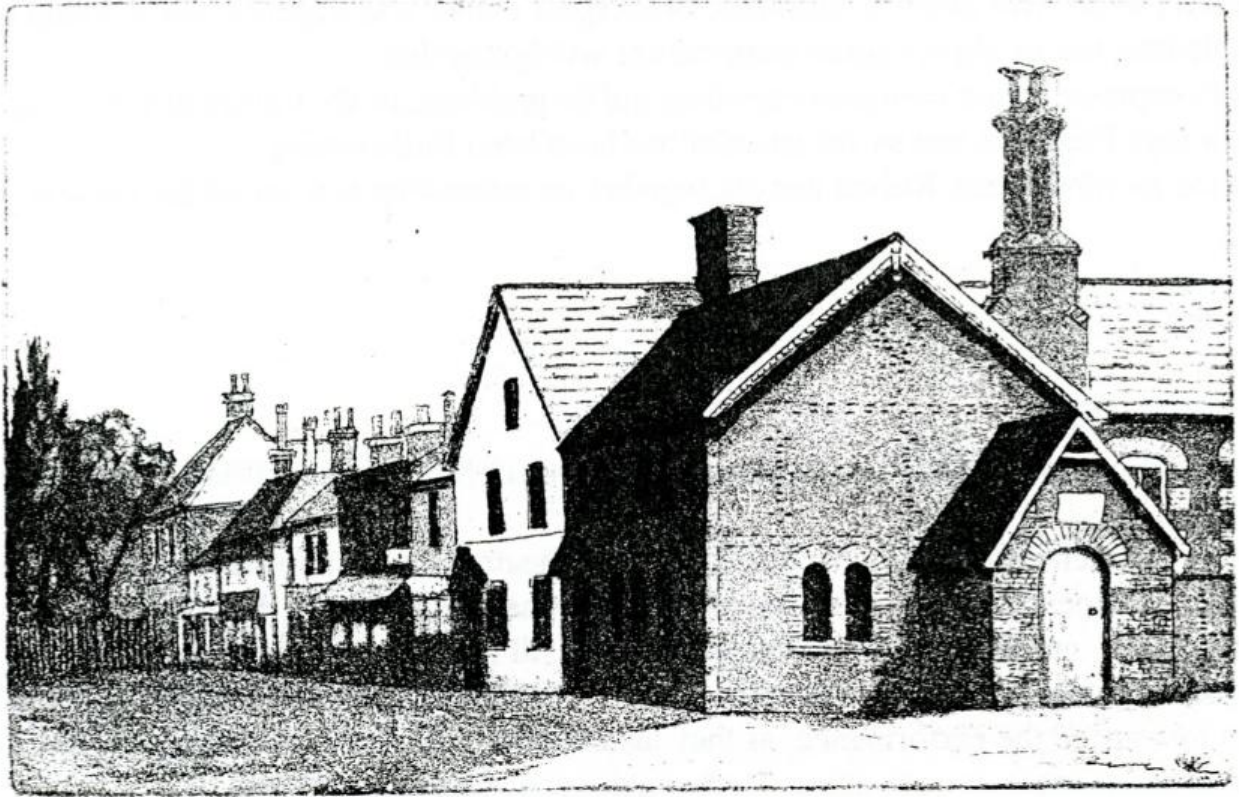


Harefield History Society

Affiliated to the Uxbridge Guild of Arts

Newsletter No 40 Autumn 2000



Committee

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

Programme

23 rd October 2000	75 Years of Wembley Stadium	Gordon Isaacs
27 th November 2000	The Gift of the Nile	Peggy Milam
22 nd January 2001	The History of the Compass Theatre and Ickenham	Mike Palmer
26 th February 2001	The Work of the Conservation Panel in Harefield	John Ross
26 th March 2001	Canals and Canal Transport	Nick Hardey
23 rd April 2001	Annual General Meeting followed by Local Studies Evening and Harefield Scrap Books	Lorraine Piercy

Secretary's Note: Welcome back!! I hope you had a good summer and managed to plan your holiday between the showers.

Plenty of "happenings" during the summer period in the village. The battle to save the Hospital continues. Our MP, John Wilkinson is making a determined effort to keep it in Harefield, and needs all the support we can give.

The Millennium Fete was a great success, congratulations to the organisers for their achievements.

Restoration of our two historic buildings, Breakspear House and Highway Farm would be very welcome, but as always some compromise will be needed.

Villagers expressed their concerns regarding traffic problems in the village at a meeting with the Highways Engineer, but as yet no solutions have been forthcoming.

So, for the months ahead. Robert has put together an interesting and varied programme for us to enjoy.

Kay Davey.

THE TEMPEST.

The history society's visit to Globe theatre to see the TEMPEST by William Shakespeare.

Just to set the scene, the atmosphere of the Globe Theatre is quite powerful. It transports one to the ^{time} of Shakespeare. People meet together around the outside of the theatre and then gradually move into their seats and the groundlings fill up the arena. You can well understand and feel the excitement with which a 16 / 17th century audience would have been looking forward to the performance, as they looked around to see who was there, who they were with and what they were doing. Very much a spectator of past time.

The TEMPEST is a story of magic and romance. It tells how Prospero, formerly Duke of Milan, who had been usurped by his brother Antonio, was shipwrecked, with his daughter Miranda, on a island. Prospero had his magic books with him and used his art to reign over the native Caliban and the spirit Ariel. He seeks revenge on his enemies and uses his power to create a great storm that shipwrecks them. Once on the island the hapless voyagers are separated. One of them, the King of Naples, believes that his son Ferdinand has drowned. However, that is not so and Ferdinand meets Miranda and falls in love. Prospero subjects youth trials to test him and then conjures up a wedding masque for the young couple. When his enemies are finally gathered before him Prospero forgives them and reclaims his old role as Duke of Milan. He grants Ariel his freedom and prepares to leave the island. Everyone to live happily ever after.

I knew that we were in for a great treat with Vanessa Redgrave playing the part of Prospero, Duke of Milan. I believe it is the first time she has portrayed a man on stage. Her artistry is consummate and she gave a strong performance in her interpretation of Prospero. However, that is not to take anything away from the remainder of the cast who all supported her tremendous enthusiasm and verve. It was Kananu Kirimi's, who played Miranda, professional stage debut. It was a well staged production and the costumes and music all added up to an afternoon of truly magical entertainment. I look forward to having another opportunity to be part of the Globe experience.

Rosemary Causton.

Harefield 2000

The article which follows consists of the memories of your chairman about the planning and execution of the event known as Harefield 2000. It does not set out to be a historical document and the slant and emphasis on various incidents is from a personal and History Society view point.

Way back in the early days of 1999, some observant members of our local schools noticed an offer to allocate money to projects directed towards celebrating the coming millennium. Since this offer had a claim by date, a committee was assembled in order to apply for it. Your chairman was a guest member on the committee, as an observer. As might be expected from such a claim, many strings were attached to what and how it could be used. Eventually the claim was accepted and allocated to various allowable items. In the meantime, a new committee, with a wider base was formed to decide what to do and when to do it. Your chairman was a full member of this committee. The decision was taken to have a fete on June 17th on the green, preceded by a parade of floats, vintage cars etc and a band from Moorhall Road, up the High Street to the Green, where the opening would take place and where the usual stalls, sideshows etc would be situated. At a somewhat later date, it was decided to use the Church Hall for some of the exhibitions. It was also decided that, in recognition of what the year owed to religion, to have an open air service on the green on the following Sunday, June 18th.

Various sub-committees subsequently got to work. Your chairman was on the sub-committee associated with the design and production of a permanent memorial to the year. A competition was staged, designs were sent in and a winner, John Ross, chosen. John was co-opted onto the sub-committee and with his background knowledge and skills, kept the project moving along. Through no fault of his own, the project though well advanced has not yet been completed or erected.

As time went by the interval between general committee meetings became shorter and the pace and pressure more hectic. Ancillary problems like insurance, availability of toilets, security taxed the members of the committee. A celebrity to open the day was required, prices had to be arranged, finance had to be organised. To this last end, a calender of photographs of Harefield was sold and, following further competitions a mug was designed by Sue Saward that, it was decided should be presented to each scholar in Harefield. The excess would be sold to increase funds. The treasurer and others approached various firms and organisations to augment the funds.

The great day arrived with the most splendid weather, which held for both the Saturday and the Sunday. The many vehicles assembled in Moorhall Road. The History Society had a decorated float on which were represented King Henry VIII, (Robert Goodchild) with his six wives represented by six young ladies decked out in their finery. Also on the float was Queen Elizabeth and an attendant (May Isaacs) and your chairman dressed as Sir Walter Raleigh. This was great fun. Being in the procession we did not hear John Wilkinson's opening speech, but were soon able to join the crowds on the Green.

The History Society was well represented: there was a quiz, entitled "So You Think You Know Harefield". This was devised by May Isaacs who used all her considerable experience

of teaching to set a questionnaire of historical questions about Harefield's past. Competitors were given a sheet of 20 questions with spaces interspersed for answers. Many took these away but did not return them. Some 26 people did hand their answers in and these were marked by May and Ann Batchelor. The winner was Deirdre Whiteman with 18 out of 20 answers correct. Much discussion was provoked by this stall. Another stall was manned by Margaret Evans who was demonstrating her skills at writing various scripts. She informed the writer of the article that people were interested in scripts that required the use of more than one colour of ink. In the church hall, among other exhibits, there was one by Reg Neil, that faithful and stalwart photographer of Harefield.

I think I can safely say that the day was a success and everyone had a fun time - due partly to lovely weather. During the night there was, unfortunately some damage done to one of the marquees but, early on Sunday morning, about 300 chairs were set out in the marquee in preparation for the open air service. Most of these chairs were occupied and a memorable ecumenical service took place which included a series of interviews with local people regarding the relationship of their faith to their work. At the end of each interview the interviewee chose one of their favourite hymns to be sung.

In the afternoon the celebrations continued with a cricket match, played in a fairly light-hearted way, in the local cricket field. So came to an end a memorable and very significant celebration of an event that the majority of us living now will not see again !!

Tom Hillier

The Harefield Village Conservation Area Advisory Board.

I am afraid my report is not as comprehensive as usual as I have been unwell these last four months and have been unable to attend meetings.

The most important item on the conservation agenda continues to be the future of the Hospital. No one has yet given up the fight.

Hope Cottage.

Planning permission was not granted by the department to extend the present house.

Harefield Cricket Club.

There are mixed feeling about the application to erect a two story building at the bottom end of the ground. I understand that none of the neighbours have raised any objections to the proposal. The Cricket Club wish to provide covered winter bowling practice nets mainly to encourage village children to play cricket in the summer. Upstairs will provide a committee room and changing facilities.

Little Hammonds.

The owner has applied to rebuild the wall and install new gates. As the present wall is part of the original boundary wall of the Harefield House estate, and has been for some 250 years, there is quite a lot of local opposition!

Breakspear House.

The council has received an application to convert the house into a number of luxury flats. In the circumstances this proposal seems to be the best option for the future so far for this grade II listed building and the best the house will be preserved. Nobody these days is prepared to take on a house of this description with all the attendant problems. An added bonus is to be the famous dovecote will be restored.

The Panel has a new Chairman. John Ross agreed to take on this onerous task and we are very lucky indeed that he agreed. We thank Pat Whiteman for his many years of devoted service and we are glad that he is to remain as a Committee member.

Valerie F. Woodward

Stratfield Saye

We arrived at Stratfield Saye just after 11am on a lovely morning and were immediately divided into two groups to be taken on a guided tour of the house.

After the victory of the Duke of Wellington at the Battle of Waterloo, the nation was so grateful that the government granted him £600,000 for the purchase of a house of his choice. In 1817 two years after the Battle the first Duke finally settled on Stratfield Saye with the intention of building a grand palace to rival the Duke of Marlborough's Blenheim Palace. However finances did not extend far enough and he had to abandon his idea and settle for making a number of additions to the original house. The two huge marble pillars bought in Italy for the Palace were eventually erected by the seventh Duke in 1947 at one end of the conservatory and designs for the intended building hang in a corridor downstairs.

The structure of the house is almost unchanged since it was built by Sir William Pitt around 1630, but the interior has been remodelled at various times. The Great Duke himself introduced central heating and two of the original radiators which are at the foot of the staircases are still working today having been connected to a new system. He also had water closets installed in many of the rooms.

In the hall the tricolour banners which hang from the gallery are some originally presented to departments of France by Napoleon and given to the Duke on his entry into Paris after Waterloo. The columns which support the gallery look like marble but are, in fact, only painted wood.

The Great Duke housed most of his collection of paintings at Apsley House, in London, but there are still many of the lovely pictures to be seen around the rooms at Stratfield Saye. In the small drawing room over the fireplace hangs a picture of the Duke in his last year of life with four of his five grandchildren, painted by Robert Thornburn, whilst in the Lady Charles room hangs a painting of a grey horse, the first commission at the age of sixteen of the young Edwin Landseer. The horse originally belonged to one of Napoleon's generals who rode it from Moscow but he died just before Waterloo and the horse was bought by Henry Pierrepont, the father of Lady Charles who married Lord Charles Wellesley, second son of the Great Duke. The horse was then renamed Moscow. The picture disappeared for many years and was found

in 1842 in a loft over Landseer's stables. Sir Edwin then sold it to Henry Pierrepont for the original fee of ten guineas.

The gallery is dominated by a series of bronze busts, many of Roman emperors, one of Napoleon disguised as a Roman Emperor, one of Charles I of England, and others of famous French personalities. The furniture here is mainly French and was bought by the Great Duke in Paris.

The Print Room, as one would expect, has walls covered with preserved prints, these are a mixture of landscapes, antiquities, military and sporting subjects, and the idea is repeated in many of the other rooms. The dining room is furnished with Regency period furniture and the George III mahogany dining table is set with the silver and silver gilt service presented to the Duke when he was Sir Arthur Wellesley, by the officers of the army in India after his successful campaign. It looks far too beautiful to be used but is apparently still in use by the family today.

While waiting for the first group to tour the house many of us visited the Wellington Exhibition housed in part of the stables. It contains a large collection of memorabilia including maps, weapons and personal possessions. Also a varied collection of clothing from underclothes to coronation robes, and the original Wellington boots.

After the death of the Great Duke in 1852 the Prince Consort requested a suitable funeral car to be designed. This took two months to be constructed; the base was an ornamental carriage on six wheels made of bronze cast from the melted down French cannons captured at Waterloo. Above the carriage was a swivelled platform which enabled the coffin to be slid onto a ramp built over the steps of St Pauls. This was ornamented with the names of the Duke's victories together with many trophies and weapons. Above the platform was a bier covered with a black velvet pall embroidered with the Wellesley crest and Field Marshall's batons worked in silver thread. Finally on top was the coffin with the usual accoutrements of head dress and sword. After being lodged in the crypt of St Pauls' for many years the "funeral car" was finally dismantled and moved to Stratfield Saye in 1981 where it is now housed in a seventeenth century barn.

The grounds are extensive and very lovely with the river Loddon running through. Unfortunately after a picnic lunch there was not enough time for a long stroll, but a visit to the grave of Copenhagen, the Duke's favourite charger which carried him through the Peninsula campaign and the Battle of Waterloo was a must. The horse spent it's retirement at Stratfield Saye and was often ridden by the Duke and many of the children. An acorn planted later in the grave by the Duke's housekeeper is now a massive oak tree which shadows the headstone. After a really pleasant day we finally we finally returned to our coach at 3.300 pm. Our thanks to Robert for another very successful outing.

Joan Thirkettle