



Notes on Life in
Harefield
1871 to 1879.

M. Evans



At this time there were about 1579 people living in the parish. Their expectation of life was about 49. An agricultural labourer earned 12s. a week. 26 families kept servants. Charles Newdigate, Lord of the Manor, had 12. Education was compulsory from 5 to 13, and School Attendance Officers were appointed in 1876. A private boarding school for boys was opened at Weybeards House.

Roads were the responsibility of the locally elected Surveyor of Highways, who collected the rates. In 1872 a pair-horse omnibus ran from Beaconsfield to Uxbridge, 1s. 6d. outside, 2s. inside.

The Poor Law was administered by Overseers; the rate being 1s. 6d

in the pound. The Inspector of Nuisances reported to the Sanitary Board, and the Guardians employed a lady secretary to look after children boarded out.

There were cases of poaching, -- carrying guns without a licence, drunkenness, assault, driving carts when asleep, and keeping children away from school. It was said that there was a policeman to every pub.

Several hayricks caught fire, and engines, horse-drawn, were called out usually by a runner, from Uxbridge or Rickmansworth. Mr Ditchard of Brackenhurst suggested more generous payment than the 4s offered to those helping to put out fires while

awaiting the engines.

Active in village affairs were Joseph Board Esq. of the Grove; Miss Sawyer with her Clothing Club; Miss Barnes; Mr. Newell, who provided entertainments at his paper mills for the Baptists. In December 1871, 100 rabbits were given to the poor by Mr. Bate of Highway Farm.

The Vicar, the Rev. Harland who took part in nearly all village events, injured himself with his "magic lantern" and blew out all the windows of the Memorial Hall.

The village had several cricket teams centered on the Victoria Club. Entertainment consisted of public teas, with music and readings, also lectures

on such subjects as China, Paris, and The Second Advent. Cricket Club Concerts were lively affairs, and often crowded. There were Temperance Meetings, with the Band of Hope; a Spelling Bee, a Parocial Soiree, and Penny Readings at Rickmansworth.

Public houses were used as bases for sales of property and produce, and for inquests - the body being stored in an outhouse.

Important properties sold during this period were Jack's Mill in 1874, Harefield Place with 5 farms in 1877, Harefield Paper Mills in 1879, and the Model Steam Brewery, Malt-house, and beerhouses in 1880.

After the sale of Harefield Place

the furnishings were sold in a large
marquee on the lawn, and several
"unaccompanied ladies attended and
made bids for various items."

Bread cost 7d. or 8d. a quartern,
or 4 lb. loaf. Employment offered
was for the young, strong, and
active - - "Groom, 18 to 20 years."
"Kitchen-maid, strong, must cook
vegetables well." "Carter, able to
plough, wise to work on farm."
"General servant, over 18, able to cook
£11 per year." "Nursemaid, age 15,
£7 per year." In 1871, there were
16 farmers, 248 labourers, and 6
people unemployed.

