

Harefield History Society

Affiliated to the Uxbridge Guild of Arts

Newsletter no. 38 Autumn 1999

Committee

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A Batchelor	Treasurer
K Davey	Secretary
V Woodward	Conservation Rep
R Goodchild	Programme Secretary
M Evans	Editor
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Hope Cottage

Programme for the forthcoming season Winter Meetings

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| 25 th October | Ken Kirkman | Pinner Chalk Mines |
| Following the recent publication of his book, Mr Kirkman will present a slide show on this local industry. | | |
| 22 nd November | John Butterworth | Industrial Porcelain |
| The former manager of Park Lane Porcelain in Harefield will share his knowledge of the industry with which he was associated for many years. | | |
| 24 th January 2000 | Harefield in the last Millennium ~ Local Studies Evening | |
| A look at aspects of Harefield life through the ages. Any contributors welcome. | | |
| 28 th February | Walter Winton | Commemorative Plates. |
| 27 th March | Ann Dent | Quilts |
| 17 th April | Annual General Meeting followed by | |
| | Ken Pearce | 100 years of retail in Uxbridge |
| With the new development coming to the High Street we shall look at how retail has changed over the century. | | |

Secretary's Note:

Hope Cottage has been in the news during the summer recess, with a proposal to build five houses in the grounds. We have written to the Planning authorities objecting to the proposal. Arrangements for the final Local History Day are underway. The hosts are the Ruislip, Northwood and Eastcote Local History Society. Co-ordinators are asking for any snippets of local information on Markets & Fairs, Communications and Industry, and Transport and Suburban Development. If you have any anecdotes etc then please let us know. We have received, through Reg, a very generous donation of £ 50 from Keith Borrow and Brian Watkins of the Harefield Society Australasia. Should we use this for something special? The Millennium? Suggestions will be welcome.

K Davey

Editor's Note:

Hope Cottage. This house on Church Hill dates back to the C18. Members of the Newdigate family lived there. Local legend has it that there is a tunnel leading from the cottage to the church, but so far this has not yet been substantiated.

There are traces of timber framing and the remains of chaff packed between first floor joists, possibly as an early form of insulation. About twenty years ago the roof tiles were held in place by the original wooden pegs but these have been replaced. However the massive king posts remain.

Hope Cottage is locally listed as late C18 with some early C19 additions.

We understand that there is now a threat to build houses behind the cottage which would involve having access by road on to the already dangerous bend in Church Hill near the White Horse. Observing the speed of traffic in both directions, this would obviously make this the most dangerous part of the village.

It is hoped that the Planning Officer will refuse this plan, since the need for conservation as well as safety is far more important than development.

Church Fete, 3rd July 1999. Again we had our Church Fete on the village green and it looked like a very successful day. There is always a capful of wind on the green and in spite of anchoring my papers with stones they were still at risk. We sold for copies of Gregory King's Harefield and enlisted two new members who had recently come to live in the village.

Reg Neil's large coloured photographs attracted the interest of everyone as they passed and there was a continuous group there discussing the village scenes.

M Evans

A walk around Rickmansworth conservation area ~ Tuesday 29th June 1999

It was a cold and drizzly June evening which went some way to explain why only 8 out of the original 26 members who expressed an interest in our walk turned up. Our spirits were not dampened and the enthusiasm shown by our host Geoff Saul for his hometown spurred us on.

We commenced at the library where Geoff used the extensive collection of C18 and C19 maps of Rickmansworth town and country to provide an informative overview to our impending walk. The original idea of starting from the top of the car park being rained off. With our new found knowledge of the people and places which make up the history of Rickmansworth and rain subsiding we commenced our walk.

The gentle stroll headed down Church Street passing over what is known as the town ditch for the first time. We turned into Bury Lane and headed to the recently restored The Bury, which has been tastefully separated into a number of apartments, the grounds having not been built on by the developers, unlike many of the Harefield listed buildings such as Manor Court, Workhouses, and Harefield House with possible future developments at Breakspear House, Rose Cottage and Hope Cottage. From there we returned past the Beresford Almshouses which were relocated from the High Street and back to the rear of the Town Hall behind the High Street.

With much interesting information provided about the shops in the High Street over the last 40 years, many memories were rekindled by our members who have using the Rickmansworth facilities for many years. Our enjoyable and informative evening delivered

with the usual enthusiasm by Geoff Saul came to a close.

R Goodchild

Leeds Castle, Kent ~ 15th May 1999

After a good journey down, we arrived at the coach park at 10.30am to be greeted by the cries of two white peacocks. Having obtained our tickets we set off on the long but pleasant walk to the castle. There was a shuttle service for anyone who could not manage the distance on foot.

Past the Duckery, a lake with many species of water fowl, including black swans, through the gardens by the River Len, which is the source of the water surrounding the castle, to the castle gatehouse with the ruined Barbican and Fortified Mill close by.

The castle is in a beautiful setting, and over the centuries has had many owners, including the Royal Families between 1290 and 1522. Coats of Arms of the owners are displayed in the Heraldry Room, where there is also the Wardrobe Book of 1422, showing the daily expenses of the castle ~ one day shows an expenditure of 37 shillings.

All of the occupants played some part in restoring and enlarging the castle, but it was Lady Mary Baillie who, having purchased the castle and grounds in 1926, meticulously restored it and arranged for it to be "preserved in perpetuity for the benefit and enjoyment of the public."

The oldest part of the castle is the Keep or Gloriette, built in the C12, much altered since but the central Fountain Court dates from 1280. Some of the rooms here are furnished in period styles ; the Henry VIII Banqueting Hall, Queen's Gallery, Queen's Room and Bathroom. The Chapel was rededicated in 1978. In complete contrast are the rooms once used by Lady Mary Baillie, now used for conferences etc and furnished in C20 style.

Leaving the castle, the first stop is the Dog Collar Museum in the Gate Tower. Pity the poor dogs who had to wear those heavy metal collars!

Then on to the Stable Yard where one could obtain refreshments or a full meal in the Fairfax Hall and browse around the shops. From there a stroll through the Culpepper Garden brings you to the Aviary with its many rare and attractive species. On again to the maze with a grotto in the centre. Did anyone manage to reach the Grotto ? The greenhouses and vineyard were also well worth a visit, and plants could be bought there.

An added attraction on the day was the Festival of English Food and Wine, held in open marquees on the lawns beyond the castle moat. Plenty of wines, cordials and titbits to taste and buy if you could manage to carry them! Music and Morris dancing to entertain and cookery demonstrations etc in the Presentation Tent.

Back to our coach at 4.30pm, with more of Reg's sweets to suck on the homeward journey ~ thanks Reg! And thank you Robert for organising such a full and enjoyable day.

K Davey

The Globe Theatre

After 300 years the Globe Theatre has reopened. It was officially opened by Her Majesty the Queen on 12th June 1997.

In Shakespear's day Bankside was a flourishing district for entertainment and the Globe Theatre, where many great English plays were first performed, was the centre of that area. In 1613 the theatre was destroyed by fire when a spark from a stage cannon, during a

performance of Henry VIII set fire to the thatched roof.

In 1949 Sam Wanamaker, an American actor and director, saw a plaque to the Globe on a wall and could not understand why the British people had never shown an interest in rebuilding it. He then decided to try and do it himself. The Government refused to help so he begged from firms and individuals. It was not until his death that people came forward to help to build it for his sake.

Skilled craftsmen trained in Elizabethan building techniques and using traditional materials such as unseasoned oak, lime, goats hair and water reeds from all over the country set to work to create the London theatre once again. The green oak came from some of England's ancient forests to be fashioned into mortice and tenon joints. Willows were split into laths, sand from Chardstock was mixed with lime and goats hair to create plaster for the walls. York flagstones were laid on the piazza; even the bricks have been moulded to the same size as they were in Elizabethan days.

The Globe Theatre has been rebuilt as an International Shakespeare Centre, an educational and cultural complex. Shakespeare's plays are being performed with audience participation as they were in Elizabethan days. Afternoon and evening performances seat 1000 people under cover on wooden benches and 500 standing "groundlings" in the open. History has been recreated at Bankside, London.

J Thirkettle

Towards the Millennium.

It is interesting to look at some of the events which brought improvements in the way of life of the people during the periods leading towards the Millennium. Some of these have been recorded during Victoria's reign in the Illustrated London News, 1897 by Sir Walter Besant. These changes were due, he says, to a spirit of enterprise and endeavour, the achievement comparable only to the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

During Victoria's reign the British Empire increased by 31/2 million square miles and 8 million people. The additions were Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. It was not a peaceful reign ~ there were wars with Russia, India, Afghanistan, Ashanti, Canada and at home there was distress due to unemployment, chiefly in farming. But there was development in railways. In 1850 there were 6621 miles of railway line, and by 1897 there were 21,174 miles. The first steam driven paddle - boat was launched in 1837 and by 1897 there were 8500 of these steamers. The last battle with sailing ships was in 1840.

Other developments were in textile manufacture and foreign trade. Important reforms were the extension of franchise; restriction of the hours of work, abolition of the Debtor's Prison and of flogging in the Army and Navy, and the Education Act. Also the reform of the Poor Law, repeal of the Corn Laws, cheap postage, and higher wages with holidays. Added to these were the development of various sciences by Darwin, Dalton, Faraday, Stephenson, Kelvin, Lister and Brunel.

Another aspect of Victoria's reign was the amount of exploration carried out by men with an interest in Natural History. Many of these travellers made collections of plants which were sold in order to pay for their journeys. It was a dangerous occupation and some failed to return safely. The main areas explored were Africa, especially the River Niger, South America and the Himalayas. Kew Gardens was one result of the collections. An interesting account is "Bright Paradise" by Peter Raby.

M Evans

The 1920's and the way we lived then

Village Shops

In the village there was a butcher's shop for all the usual cuts of meat, liver and kidney, pigs head (for making thick brawn jelly), pig trotters, scrag end of mutton and sheep's heads for stews, bullock and lamb hearts, sweetbreads, rabbits, boiling fowl, beef and pork sausages, faggots, black pudding, suet, beef dripping and bones for the dog.

There was a baker's shop where the loaves were made every day, as well as a range of buns rock cakes, doughnuts, yellow sponge cake with or without cherries, and other delicacies although most households could not afford the luxury of these "shop cakes".

Milk was delivered to the houses by cart in a very big churn from which it was measured into jugs by the milkman though later in this decade milk began to be delivered and left on the doorstep in glass bottles with paper cap seals.

Fish could be bought from a man with a barrow who called in the village once every week.

There was a shop for tobacco, newspapers and sweets. In those times there were very few packed items. There were expensive toffees such as the individually wrapped "Blue Bird" at 1d. each ~ highly desirable but beyond our financial reach. Most things were sold from large tins, bottles or sacks. The best value in sweets for pennies, were boiled sweets # acid or pear drops were the favourite ~ at 2d. per quarter pound. There were also highly scented "Angels Whispers" lenticular discs of hard suckable pastel coloured sugar fondant each bearing a brief romantic word or two. Then there was the slab toffee which came to the shop in flat tin trays from which it was taken by the shop assistant who broke it into smaller pieces with the help of a pair of shears and a toffee hammer. The quantity required was then weighed out and packed in a little paper bag or square of brown or blue wrapping paper. Aniseed balls, often as much as a penny each, though expensive were deemed good value. They lasted a long time and changed colour from the original brown or yellow to a wide variety of interesting hues, green, blue, red and orange as they dissolved in the mouth until in the end nothing was left except a single aniseed to remind one of their name and origin. There were monkey nuts otherwise known as peanuts, tiger nuts (not as popular), large dried carob bean pods with sweet but fibrous husks and hard inedible seeds, dried liquorice root ~ sweet but not as attractive as the sticks or ribbons of black liquorice at 4 for a penny and the loose liquorice allsorts which were more costly than acid drops.

There were a few affordable pre wrapped sweets, such as sherbets. These were small triangular packets containing a powder and a small boiled sugar lolly at the end of a stick. This could be licked and moistened so that when dipped in the sherbet it became coated with lemon or pear drop scented powder which tasted of sugar and fizzed in the mouth. There were also packets of "Cavendish Cut" made to look like tobacco and five sticks of candy, white with red tips, in a packet labelled "Woodbines" for a penny, just like the real Woodbines which then cost 2d. for five.

Fizzy lemonade and carbonated, coloured drinks (but no fruit juices) were available in glass bottles ~ usually returnable for a penny when emptied.

There were no ice creams in the shops until the 1930s when the first electric refrigerator was installed in the village though ices could occasionally be bought from an itinerant ice cream man.

At the barber's shop the standard haircut was a "short back and sides" 6d. for men- 3d. for boys. Men would queue to be shaved, with a cut throat razor - on Friday nights and Saturday mornings so we boys were advised to ask for a haircut at other times. There were no beards to be trimmed, just the occasional moustache - the mere sight of a beard would have lead to cat calls from the children and disapproval from the grown ups! At the barbers one could buy male toiletries - razors, safety razor blades, "Brill cream" and oils for the hair, shaving soap and shaving brushes were on the shelves while condoms, hidden from view, (at 3 for 2/6 ie 12 ½ p) were available from a drawer at the discretion of the barber.

There was a lending library in one of the shops from which one could borrow a book for d. per week - a new book would then normally cost about 7/6.

~ to be continued ~

Dr Cuthbertson

Is Your Green Belt Land Safe ?

In 1580 Queen Elizabeth I passed a law stopping any expansion of London and followed it in 1593 with a act forbidding any further growth.

However, we all know that growth has continued over four centuries.

In the 1930's the London County Council determined to restrict expansion, and in 1948 the **GREEN BELT PLANS** were made -

TO RESTRICT LONDON'S GROWTH

TO SAFEGUARD OPEN LAND FOR RECREATION AND AGRICULTURE

TO KEEP THE CHARACTER OF VILLAGES BY PREVENTING THEM BEING ABSORBED

Are these rules being kept in your area ?

If not, please write to your Planning Department, your Councillor, your Member of Parliament, the Secretary of State for the Environment.

YOU MUST PROTECT YOUR
GREEN BELT LAND