

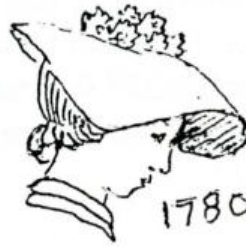
Harefield History Society

Affiliated to the Uxbridge Guild of Arts

Newsletter no. 39 Spring 2000

Committee

T Hillier	Chairman
K Davey	Secretary
A Batchelor	Treasurer
M Evans	Newsletter
R Goodchild	Programme
V Woodward	Conservation
M Marjoram	
M Isaacs	



Summer Programme 2000

26th April 2000

A G M Followed by

One Hundred Years of Retail in Uxbridge, a talk by Ken Pearce.

Saturday 13th May

Visit to St Mary the Virgin, Harefield

10.30 am - 12 noon

Heraldry within the Church, Guest Speaker Kay Holmes

Tuesday 13th June 2000

The Tempest featuring Vanessa Redgrave

Shakespeare's Globe Theatre

Saturday 22nd July 2000

Visit to Stratfield Saye House and the Wellington Museum

This is the former home of George Pitt, one time owner of Harefield House.

The Millennium Resolution

*Let there be
respect for the earth
peace for its people,
love in our lives,
delight in the good,
forgiveness for past wrongs,
and from now on a new start.*

Secretary's Note:

Time is flying by, already it is April and in couple of months time is the Millennium Fete. We have been asked to provide a float, and are looking into the possibility. Any helpful ideas would be welcome. We have agreed to have an historical quiz and a demonstration of calligraphy. Then on September 23rd the Park Lane Village Centre is holding an Open Day, all profits to go to the upkeep of the Centre. We will have a stall, probably with a treasure Hunt and / or a mini-market.

We were pleased to note that the proposed development behind Hope Cottage was refused. The new owners have permission to extend the property, but the extensions seem to fit in well with the cottage.

Looking forward to the outing to Stratfield Saye, and I hope you enjoy "The Tempest" at the Globe. Have a good summer!

K Davey.

Report on the Harefield Village Conservation Area Advisory Panel

Currently the main pre-occupation of the Panel is the future of Harefield Hospital. The planning application for a three storey extension to the Heart Sciences Centre has been submitted. The application is on behalf of a charitable trust and not the NHS.

It has been alleged that the Conservation Panel is not in sympathy with the overwhelming mass of opinion, both inside and outside the village, that Harefield Hospital stays where it is. This is not the case and, with our interest in the long term future of the Hospital, our only objection to the Heart Sciences Centre extension application is to the proposed style of the building. Most members of the Panel are to attend a meeting in the hospital on Monday 8th May when a formal notice of our opposition will be presented. Letters have been sent in the meantime to John Wilkinson MP among others, voicing our strongly held belief that Harefield Hospital with its world wide reputation should not, under any circumstances be moved. I have, incidentally, had a phone call from Australia asking if the NHS administrators have gone mad!!

Lighted Signs

There has, of late been a proliferation of lighted signs appearing in the High Street. Such signs are not permitted in a conservation area and the Planning Department is taking enforcement action for their removal.

Princes House

An application for the change of use from a nursing home to private flats is to be recommended for approval. The Panel had no objection, as in line with the building's listed status, the exterior is not to be altered in any way.

Hope Cottage.

Having supported the Planning Department in their refusal to grant permission for the development of the land to the rear of Hope Cottage the Panel raised no objection to the two storey side and rear extension to the cottage. The proposed style of the extension is in keeping with the building's listed status. The application was approved by the Planning Department.

Public Toilets - Park Lane

After our success in making the Council concede to the opening of the toilets on days where there is a function in progress on the village green, no decision has yet been made on the installation of a "porta loo" in the village. The Panel does not think that such a toilet is really conducive to a conservation area.

Conservation Area Review.

The debate on the realigned conservation area has not yet been resolved. Meanwhile the Panel has suggested that a leaflet be distributed to all households in the conservation area informing everyone of the responsibilities incurred when living in such an area. Hopefully estate agents will agree to co-operate and give new residents a copy when house sales are completed.

Finally, after many years of dedicated work, Pat Whiteman has retired as Chairman of the Panel and handed the reins into the capable hands of John Ross. Pat agreed to continue to be a member of the Panel.

Val Woodward

6th March 2000

Canals in the United Kingdom

The first canal to be built in the UK was the Newry Canal in Northern Ireland, built in 1742. It was followed by the St Helen's Canal in Lancashire in 1757.

By 1761 the Bridgewater Canal, engineered by James Brindley, solved the transport problem of getting the coal from the Duke of Bridgewater's mines taken to the textile factories of Manchester.

This successful project started off many more similar schemes, and so began the Industrial Revolution. At this time there were no machines for digging out the soil, and this was done by thousands of navvies with spades. Hence there are many public houses along the canals with names like "The Shovel" in Cowley on the Grand Union Canal.

During the early nineteenth century Stephenson and Company were fast developing steam railways which almost ruled out the use of canals. However some of them continued and by the 1960's people were using them for holidays and leisure. This popularity has grown, as shown in Julian Holland's book "Water under the Bridge" published by Collins and Brown and beautifully illustrated by Mr Holland's photographs.

M Evans

Peerless Fence & Products Ltd

Moorhall Concrete, Harvel Restraints.

Started by Totkinson & J MacNally in the late 1930's at Oldfield Lane, Greenford.

A small branch was opened in the old railway sidings by the bridge in Harvill Road. The concrete posts and other products, such as chestnut paling fencing and coal, were produced until the main works were built in the late 1930's, the site was down Priory Close. Later half the site was sold to Acrow who later built their factory. At the outbreak of war Peerless was taken over by the MOD and became a reserved industry. Products then included army lorry bodies, prisoner of war compounds for Italian prisoners, sports equipment for all the forces, boxing rings, hurdles etc. and landing nets for the RAF and the Navy.

After the war in 1946 Peerless started to make Easy Erect Buildings, one of the first type of prefab buildings made in England. Contracts with Aramco got the Peerless contracts to fence the atomic bomb sites and oil wells in the Middle East. All the wire was supplied for Richard Johnson of Manchester, who finally took the company over until it closed, a big loss to Harefield.

Contributed by Doug Savage, former employee.

The 1920's and the way we lived then

Town Shops

Groceries were much cheaper in the town than in the village - but it was hard work to get there. A bus or a long walk took one to the big shops, the Co-op, Maypole, Home and Colonial, International, Liptons and Sainsbury, in the High Street and others between them and in the open market. Shopping took a long time - one had to wait in the queue at the counter to be served. Sugar would be taken with a scoop out of a sack, weighed and then put into a packet folded from a square of blue paper. For your butter or margarine a pair of wooden butter pats would be used to cut a piece from a large yellow rectangular block. This was then weighed and trimmed to the weight requested, patted to shape, stamped with a pattern and finally wrapped in grease proof paper.

The most popular cheese was cheddar, yellow or red, displayed as 14lb blocks wrapped in muslin cloth. When sold the imprint of the muslin could be clearly discerned on the rind. Almost equally in demand was the cheap red waxed Dutch Gouda. Other varieties were rarely available except for the blue types, Gorgonzola or expensive Stilton. Some few shops like Sainsbury's did take pride in offering a wider range. Often tiny cheese mites would multiply in the crevices and surface of cheese. These mites were not uncommon, nor were the maggots often found in apples, or the slugs and caterpillars frequently lurking in cabbages and lettuce. They were considered irritating but natural phenomena not normally worth the bother of objecting to the grocer.

Tea and biscuits were cheaper if purchased loose but would not keep well unless bought or kept in expensive damp proof tins. There were no tea bags or instant coffee but there was "Camp Coffee" a concentrated liquid essence which made a delicious drink with lots of sugar and milk.

There were butchers, fishmongers and greengrocers shops but fish fruit and vegetables were usually cheaper from stalls in the market, especially for perishable goods when near closing time! Rock salmon, whiting, cod, herring, dabs and huss were all usually available. Mackerel were cheap but demand suffered from the unfounded belief that they were dirty eaters. Fresh fruit and vegetables were in seasonal supply. Though there were some imports only bananas and oranges were generally available from abroad. Fruit was expensive and hard to come by. If one ate an apple in the streets of the town urchins would often approach and cry "giss a chog" which meant "give us the chog" ie the apple core, which would then be rapidly consumed - stalk pips and all.

Apples began with "Beauty of Bath" in July, a small fragrant variety which did not keep more than a few weeks. Thereafter other varieties followed and would mostly be available until Christmas - I still remember the aroma of the apple in my Christmas stocking, a real treat. By March only a few wrinkled cooking apples would be obtainable until the next crop. Oranges came in the autumn and winter, usually a penny each, or seven for sixpence, bananas were popular coming throughout the year by fast boat from the Carribean Empire. Plums, like cherries, strawberries and raspberries were only to be seen for their short seasons during the summer. Dried fruit was available all the year round. Not just raisins, currants and sultanas but a host of others, apple rings, half pears, peaches, apricots, prunes (as welcome for their laxative properties as much as for their sweetness) dried figs and dates usually came in big compressed blocks though at Christmas it was possible to buy dates, packed as now, expensively displayed in little cardboard boxes. Many fruit could be bought in cans , peaches and pineapple rings were probably the most popular of all the tinned fruit.

Vegetables were not commonly imported, except onions from Spain or from France by Breton men on bicycles hence supplies were seasonal. Fresh green peas were a real delight only to be eaten for a few short weeks in the summer. Lettuce were on sale for a somewhat longer period but during the winter there were the roots, swede, turnip, beetroot, carrot, parsnip and potato with kale, drum head, savoy and red cabbage and a little water cress. Cauliflower, purple sprouting broccoli, brussels sprouts and spinach had shorter seasons. Every thing had to be carried to the bus. Then a long walk home laden with the heavy arm-stretching straw or wicker baskets full of shopping - there was no such thing as a light weight plastic bag !

~ to be continued ~

Dr Cuthbertson