to have been addressed, the Panel is still waiting to see a copy of the legal agreement. At our last meeting the Panel urged the Planning Officer to clarify the legal position. The panel have expressed their concern about the proposed materials to be used in the building to replace the coach house. Concern has been voiced about this building as it is very obtrusive and far exceeds the ground area of the old coach house.

**Church Hill hedge:** This plan has now been abandoned.

**Mines Royal Cottages:** The Council agreed to the suggestion of the Panel in the naming of the development on the Mines Royal site.

**14 / 14A Northwood Road:** permission was granted for the moving of the replacement trees so that the owner could build a detached house in the rear, which is now under construction of course. Members of the Panel were not happy about this turn of events - seemingly the law can be bent !! Rumours abound about further development - we shall see.

**Signs:** There seems to be a proliferation of advertising notices , some for events not connected with the village. This is quite illegal and anyone is quite within their rights to remove them. Owners of various lighted signs in the High Street, again not permitted in a conservation area, are being served with enforcement action. Bus shelters are appearing at various points in the village and the panel is unhappy that the Council have allowed what appears to be no more than an advertising ploy by the contractor supplying the bus shelters. The panel has objected strongly to the illuminated signs which have now appeared. It is hardly fair to Harefield's shopkeepers who have to abide by the rules. The Panel was not consulted before the erection of any of these bus shelters.

**Fences:** A fence to a property in Rickmansworth Road was erected without planning permission and is considered by residents and the Planning Officer to be too high. This case is being pursued.



An enforcement notice has been served but with no result so far.

**Church Gardens Cottage:** This grade II listed building has recently been purchased and the new owner is seeking planning permission to restore and make various alterations to the property. The panel has asked for more information as the plan shows windows and a door in the south wall which is itself grade II listed.

**Breakspear Stables:** The planning application is awaiting the result of the enquiry. The Chairman of the Panel wrote a letter to the Enquiry giving the Panels' views. The results of the enquiry are not yet announced.

**High Street ( School Parade Area ):** A plan to construct pedestrian islands in the middle of the road ( the widest part of the High Street ) which would regulate traffic flow and make crossing the road at this point safer for pedestrians, was shown to the Panel. No previous consultation took place so the Panel has invited the Head of the Highways Department to attend the next meeting as members have several suggestions to make.

**Village Pond:** Everyone will be aware of the proposal to line the pond. M J Clancy and Sons Ltd are to commence work about June when the pond will have presumably dried up.

*The Panel continues to voice it's concern about what is happening within the conservation area and we do attempt to be constructive in our criticism. However members do feel that not enough regard, if any, is taken of our concerns and comments. In other words we get very frustrated !!!*

*The Panel is very concerned about the increase in incidents in breach of planning control. Investigation into these matters, particularly if they are brought to enforcement notice or to court, means a huge cost being borne by the Council. Members are concerned that many of these breaches are carried out by people who are unaware that they live in a conservation area. All that is needed is a leaflet to be distributed showing the actual conservation area. This could also be given to estate agents. The Panel members would undertake the delivery of any leaflets the Council could produce.*

The above information is an amalgamation of the latest two conservation reports.

Val Woodward

Well, folks, that's it for newsletter 33! Don't forget your contributions for the next edition !  
Many thanks, M Evans