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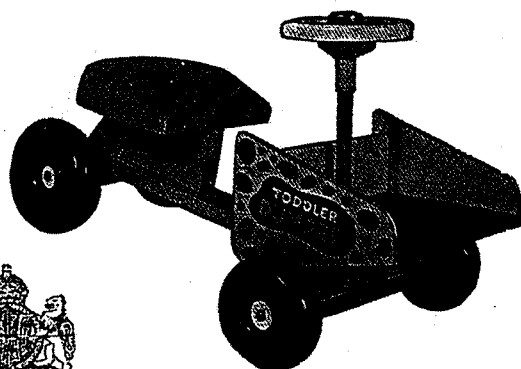
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Summer 1997

The Harborne Society NEWS

THE VALLEY OF THE DOLLS

By Mary Worrall



CHAD VALLEY

Harborne, Birmingham 17

Have you any old toys at home? Any old board games? If so, it just might be worth a second look at those attic treasures to see if they were made here on our own doorstep, for from 1897 to 1972 Harborne was famous for its toy factory. Sadly, little remains to obviously remind us of the Chad Valley Works now as we walk round Harborne, but once this business was of national importance and few homes with children can have spent a Christmas without a Chad Valley board game being bought and enjoyed until late into the 1960's.

In the 1820's a printing and bookbinding company was established in Lichfield Street in Birmingham by a family named Johnson, this business eventually became known as Johnson Bros. with premises in George Street. Here they made and traded in stationery, bound books and ran a printworks.

The Johnsons must have been successful in their family company, for in 1897 they moved to Harborne into the purpose built factory in Rose Road next to the stream known as the Chad. From this they took the name for the factory, the Chad Valley Works, the registered Trade Mark 'Chad Valley' being used for their products. Once established in Harborne the company gradually became more involved in toy production, initially specialising in board games. It eventually went on to manufacture an enormous range of products for children.

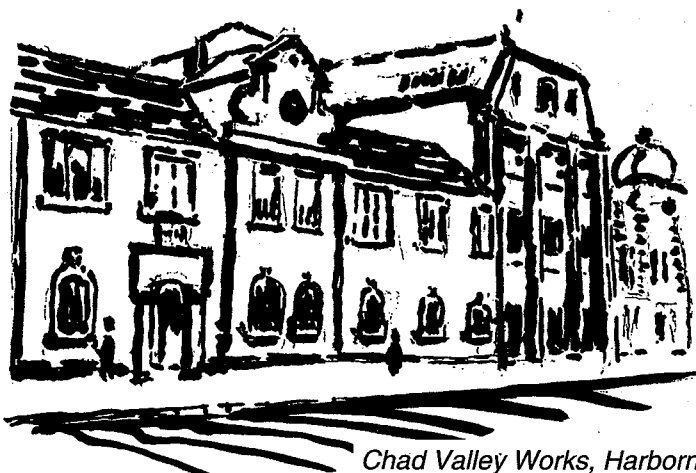
From its beginnings in the 1890's the factory's output grew. The outbreak of the First World War stopped the import of toys and games into this country from abroad, giving an enormous boost to English toy makers. This led to further expansion with the company acquiring the Harborne Village Institute in 1919, when the war had finished, for use as a printing works to provide labels and box covers.

Soft toys were by now becoming an important part of the turnover and continued to be so until the closure of the factory in 1972. A second Chad Valley factory was established in

Shropshire in 1920 to cope with the demand for 'teddies and dollies' and most of these were made there at the Weekin Toy Works in the market town of Wellington. Teddy bear collectors are familiar with the 'Chad Valley Hygienic Toys' button sewn into early bears, no doubt in imitation of the more famous Steiff toys from Germany. In recognition of the quality of their toys the Chad Valley company was granted a Royal Warrant of Appointment in 1938 as 'Toymakers to Her Majesty the Queen'. During the 1930's rag dolls of exceptional charm were produced. A recent Antiques Roadshow book, *A-Z of Antiques*, shows a set of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, made in 1938, and now worth an estimated two thousand pounds! Snow White is a wind-up doll who plays *Some Day My Prince Will Come*, which no doubt contributes to the value.

As the company expanded in the 1930's, taking over Peacock and Co. Ltd. of London who manufactured wooden toys, more space was again needed. This resulted in the rebuilding of the original Harborne factory which now had four floors and was one of the first buildings in Birmingham to use steel and reinforced concrete in its construction.

War, sadly again, played a part in the fortunes of the company in the 1940's. The Second World War resulted in production



Chad Valley Works, Harborne

of toys being dramatically cut as the factories switched over to work on Government contracts, one of the more interesting of which being the manufacture of jig-saws, chess sets, solitaire, draughts and dominoes for military hospitals.

When the war finished the range of products expanded to include both metal and rubber toys, a useful fact to remember if you are trying to date an old toy made by Chad Valley. 1950 was the year that saw the end of Chad Valley as a family business and it became a Public Company with a succession of Chairmen, the most famous being Kenneth Horne in the late 1960's. By this time the complete range of

products consisted of nearly a thousand different articles.

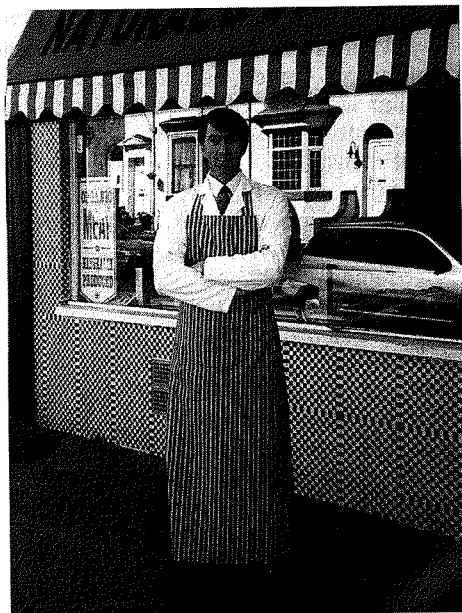
Nothing lasts forever, and the company was eventually taken over by Barclay Securities in 1971 who reorganized and streamlined production. The old factory in Harborne closed in 1972, toy production moving to Garretts Green, close to the Airport. Buried deep in the Local History files in Harborne Library I found the following sad little cutting, 'a proposal to demolish a disused factory in Harborne and erect two blocks of privately-built homes is being considered.....' It was dated 1975. The only consolation is that at least the factory is

remembered in the road name, Chad Valley Close.

If you are interested in finding out more about Chad Valley the library has an excellent file of cuttings and photographs waiting to be explored. This article only scratches the surface! Please remember the Library is always eager to receive any cuttings, old photographs, or documents relating to Harborne you might no longer want. The staff will also be delighted to photocopy anything of interest for the local history files if you cannot bear to part with it!

Mary Worrall.

Harborne Portraits Number 1. Chairman's Letter



Roger Brown outside his shop

This is the first of a new series of cameo sketches of local personalities who have made a contribution to Harborne life and society. We hope to look at a wide variety of people in this new slot and would welcome suggestions from readers.

To start off this new venture the Harborne Society asked local butcher, Roger Brown, to talk to us about himself, the time he has spent in Harborne, and the changes he has seen. Here is what he said.

'I was born in Alum Hospital in West Bromwich. I have three brothers and all of them are butchers too! I attended Oldbury Road School until I was nine when my family moved to Handsworth Wood. I then went to Handsworth Wood Juniors and finally to Handsworth Boys School. I'm married with three sons the youngest, Anthony, is following in the family trade.'

'When asked by the Harborne Society to tell you about myself I thought it wise to start at the beginning of my time in

Harborne. On the 25th. August 1969 we took over the shop in Lonsdale Road from an old chap called Alf Blackwell, and I have been there ever since. So I have seen a few changes. The biggest change to this part of the village was the demolition of the bus garage which stood where the flats for retired people are now. The Highways Department don't know about this though, as the yellow lines are still there! We will keep it our secret.

What has not changed in Harborne in 29 years is the people, they still go to great lengths to look for quality. In fashion, fabrics and food, which is where I come in, on the food side. My father was a butcher all his life, he knew quality and bought it, and so do I. The difference between my father's time and mine is in his day all meat was reared naturally. There were no hormones or antibiotics used in meat production and no crop spraying. So when I buy meat I must look deeper than the quality of the carcass. I need to know the farm of origin, the point of slaughter as well as the breed. This means more and more paperwork.

Buying in cooked meat is out of the question so we cook all our own. The same goes for bacon, sausages etc. we make our own, then we know what goes in and what does not. This way we can keep flavours of times now gone and maintain a quality of first class meat for a first class group of people!

Over all, my part of Harborne has remained much the same for all the years I have been here. This cannot be said of my industry, it has changed dramatically in twenty plus years and I am afraid not always for the better. So someone has to look after the interests of the customer, and that is what I have tried to do, and why I stay in Harborne with people who care about what they eat.'

Roger Brown.

Harborne has changed radically over the last years but it is still a pleasant place to live. Some changes have been for the better, such as the new Medical Centre and the development of the two derelict sites, albeit one site will include yet another public house. Other changes have not been so acceptable, for instance the loss of more retail outlets and the missed opportunity of conserving the original free school building, also known as the old Police Station.

The Technical Committee works hard checking all applications. Some we can agree with, others we are sometimes successful in influencing their refusal. But there are always some that we feel could be better and we often work with architects and developers to find a more reasonable answer.

What is this leading up to? I should like to ask you all personally to involve yourselves in matters which affect our community.

What can you do? How about attending the Harborne Ward Sub-committee meetings. Our councillors and officers from the Council discuss matters relating to Harborne and you can have your say.

Planning applications can be viewed at Baskerville House and comments made in writing.

Are you happy with the present policing of Harborne? Why not attend the Harborne and Quinton Community Consultative meetings. These bi-monthly meetings are held at the Quinborne Centre and any complaint you may have is addressed by our Police Officers.

What about joining the Harborne Society? Our various committees work unsparingly to improve the way Harborne develops

Continued on page 3

and to keep a sense of community. At our monthly meetings we tell you what is happening and you can raise your own concerns. The annual dinner and the Heritage Day walk bring people together. The more people who join the Society the more effective we can be either in criticising, seeking redress or congratulating.

Finally I would ask you all to use Harborne shops. There are new shop

units being built but unless we use them the High Street will never again become a viable shopping centre. We lack many kinds of retail outlets but unless we are prepared to shop in Harborne such shops will never be reinstated.

Please do your best to help. Harborne needs you!

Yours sincerely,
Mary P Abbott. Chairman.

Madeline Aston Memorial Award



Miriam Blakemore receiving her award

This is part of the winning entry for the award which was won by Miriam Blakemore of St. Peter's Juniors. In this section she is writing about past and present Harborne.

Rural Harborne

The Romans came to Harborne as early as A.D. 48. They built a camp where the University is now.

Celtic people must have come to Harborne too because there are Iron Age hill forts at Hagley and Shirley and Harborne is in-between. The

word Harborne means ancient boundary because *har* is an old word for ancient and *bourne* means boundary and Harborne was the boundary in Anglo-Saxon times when Saxons came up from the South and Mercians came down from the North. Harborne is mentioned in the Domesday Book. It was most probably a tiny hamlet because the Domesday Book doesn't mention that it even had a church then. The first time in history that a church was mentioned is in a will in 1217. St. Peter's church building was finished around the 14th. Century. In 1538 Thomas Cromwell said that all churches had to keep records, so Harborne began their church records a few months later.

Nail makers are first mentioned in 1600 and a school for Harborne in 1707. St. Peter's School opposite the church was built in 1837 and the schoolmaster's cottage from that date is the oldest school building in Birmingham which is still used as a school.

From 1727 to 1729 there were bad harvests and in 1730, a drought.



The extension to St. Peter's C of E Junior School

If you are interested in attending any of the meetings mentioned, details are displayed well in advance around Harborne in public places. The notice boards within the Library entrance always show the dates of any meetings along with lots of other local information. The Library also receives a weekly list of planning applications for the whole area which are available for anyone to look at.

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Harborne Rugby Football Club

Harborne Rugby Club has now been in existence for two years, with headquarters in the Green Man public house, its membership has grown from an original 17 to 120 members. They have two pitches at the playing fields, Metchley Park Road and have recently been voted best club in Birmingham, well done those Harborne chaps!

Keith Barbier the club secretary says that the club is most interested in supporting

local events and charities, so make a note of his name and address. He also tells us that the club is looking to start a Junior team and a Ladies team in the forthcoming season.

Anyone interested in the club should contact Keith at 186 Weoley Avenue, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 6PS. Phone No 0121 244 4431.

Heritage Open Day

The Harborne Society will again be celebrating Heritage Open Day with a guided walk led by Edward Chitham. The walk will be on Sunday 14th September at 2pm, starting and ending at St. Peter's car park.

Edward will have plenty of surprises for us and, with his enormous knowledge of local history, it should be a most interesting eye opener! Everyone welcome.

Miss Thelma Hadley

It is with great regret that we announce the death of Miss Thelma Hadley, just before her 93rd birthday. Thelma was one of the Society's founder members and for many years the membership secretary. Many of us can remember seeing her riding around Harborne on her bicycle on Society business. Woe betide the member who had neglected to pay his or her subscription! Thelma would accost you in the road or even catch you queuing in a shop. She was a tireless organiser and an excellent manager of people.

Thelma was a former pupil of King Edward VI school for girls, Handsworth and kept

up her links with the Old Girls' Association. She was also for many years a valued member of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade.

Thelma had been in poor health for some years but a mention of the Harborne Society would always bring a light to her eyes. That the Society has now been in existence for thirty-seven years and that membership is so strong owes much to her. We are therefore sending a cheque to the St. John's Ambulance Brigade on behalf of our members. This, we believe, would have been Thelma's wish.



Thelma and her close friend, Marie

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ALARMS KEYS



The Cartwright and Lewis Building – another pub?

The two major issues, applications for public houses, which have concerned the Society during the last twelve months may have appeared to overshadow any other matters which are of equal interest to the inhabitants of Harborne but, please rest assured, all planning applications for the ward have been inspected and dealt with where appropriate.

At the Planning Committee meeting on 22nd May a decision regarding the Change of Use application for Cartwright and Lewis was deferred pending the completion of a legal agreement for financial contributions to be made by Wetherspoons for a pelican crossing, additional lighting to the alleyway leading to the York street car park and a residents parking scheme along St. John's Road, North Road and Grays Road. But in the event of this legal agreement being concluded satisfactorily within six months, favourable consideration would be given to Change of Use. So much for what the village residents think. The Planning Committee meeting was a travesty. If any of the councillors had read all of the report or information with which they had been supplied they were not letting on. There was one half-hearted attempt to get the committee to actually visit the site but this was quashed by the Chairman and rapidly followed by a laconic 'agreed' from those of the committee who were alert enough to have heard him speak and that was it. I left in such a rage that the door actually slammed and I immediately wrote to the Editor of the Post and Mail. The outcome of this

was an article in the Birmingham Post on Saturday 31st May entitled 'A Bar Too Far'.

We are left with the hope that the Licensing Justices will show some common sense and intelligence and refuse to grant a licence in August. Mary Abbott has rallied our MP, Gisela Stuart, and the Police and we now also have the backing of the Civic Trust not only for the treatment which we have received but also for the abolition of twin tracking. This latter has already been the subject of Government statements to the effect that the practice is to be deplored and Local Authorities are to make every endeavour to dissuade applicants from putting in more

than one application, but deploring has never got anything stopped yet.

On a more cheerful note the Bovis Homes development is now completed and applicants are queuing up for the flats. Rudells have a most dignified new shop front, the Fire Station has been sold and is to become residential and the Traffic Management Scheme is under way.

The final scheme for the Harborne Traffic Plan was presented at the Ward Sub Committee on 14th of April 1997 when, having taken on board all concerns of the local community, Option 1 was proposed for adoption.

The estimated cost for taking forward the scheme is approximately 1.8 million pounds and a breakdown of the costs for individual elements of the proposals were detailed.

It is intended that an incremental approach for implementation be adopted with the High Street option as Phase 1. The Transportation Department intend to make applications annually for funding for the project and work is already going ahead with the scheme in parts of the High Street.

It is intended to put the drawings for Option 1 and all 6 local area plans on display in the Harborne Library in the early Autumn.



Bovis Homes; The Tower and corner shops suggested by the Technical Committee. Named Pinner Court as suggested by Harborne History Group.

Hugh Morton Memorial



Phil Stokes at work

The Hugh Morton Memorial consisting of a seat, a silver birch with tree guard, a plaque and adjacent garden, was erected in 1980 at the front of the Clock Tower. It was paid for by the grateful people of Harborne.

After 17 years it was in need of repair and renovation. This has been carried out by the Harborne Society and we hope that people will continue to use and enjoy it.

Report of the A.G.M. held on 14th May 1997.

Jenny Buchan Hon. Sec.

The 37th Annual General Meeting of The Harborne Society took place on Wednesday 14th May 1997 at 7.30 pm. in the Conference Room at Harborne Junior School.

Owing to the indisposition of the Chairman, Mrs. Mary Abbott, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Roger Miles and the Chairman's Report was delivered by Mr. Eric Abbott. Other reports were given by the Technical Officer, Ann Yorke, and the Treasurer, William Curr.

All the reports showed how busy and successful the Society had been over the last year. In particular the Art and Craft Exhibition, Traffic Management plans and some difficult planning applications were mentioned as these had taken up a great deal of time and involved many different people. However more offers of help would be much appreciated.

Two committee members had resigned and one new nomination - Mrs. Beryl Romano - had been received. Along with the twelve members who were standing again, she was elected to the committee for 1997-98 giving a total of thirteen people.

Dates for evening meetings in 1997-98 were given out and also for the next Heritage Open Day walk on 14th September.

The evening finished with coffee and informal discussions.

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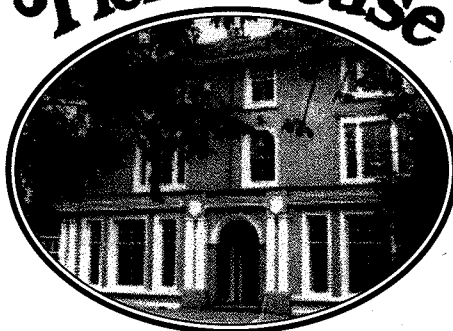
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427 4084

Committee Members

Mr Eric Abbott
Mr Leslie Blennerhasset
Mr Michael Darby
Mr Graham Parker
Mrs Beryl Romano
Mr Phil Stokes
Mrs Mary Worrall

PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 1997-98

Jean Curr, Chairman Social Committee

Once again we look forward to a varied programme of monthly meetings - a number of them drawing on our store of local talent: Andrew Maxam's recently published books of old postcards have attracted much attention; Charles Price, and his interest in antiques with a local connection, is well known in the community; and many must have wondered about the background of Dore House, its fall into dereliction and splendid revival [Rosemary Ruxton has been researching this.] .

In addition to the interest of the talks, these meetings give opportunity to hear what the committee has been up to, especially with regard to planning applications and developments in Harborne.

We look forward to seeing you. Non-members are welcome at an entry fee of 50p.

1997

Wednesday, September 10th.

Harborne Junior School. "My experiences in Antarctica". Miss M Boggis.

Tuesday, October 7th.

Onneley House.
[Speaker on Birmingham Conservation Trust] "Actively conserving Birmingham's built heritage". Mrs. M. Dance.

Wednesday, November 5th.

Harborne Junior School. "Dogs for the Disabled". Mr. P. Gorbng.

Tuesday, December 2nd.

Onneley House. "The West Midlands Police Air Operations Unit". PC. R. Holland.

1998

Tuesday, February 3rd.

Onneley House. "Antiques with Local Connections". Mr. C. Price.

Wednesday, March 4th.

Harborne Junior School. "Harborne, Quinton and Bearwood in Old Postcards".
Mr. A. Maxam.

Tuesday, April 21st.

Onneley House. "Dore House".
Miss. R. Ruxton.

Wednesday, May 20th.

Harborne Junior School. A. G. M.

All meetings begin at 7.30. pm.

Harborne Junior School is entered from Wentworth Road. Onneley House is in Court Oak Road, on the corner of Wood Lane.

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