

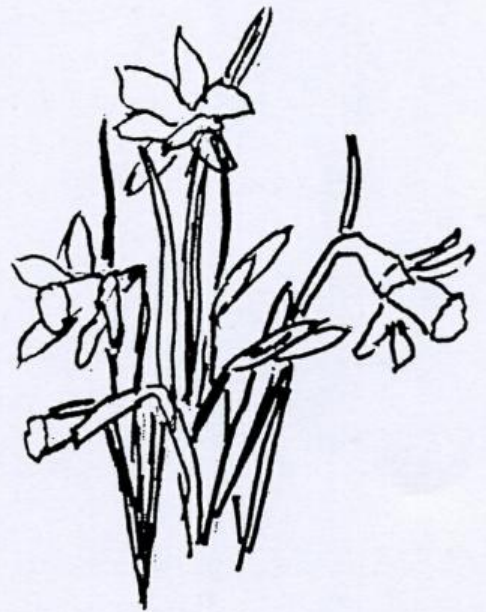
Harefield History Society

Affiliated to the Uxbridge Guild of Arts

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B. Waterman	Secretary
A. Batchelor	Treasurer
R. Goodchild	Programme Secretary
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Summer Programme 2003

Tuesday 10th June

Visit to Arbury Hall and Gardens, Nuneaton. Arbury Hall has been the home of the Newdigate family since 1586 and the strong connections of the Newdigate family with Harefield should make this a very interesting outing.

Saturday 19th July

Visit to Burghley House and Stamford, Lincolnshire. Burghley House has been the home of the Cecil family for over 400 years. This splendid Elizabethan house with its 18 state rooms was built for William Cecil, Lord High Treasurer of England during the 16th century. The gardens were landscaped by Capability Brown in the 18th century.

At the moment there are places remaining on these outings so do come and bring your friends. For further information, please contact Robert Goodchild on 01895 823993.

Winter Programme 2003/4

The first meeting will be at 8 p.m. on 22nd September, 2003 in the Park Lane Village Centre when Terry White will be talking to us about the History of Dawley

Visitors are always welcome.

THE TANGLED WEB OF HAREFIELD PAROCHIAL CHARITIES

Notes from the fascinating talk given to the Society on 22nd April 2002 by John Ross, a trustee of the Harefield Parochial charities

When John was asked to become a trustee of the Harefield Parochial charities he had little idea of the task ahead of him. Like most of us he had been under the impression that the charities, including the almshouses, were related to the Church of St. Mary's and he was surprised to discover that the charities have nothing to do with the Church, even though the Vicar is always an ex-officio trustee.

The charities are in fact an agglomeration of ancient Charities for Harefield put together by the Charity Commission in 1932. The Charity Commission founded by Act of Parliament in 1853 is there to give advice, information and help. In particular, it maintains a public register of charities, investigates misconduct and abuse of charitable assets and gives advice to charity trustees in order to make the charities more effective.

The duties of the trustees and the objects of the Harefield Parochial Charities, in addition to accommodating qualifying poor women of good character from the Parish in the Almshouses, are many, including:-

1. PROVISION of bedding, clothing, food, fuel, furniture or other useful articles including comfort for the sick.
2. Weekly allowances of not less than 2/6d or not more than 10/- except with the approval of the Charities Commission. (*The foundation of the charities goes back a long way!*)
3. Gifts in money to relieve sickness, infirmity or distress.
4. Grants for the benefit of persons who are sick, infirm, or convalescent.
5. Payment of travelling expenses of persons entering or leaving hospital or of relatives to visit the sick
6. Subscriptions to almshouses, homes or hostels for the benefit of the poor of the parish.

Of course, the trustees are not allowed to give assistance to individuals unless satisfied that they are deserving and in need and income can not be applied in relief of rates, taxes or other public funds.

The Harefield Parochial Charities funds are invested in the Charities Official Investment Fund and the National Association of Almshouses Common Investment Fund and the funds are used to benefit people in the village to this day

The trustees have very many problems. Obviously the bequests were made many years ago when times were vastly different. For example, the Almshouses on Church Hill were founded by the Countess of Derby in 1636. They have been vacant for some

time because by modern standards they are hopelessly sub-standard but a conversion has been estimated at £120,000, well beyond the resources of the trustees.

However, the trustees who are all honorary, are determined to grow the charities and honour the faith of all those who made the generous endowments for the people of Harefield in the first place.

(More about the wonderful bequests in the next edition)



The Almshouses

Life at Warren Farm 1935 -52

by Midge Kempster (nee Spicer)

We came to Harefield from Wembley in 1933 and moved into Mad Bess Cottage. I was sent to Bishop Winnington Ingram School, then situated on Eastcote Road, Ruislip, a two and a half-mile walk away. While still at BWI my sister and I were given our cousins' old bikes which was bliss. The teacher would not believe that I had lived on a farm in Wembley. It was called Oakingham Manor Farm. My mother had to write to the school to confirm this.

We lived at Mad Bess Cottage for about 18 months. My father used to lean out of the bedroom window with a double-barrel shot gun to shoot a rabbit for our dinner. Dad was the pig man at Warren Farm and Mr Plaistow who lived at the farm was the keeper of Mad Bess Woods, which were private in those days. It was decided that we should exchange houses and the move was done by one horse and cart with each family's goods and chattels going back and forth. We had to take the bedroom window out to get the furniture in.

Warren Farm

There was a living room with a range and a small sitting room with a 'phone fixed on the wall. In the passage way between there was a copper for heating water for washing and bathing and boiling Christmas puddings. Mother did the washing in a tin bath. There was a large walk-in pantry and a tin lean-to at the back with one cold water tap. There were also two wells outside. We had no electricity and no gas. We used logs or coal for the range and copper and oil lamps and candles for lighting.

Outside there was a big boiler in the shed and four outside tanks for boiling food for the pigs. The pig food came from J Lyons's Tea-shops. The smell was horrendous! Most of our cutlery had 'J Lyons' stamped on it as it came with the pig food.

Down the garden path there was a small shed which was our toilet, consisting of a scrubbed white wooden seat and a bucket that had to be emptied every day. A job for dad!

Pigs to Southall market

We kept about 150 pigs and I was very involved in looking after them along with my father although I was only about 10 years old. We used to take them to Southall Market by horse and cart, with a net over the pigs to stop them from jumping out. On the way back we would stop at a pub in Greenford, where Dad had a pint or two and I enjoyed a savaloy and a lemonade. As Dad had been up since 5 a.m. he was tired and after a few drinks he fell asleep so the horse would bring us home.

Bolting Horse

One day I drove a horse and cart to West End Road, Ruislip, to my aunt's house. The horse took fright in the High Street and shot straight over the station bridge, but I managed to stop him before I reached my aunt's. I tied him to a lamp post. When I came out I was so cross with him that I made him run all the way home. He was sweating so much by that time that I got into trouble with my father.

My father worked for R.G Steele, earning £1 5s (£1.25) per week and lived rent free. We were really quite poor, but we were very happy. By the time the war came Dad was renting directly from the Middlesex County Council. With an American Army camp opposite Bourne Farm a fair amount of blackmarketeering went on, involving killing pigs and chickens on the quiet. We lived quite well, but Mother worked very hard.

Doodlebug 4th October 1944

We were provided with an Anderson Shelter which my father put up in what was then called the Dairy. Mum and Dad slept in this, but my sister and I refused to go in it, so we slept in the pantry. That is where we were in the early morning of the 4th October 1944 when a doodlebug landed across the lane and brought the cottage down around us. Mother had forgotten to remove her pickles and jams from a shelf, which descended on us.

There we were with broken pottery, glass and plaster all around us, in our nightclothes and with bare feet, hearing Mother screaming in the yard "My girls are in there". We managed to get out unhurt, but we were filthy.

An ambulance came and I wouldn't get in without my puppy alsatian, so there was an argument. Eventually I went with the puppy and the ambulance stopped at Newdigate Road, where my boyfriend's mother lived, to drop off the puppy. Before taking us to Harefield Hospital. We stayed for a few hours, then were sent out, but we had no home. I went to Stan's mum's at 10 Newdigate Road and Mum, Dad and Rene went to Thelma Bugbee's House. Her husband was away fighting in the war and she was expecting her first baby.

Father wanted to get the family back together at Warren Farm. He did up the Cow shed, whitewashing it and dividing it into three with curtains. As much furniture as possible, including a piano, was rescued from the ruins of the cottage and we all moved in and put up decorations for Christmas.

I got married from the Cowshed on 10th August 1946 and continued living there while my husband was away in the services.

New Warren Farm

The new Warren Farm was being built in 1946 and was ready by the end of the year. It had a bathroom, but the WC was still outside. My eldest son was born there in the front room in 1950. In 1952 we moved to Reservoir Road in Ruislip. After life in the country I couldn't get used to neighbours for a long time.

When Dad left the farm in 1964 he was very unhappy and died the following year. He had been born in Whitewell, Herts and had worked on farms from being ten years old. He met Mum, who came from Edmonton, after being wounded in the First World War.

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I think Midge's story is delightful and it certainly gives us a picture of how life was for many people before and during the last war. How times have changed. I'm sure many people think not for the better.

If you have a story to tell of times gone by, especially in Harefield, please let me know. May Isaacs.

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Special notice

Following the successful Local History week last year, it has been decided to make the whole of May a local History month this year so do look out for events which will be taking place in our surrounding areas. For our contribution, Reg Neil will be displaying some of his wonderful photographs in the Park Lane Library and Maisy Marjoram and Robert Goodchild will be delving into the archives for added information. Please do not miss it.

"LONG TO REIGN OVER US"

Throughout the country in every town, hamlet and village, preparations had been going on to celebrate the crowning of our young and beautiful new Queen Elizabeth. June 2nd 1953 was a public holiday and everyone was excited that after the austerity of war this was to be the beginning of a new age.

For me, 1953 was also a beginning. It was the year Gordon and I were married. It was also the year that Mount Everest was at last conquered by Hillary and Tensing, the four minute mile barrier was broken by Roger Bannister and the very famous champion jockey Gordon Richards, won the Derby for the first time. There was certainly magic abroad in the air

In those days, very few people owned televisions and those available were small and transmitted pictures in black and white only. The transmissions often broke down and there was only one part time channel. However the Coronation was to be transmitted live which meant that the occasion could be shared by people far and wide.

My in laws were lucky enough to have a television (14 inch) and they had invited friends and neighbours in to see the wonderful spectacle. At the beginning of the transmission the sound went so we watched the pictures on the T V while listening to the radio broadcast. What an exciting day it was. The crowds lining the route to Westminster Abbey (some had been waiting for days) the banners, crowns and bunting decorating the lamp posts and buildings, the wonderful procession with royalty and dignitaries from around the world, the immaculate horse guards with their gleaming uniforms and wonderfully groomed horses. And then the golden Coronation coach itself with this tiny young and radiant woman inside.

The Coronation service itself was just magnificent and no one wanted to leave the room in case they missed something. I remember as if it were yesterday the wonderful anthems and music and the heart stopping moment when the heavy jewel encrusted crown was placed on the young Queen's head. Vivat, vivat Regina! The whole cathedral rang with the glorious sound.

Then the procession back to Buckingham Palace. Everyone in their finest gowns and robes. The newly crowned Queen next to her handsome husband. It rained, but it didn't seem to matter. They were to be joined later on the Palace balcony by The Queen Mother, Princess Margaret, five year old Prince Charles, little Princess Anne and other members of the Royal Family. The cheering went on and on and on.

Later that week, Gordon and I went to London to see all the decorations and we went into Westminster Abbey where the throne, carpets, special chairs and the flowers were still in place. Even then some of the glamour still remained.

It doesn't seem possible that this was fifty years ago. A lot has happened since then and times have certainly changed. It hasn't always been easy for the Queen but she has steadfastly served this country and carried out her onerous duties with determination and dignity. Long may she reign.

May Isaacs

