

Number 40

**FORTIETH
ANNIVERSARY**

10,000 copies issued

SUMMER 2000

The Harborne Society

NEWS

THE HARBORNE SOCIETY - FORTY YEARS OF SUCCESS?

Mary Worrall

This issue of our Newsletter marks an important Anniversary for the Society as we came into being forty years ago, in 1960. You will see in the centre pages of this special Ruby edition how the Society was launched and be able to read some of the speeches made at that first ever meeting. Our very first Chairman was the well-known "Harbornite" Charles Parker whose inaugural address we have reprinted in its entirety.

The venue for this first ever meeting was the then "new" Hall at St. John's Church on High Street on Wednesday 4th May 1960 at 7.30 p.m. The response to the rallying cry, which had gone out to Harborne, was tremendous with the meeting overflowing into The Junction Public House to where the addresses were relayed. Allegedly the windows of the Hall had to be opened so people could "eavesdrop", as it was not possible to accommodate everyone!

I am sometimes asked what The Harborne Society is. Many people think we are some sort of Local History Group, others, sadly believe that we are total reactionaries opposed to any change with our heads lost in the "glories" of the nineteenth century!

Nothing could be further from the truth.

As a Local Amenity Society our aims are still those posited at that very first meeting. We encourage good developments within the community, oppose bad planning, attempt to help conserve historic elements of Harborne, promote an interest in the history of Harborne and hopefully help to preserve and maintain a sense of community and belonging in Harborne which we all know is of great value in our lives.

If our aims are still those of the Society forty years ago, what can the Society claim as its successes in this period?

One of the very first campaigns supported by the Society was the preservation of the threatened Municipal Golf Course followed by a similar action to keep The Clock Tower. Just imagine what a loss to Harborne the demolition of this useful and attractive focal building would have been.

We have also led on renovation, re-use and listing of Harborne Fire Station, the conservation of Park Hill Road Railway Bridge and the conservation of Greenfield House, the residence of local nineteenth century water colour artist David Cox. The Harborne Society erected the Dr Morton Memorial, recently refurbished, on the front of the Clock Tower to commemorate a lifetime

of service to the community. In 1986 we took part in the "Green Up" initiative and still continue to maintain these sites around Harborne.

As a result of our positive championing of Pinner Court, an excellent substitution for the previous unsightly premises, the committee were all invited to dinner as a thank you by the developers.

More recently we have given our total support to the Marks and Spencer development on High Street, seeing this as an enormous incentive to other shops to move into Harborne.

Since the very beginning of the Society we have organised very successful Art and Craft Shows which have given many people the chance to show their work to a wider audience. We are having an exhibition this October in The Clock Tower, see inside for details on how to enter.

Sadly for us it's not all successes, the Old Police Station for example, we had very much hoped could be preserved and redeveloped; although many people now like and enjoy the "art deco" of All Electric Garages' show rooms which replaced it. However, our most recent success, as many of you will know, was the campaign to limit the number of Public Houses on the High Street. The Society effectively opposed the development of the old Cartwright and Lewis building next to Iceland to give us yet another pub. We have recently been consulted by The Moseley Society for help with a similar situation in their "village", quite a compliment!

Forty years is a long time for a Society to continue to grow and thrive. The Harborne Society will go on because Harborne is still a community, which cares both for the people who live here and the environment in which they live, and if that includes you and you still haven't joined the Society please consider doing so now. All the details you need to become a member of the Society are on the back page of this Newsletter.



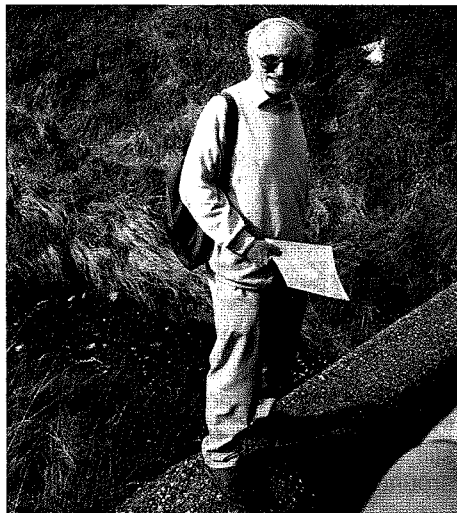
Park Hill Road Railway Bridge.

Eric Abbott

Heritage Open Day

17th September, 2000

Phil Stokes



Edward's on site history.

Once again the Society will be celebrating Heritage Open Day, co-ordinated by The Civic Trust, with another of Edward Chitham's famous guided walks around Harborne. The leisurely walk will be on Sunday 17th September starting at 2 p.m. from St. Peter's Church car park and should last no more than an hour and a half. The walk will embrace 'Harborne Old Village' and, with Edward to lead us, is certain to be one of the highlights of the year. The walk will take place whatever the weather, so please be prepared! Everyone is welcome.

Chairman's Letter

Little did I think when I joined The Harborne Society on 4th May, 1960 that I should be its Chairman in forty years time. In all I have served as Chairman for eighteen years and before that as Social Committee Chairman, Vice Chairman and Honorary Secretary - not all at once of course. It makes me very proud of the trust that has been put in me.

In his speech at the first meeting (which you can read in the centre pages of the Newsletter) Charles Parker, the Chairman, talks about a feeling of belonging to a place and the achievement of the right surroundings. This was much easier when villages were smaller and had fewer inhabitants, but, when the Society was formed, Harborne had increased in size and population. It was felt that the "villagers" themselves would need to make their voices heard by the City Council and other groups.

Over the last forty years through the work of many members we have achieved much of this aim but we go on learning all the time.

Mary Worrall has told you of just a few of our successes, but perhaps our greatest success is in our relations with the Planning Officers, City Engineers, local councillors etc. We have become an effective voice for Harborne. At the last meeting of the Midlands Amenity Societies Association I related how very often developers and architects are sent to speak to us before they even apply for

planning permission. One gentleman asked, "How does Harborne do it?" Rather facetiously I replied "Train your planner!"

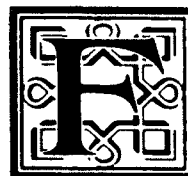
In truth we have built up an excellent relationship with all Council Departments and we are able to play an important role in their deliberations. I know that you have had the aims of the Society re-iterated many times, but I have no compunction in stating them again...

We aim to encourage the spirit of community, to promote interest in the character and history of Harborne and to represent the interests of Harborne by encouraging suitable conservation, opposing unsuitable development and putting forward proposals for the future of Harborne to the Local Authority.

I, for one, am proud of what we have achieved and I hope that all people in Harborne or with an interest in "our village" will come forward to help us.

As usual this free summer edition of our Newsletter is being distributed throughout Harborne as a service to the local community. If you wish to receive copies of the Christmas and Easter Newsletters and to support our efforts in working to maintain Harborne as a good place to live in, I urge you to show your support by joining the Society, details of how you can do this are on the back page,

Yours Sincerely,
Mary Abbott, Chairman

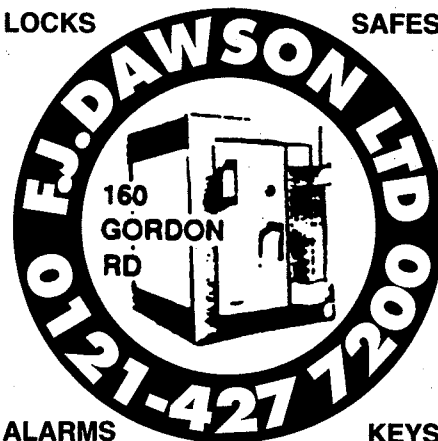


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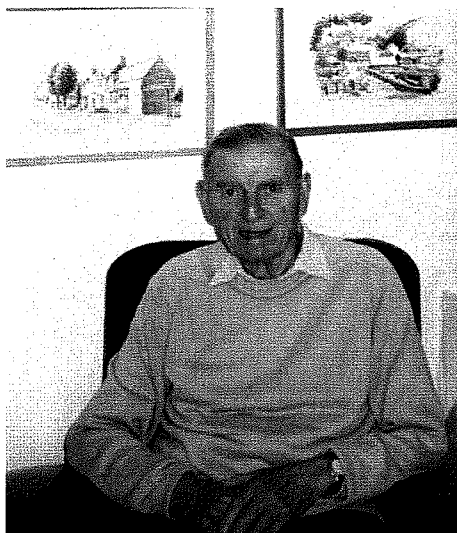
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Harborne Personality Number 4 - Bill Price

Mary Worrall



Bill Price

Those of you who are members of the Society will recently have been delighted to receive your free Commemorative Print for our Ruby Anniversary. Others of you who have visited Harborne Society Art Exhibitions will have seen the delightful illustrative work of Bill Price our "personality" for this issue of the Newsletter.

Albert William Price (Bill to his many friends) was born in Hampton Court Road in 1915, the third of nine children. He attended St Peter's School, with the renowned headmaster "Billy" Hardwick, which he describes as providing him with his first ambition - football. A self-confessed "football fanatic" Bill was proud to play for the school team, the first of many similar experiences. He also remembers art classes with pleasure and being "singled out" by his teacher but not really understanding it at the time... At eleven Bill took entrance exams for both King Edward's Five Ways and Moseley School of Art passing both and opting for Art School as he hated "ordinary learning". I asked Bill if his parents tried to influence his choice of school but he replied that they weren't in any way bothered and left the decision entirely to him.

Bill says that he set off to the Art School "scared stiff" but soon settled down to what he says was a basic secondary education with a major emphasis on art, and he was happy there. One of his greatest problems in life began at this age however, and fellow sufferers will know exactly what he is talking about, that problem was migraine. Bill says it was brought on by excitement, anticipation, worry, travel, bright sunlight, smells (especially chocolate), in fact almost anything that was stimulating!

As Bill approached school leaving age he was summoned to the Headmaster one day to be told that a firm had asked the school to supply them with "a junior studio

artist to learn the trade". So began his lifetime career in illustration and advertising.

Football still featured in Bill's life and he continued to be an active player for the original "Harborne United" in the Kings Norton Under 21 League.

During this time Bill went to "night school" five nights a week in Station Road School and here first met his future wife Maisie (Peplow).

"I made good progress in our studio to a senior position and got engaged to my dear Maisie only to be frustrated by the outbreak of World War 2 - the disaster of our lifetime".

Talking to Bill about his war time experiences I was struck by his great modesty and also by his relative good luck in surviving virtually unscathed an enormous amount of action. Drafted into the Sussex Yeomanry Bill took part in the battle of El Alamein, the invasion of Sicily, fought his way through Italy and still managed to captain the regimental football team! Having married Maisie as war broke out Bill came home on leave from Italy to his four year old son Bobby who couldn't remember having seen his dad. The second son Colin arrived ten years after Bobby. Six years of war saw Bill back at the drawing board again in advertising where he stayed until he retired at 65.

He was unlucky enough to spend his sixty fifth birthday in hospital, but lucky enough to have survived his operation for cancer which left him with half his left lung removed.

"I thank the Lord for a remarkable recovery - and still going strong!"

Bill says that he really only started drawing for his own pleasure after Maisie died four

years ago. He is the only artist in his large family and his two sons went into farming and the Police force. He has five grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

I asked Bill, as someone who has spent a lifetime in Harborne, how he felt things had changed. Having lived for many years on the High Street he stressed how much more noisy things were and how much faster the traffic went and how much busier people were with less time to stop and chat. He also said that Harborne used to be much more split up into areas with distinct boundaries and how as a child he seldom even came down to the High Street from Court Oak Road. He reflected that the growth of Harborne in his early years was due to the expansion of family run businesses that we have sadly now lost in our welter of charity shops and estate agents.

You will be pleased to know that Bill's migraine subsided in mid life and he enjoyed a happy family life after the war complete with car and caravan in Wales! He still enjoys Harborne he says, but is looking forward to this year's Greek holiday with his son's family; last year it was Kefalonia and this year it's Thassos and he'll take plenty of photos to work on later.

At his son's suggestion, and partially prompted by this interview, Bill is now working on a written memoir from which I have quoted. We hope perhaps in future issues to feature Bill's early memories of Harborne as a child, along with some of our other senior Harbornites early memories. If you have early or interesting recollections of Harborne why not commit them to paper; the Newsletter is always interested to read reminiscences and they provide a valuable resource for future generations.



One of Bill Price's Drawings.

Driving for the Future

Graham Parker

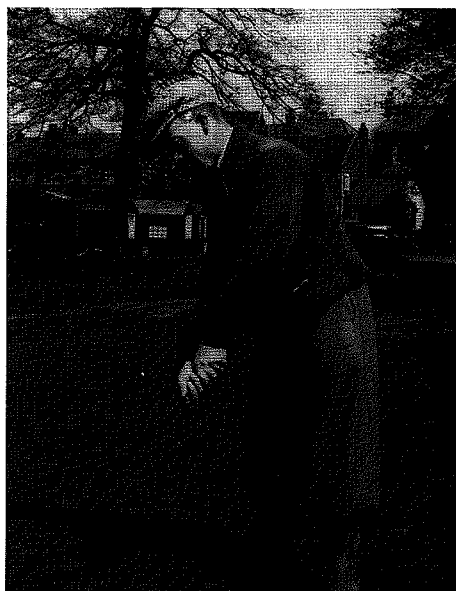
On land that was once a small dairy farm, set within a rural farming community, Harborne Church Farm Municipal Golf Course, founded in 1926, must surely be one of Harborne's most valuable leisure facilities. Prior to this, Church Farm formed part of Harborne (Private) Golf Club, who are still near neighbours, situated on the other side of Northfield Road, and who in 1993 celebrated their 100th Anniversary.

Anyone who has played at Church Farm will know it to be a very challenging course, requiring thought and accurate shot placement skills. Many holes require care to negotiate the numerous stream and bunker hazards.

In 1997 Paul Johnson was appointed the Club's Professional, having served as Assistant Professional for eight years. Paul's family links with the Club go back to the thirties, when his wife's grandfather, Bert Rudge, was the Club Professional.

Operating under the control of Birmingham City Council, the Club provides the opportunity for anyone to play golf without having to be a member and is used by local and visiting players. Club membership is available to obtain handicaps and play competitive golf, with members enjoying success in regional and national competitions. A new Ladies Section is currently being formed and is expected to be running soon.

Just under 40,000 rounds of golf are played each year on the course; of these figures 12% are Juniors. There are excellent opportunities for young aspiring golfers. During school holidays the Club Professional organises group lessons suitable for Juniors (Boys and Girls) aged 7 - 15 years. Five one-hour sessions cost £12.50. Clubs and golf balls are provided. A Junior can enjoy a round of golf from as little as £1.50. Clubs are available for hire if required.



Bert Rudge - Club Professional
1934 about to tee-off in front of
the old Club House



Paul Johnson - Club Professional - A training session with a group of budding Tiger Woods.
Photograph by kind permission of The Birmingham Post & Mail.

Within the Club House there is a shop run by Paul Johnson, selling a wide range of equipment at competitive prices, and a café serving beverages, snacks and meals.

Church Farm remains open on most days throughout the year - even during periods of inclement weather. Maintaining the greens and fairways to a high standard, to cope with the demands in all conditions is the responsibility of Peter Johnson, who has been the Green Keeper for the past 27 years. His hard work and contribution is obvious to those who use the course. Pete is fully involved in plans and projects to further update and improve the quality of the course, which is very highly rated and

considered to be one of the best nine hole courses in the area

Over the years there have been two attempts to close the course; each attempt was successfully rejected. In 1988, when the last attempt was made, local pressure and feelings ran very high. It was the Harborne Society which stressed the need to retain the Club as a valuable leisure facility serving Harborne and its neighbours - and for local residents the course should be seen as a vital "Green Lung" within our developed environment.

Today the Club is well managed and extremely well supported by the many who enjoy the pleasure of playing golf.

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Technical Officer's Report

Summer 2000

Ann Yorke

Having been part of the Harborne Society for only 6 years I stand in awe of the work which has been done by the previous Technical Officers in the previous 34 years. It is the likes of Messrs. Abbott, Hackett, Lowe, Peet, Perraudin, Pratt, Simpson and Smith who have set the standards of doggedness, attention to detail and pure bloody mindedness with which I now pursue the fulfilling of the position. They did not have the advantages of easy access to planning applications nor the enormous public empathy with our efforts to retain some semblance of village history. No faxes, no e-mail, no empathetic planning officers. They were often voices crying in the wilderness. I salute them.

The last year has been hard and intense at times. The Technical Committee has been involved in more projects than usual - the listing of the Harborne Institute and the present fight to prevent it being demolished, an application for funding for a Harborne 2000 photographic record, the Marks and Spencer planning application and the start of the subsequent development, the sale of Techno House and hopes for its future. A strong battle is also going on to have a special Planning Policy Document for the High Street, to which ends the Committee have sent in their comments on the Unitary Development Plan. The owner of the Harborne Market has had his knuckles rapped over the lack of Health and Safety. And so it goes on.

The constant vigilance of Phil Stokes has ensured that hedges are cut back, litter bins provided, road signs replaced, (we

were granted £3,000 of Local Initiative Local Action (LILA) funding for this purpose), litter cleared up and your worries about the reinstatement of the bus routes into the city rapidly set at rest, to mention but a few. He has been invaluable. Thank you Phil.

I have just become the secretary of the Midlands Amenity Societies Association (MASA) which will keep the Society even more in the know regarding methods of maintaining and sustaining campaigns. I also attend quite a number of Civic Trust meetings and seminars and keep in close contact with the City Planning Department by being a trustee of the Birmingham Conservation Trust and a member of the Planning Forum. I am also the Chairman of the Harborne Police Community Consultative Committee and attend the Police F2 meetings - all of these are useful platforms when it comes to getting advice and assistance.

Many of the Technical Committee attend the Harborne Ward Committee meetings and raise matters of importance for action by the Councillors. We hassle the Committee until we get a response or, sometimes, answers.

The work is never ending and we do it from love of our village but we need more help from you, our members. Do come to the Society meetings, do be vigilant, do come to the Ward Committee meetings and make yourselves heard. We have been in existence for forty years - we want to go on being in existence and to do that we shall need more of you offering your time and energy.



Harborne Fire Station.

Eric Abbott

P. KAPNISIS

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Harborne Traffic Management Scheme

Phil Stokes

The proposed Traffic Regulation Order required to progress Phase 2 of the Harborne Traffic Management Scheme was the subject of public consultation during March. Because of the extensive public consultation previously carried out on the whole of the Scheme, it is not surprising that very few formal objections were made and even then only in relation to limited aspects of the proposed Order. The majority of objections have been resolved but, where that was not possible, the objections have to be considered formally by the Council's

Street Works Advisory Team and final decisions made. That should have happened in July although, at a very late stage, some doubt appears to have arisen over the question of the funding needed to implement all of the proposals. However we remain very optimistic and, all being well, the new parking regulations and the introduction of a number of one way systems should be in force by the end of September. The proposed transfer of Traffic Wardens from the Police back to the control of the City Council should lead to stronger enforcement

of the no waiting restrictions and be more responsive to local pressure for firmer action.

The Society has campaigned for several years to bring about the changes in the parking regulations in and around High Street and naturally your Committee is encouraged by what has been proposed and is appreciative of the City Council's actions so far. Needless to say the Committee will continue to pursue the implementation of the next phases of the overall Traffic Management Scheme.

Environmental Issues Update

Phil Stokes

1. Old Church Avenue

Following the earlier approach by the Society, the Church Commissioners' agents have now repaired the metal railings along Old Church Avenue as part of their further clean up, tree pruning and groundwork operations at Bishop's Croft and its environs.

2. Land at Lordswood Road adjacent to Frankley Terrace

The piece of land between the 'bus shelters and Frankley Terrace opposite 'The Duke of York' in Lordswood Road is somewhat scruffy and unkempt, particularly when contrasted with the adjoining formal flower beds at the corner of War Lane. It is probably unrealistic to expect this land to be similarly laid out because of the damage that would inevitably be caused by members of the public waiting at the heavily used 'bus stops and also by the pigeons which, regrettably, are encouraged by people feeding them at the top of War Lane. However, the Society

has requested the City Council to consider a number of relatively modest steps to bring about an improvement, including reurfing and further tree planting.

3. Road Nameplates

Very regrettably the theft of cast iron road nameplates is continuing, Yew Croft Avenue and Oaklands Avenue are amongst the more recent cases. In addition, attempts have been made to steal other cast iron nameplates but they were broken in the attempts and were discarded i.e. Regent Road and St. Peter's Road (despite being fixed 9 feet up on the side of a house). We are very grateful to the Transportation Department for going out of its way to repair these two broken signs rather than just replacing them with the standard aluminium signs. Please report it to the Police if you ever see anything untoward going on or are aware of any other cases of stolen nameplates.

Harborne 2000 ~ A Photographic Record

Phil Stokes

The Easter Newsletter reported details of the bid for a grant from the Millennium Festival Awards for All Programme to enable the Society to produce a photographic record of Harborne. This was to be used as an educational and historic resource, principally by local schools and Harborne Library. Sadly the bid was unsuccessful. However, your Committee still considers that the principles behind the grant application remain valid and worthwhile and accordingly have agreed to consider carrying out a similar project, even if on a rather more modest scale. If this goes ahead, it is hoped that the results will be available for members' inspection at the Art and Crafts Exhibition in October.

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Planning Policy for Non-Retail uses in High Street

Phil Stokes

Since it was founded the Society has consistently supported the maintenance of Harborne Village as a principal shopping area and, with a very few exceptions, has opposed all planning applications for the change of use from retail to non-retail purposes.

The increase in the number of non-retail uses in the Village has become a significant issue over recent years with what seems to be an ever-increasing growth in the number of banks/building societies/financial services and estate/letting agents. In High Street alone there are now 16 banks etc. and 10 estate/letting agents.

The Harborne District Centre Plan adopted by the City Council in 1983 and subsequently modified in 1989 sought to deal with this issue and established planning policies for a core retail area and primary and secondary frontages. The policies, which provide the basis for consideration of all new planning applications, were subsequently incorporated into the Unitary Development Plan adopted in 1993. In your Committee's view these planning policies have failed to

secure the appropriate balance between retail and non-retail uses and the position must not be allowed to deteriorate. The greatly anticipated arrival of the Marks and Spencer Food Store will, it is hoped, go some way to restoring the High Street's viability and act as a catalyst to attract new shops. There is already evidence of this with the proposed retail redevelopment of the properties next to Iceland. It was felt that it was now an ideal time to review the current policies and consequently the Planning and Architecture Department was approached to instigate such review.

Disappointingly, the Department did not agree, contending that the existing policies "already provide sufficient safeguards to ensure the continued viability and vitality of the Harborne Centre" although, somewhat contradictorily, they would reconsider the matter "should circumstances show a dramatic change from those existing at present". Stable doors and horses spring to mind. We certainly do not intend to let the matter drop and we will continue to pursue the issue strongly.

HAVE YOU HEARD THAT: "Karen Noy"

- The library is closing down and Marks and Spencer are taking it over to sell clothes?
- The owner of the Harborne Market has bought the Pizza Express site and is going to turn it into a car park?
- Safeway is closing and being turned into a motel? (I think we've heard this one before!)
- The High Street is being closed to all traffic and the buses will have to go along St Mary's Road?
- South Street Methodist Church is going to become a drop in centre for drug addicts?
- The Duke of York PH is closing and becoming a Macdonald's Drive Thru restaurant?
- Harborne Railway Station is going to be rebuilt and the line opened into Snow Hill Station?
- "They" are going to open a café in Grove Park? (Not a bad idea, the one in Cannon Hill Park does a roaring trade)

These rumours, of course, have no foundation in fact but we do love to hear them, so if you hear a good bit of gossip about Harborne please don't keep it to yourself - pass it on - it's sure to get back to us eventually!

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CHARLES PARKER'S FIRST SPEECH AS CHAIRMAN MAY 1960

The word "**Society**", ladies and gentlemen, can be spelt with a small "s" or a large "S". Now I and my colleagues on the Committee believe that only by forming a Harborne Society – with a large "S" - can we ensure the continuance of Harborne as a recognisable society – with a small "s". In other words we must organise ourselves or lose our identity.

Many of us can, I am sure, remember the days when Harborne was still recognisably a village; when the active sense of belonging to a live community was quite natural quite unconscious. Today it is only by conscious effort that we can re-ignite that sense of belonging – which we still acknowledge when we refer to the High Street as "The Village". This means organisation; because of our size and our members, because of the pace of changes around us, and above all because so many of us are newcomers. But the newcomer needs to "belong" as much as the person whose roots in Harborne go back for generations, and this means hard work – make no mistake about this. It won't come naturally to us anymore.

Now the relationship between this sense of "belonging" and the place belonged to - the actual bricks and mortar surroundings, which make up Harborne – this relationship's a subtle, complex, even mysterious thing. Again for our forebears whose scale of living remained small and close to the soil, the achievement of the right surroundings, the right environment came pretty naturally – the sort of happy relationship between buildings – that you find for instance between St. Peter's Church and "The Bell Inn" – this happened without deliberate planning. But it won't happen again like that! We must now begin to plan ourselves in this respect, or we will be planned for – whether we like it or not.

How do we start?

Well first, we must come into existence as an effective "**Harborne Society**". At the moment, this is going to call for an act of faith on our part – not, let me hasten to add that the acting Treasurer is likely to abscond with the funds! No, I mean really I suppose, faith in ourselves. The Society will be what we make it, and it is for this reason that the present Committee, have not as yet been too specific about aims and intentions. But the fact is that none of us anywhere, whether it be Harborne or Huntingdon or Honolulu, are as yet very clever at coping with this twentieth century problem of urban society with its motor cars, chain stores, housing estates, and the rest. And this means that we must first give serious thought to ourselves and our surroundings if we are ever to achieve the good life we all desire, and hand on a Harborne we can be proud of.

As you will see on the membership forms given to you at the door, the Committee have planned – for our first meeting as a Society – an evening on the history of Harborne; and then we plan a visit to Coventry to see their problems there and the way they have been tackled. But all this is only a beginning, and although we shall expect to continue and extend these activities – lectures, discussions, expeditions – on the lines of these two events, what we most hope for is that each individual street, locality or community will itself contribute to our overall understanding of ourselves – perhaps unearthing facts about the locality and its particular needs – and at first in the comparatively small things that can yet be so important – litter bins, dangerous pavements, trees, bus shelters, car parking, pedestrian crossings and so on. Precisely how best to achieve this we don't know, but we shall hope that when we formally constitute a full committee at the General Meeting 18th October, 1960 that each district in Harborne will have a representative on the committee who resides in that district, and can bring forward its needs and suggestions.

Now this is not to usurp the power of the City Council but rather to anticipate their application in providing informed and constructive statements of our local needs.

And as we shall be a representative society, we should also have a social programme so that the Society can be a focal centre for our community and a link between our existing smaller communities of Church, Chapel, The Harborne Community Guild, The Harborne Cricket Club, The Harborne Tenants Association and so on.

Only then, ladies and gentlemen, will the **Harborne Society** be able to claim an effective voice in our local affairs – to quote from our circular letter "representing the interests of the neighbourhood to Planning and other Authorities, to appose bad development and encourage good". To achieve any of this we must first learn to know ourselves as we are, to inform ourselves as to what we want to become, and to master the art of working together to this common end.

"A lovely village on a Hill, We call it Harborne still, Is it in name only?" (Tom Preston)

CHARLES PARKER

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The Worm Spurned?

"Digger"

Local Allotments - your chance to go green

Many people do not realise how many allotment sites we have in and around Harborne. In general, they are reasonably well subscribed, partly as a result of some recent effort and investment by our City Council, but also because the local residents evidently value their green spaces and green veggies.

However, there are a couple of exemptions to this generally bright picture: Harborne Lane is under threat from redevelopment plans in Selly Oak and the occupation rate has fallen below 50%. Court Oak Road also has over 30 plots vacant, so, if you live near these sites, why not consider taking one on.

Annual rents for allotments range from £16 to £30 with a 50% reduction for the over 60s. There is a great sense of community to be found in these hidden oases of peace in the Inner City, not to

mention the health benefits of growing your food organically while getting plenty of fresh air and exercise.

There are two sites locally which are not owned by the City Council: after a fascinating and tumultuous history, the last remaining guinea gardens in the city, situated off Westbourne Road, have now been safeguarded for the foreseeable future. The allotments at the top of War Lane are church-owned, and we understand that, some time ago, the church expressed an interest in developing the land. Nothing has been mentioned lately, but it stands to reason that the more plots are occupied and the better the site is maintained, the weaker will be the argument to develop.

Allotments are generally managed by associations. If you are interested in having a go the contacts are as follows:

Site	Contact	Telephone
Tennal Lane	Mr Harbour	426 1586
Court Oak Road	Mr Harbour	426 4586
Meadow Road	Mr Price (Allotments section)	303 3038
Periera Road	Mr Miles	427 1023
Westfield Road	Mr Miles	427 4023
Westbourne Road	Mr Hughes	458 2747
Shenley Lane	Mr Bennet	411 1687
Harborne Hill	Mr Chance	427 1706
War Lane	Mr Smith	427 7064

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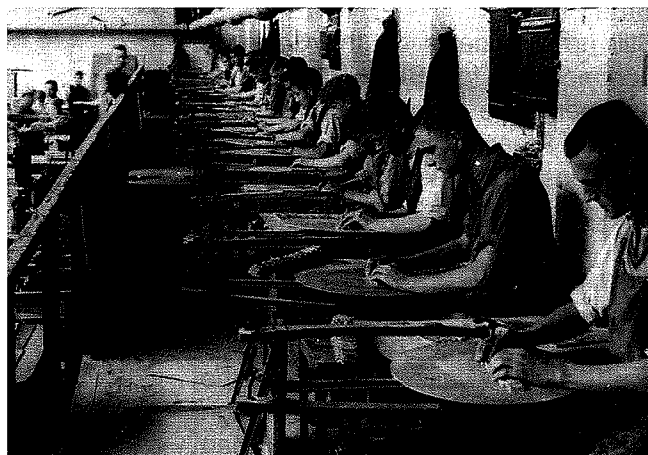
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PUZZLING TIMES IN HARBORNE

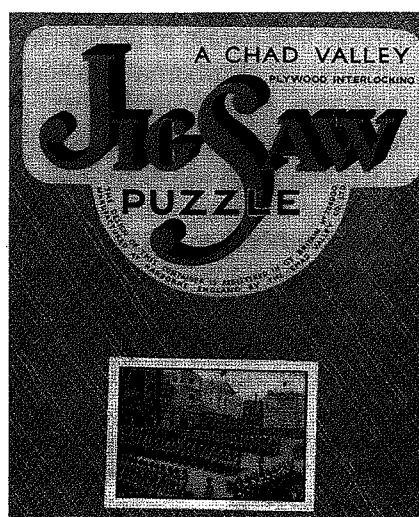
Phil Stokes

What fills you with local pride? For me it's the magic words "Manufactured at Harborne, England by the Chad Valley Co. Ltd." The history of this famous toy company, whose factory was next to the Fire Station in Rose Road, has featured in a previous Newsletter but my own abiding interest is the wooden jigsaw puzzles that spread the name of Harborne throughout the world.



Cutting shop Chad Valley.

The jigsaw puzzle was invented in about 1760 by John Spilsbury, a Worcester born mapmaker, who glued a map of England to a thin wooden board and cut round the individual counties with a fretsaw. These "dissected puzzles" as they were then called were almost exclusively used as learning aids for children of the upper and middle classes and were usually based on geographic, historic or religious themes. Because the puzzles were laboriously cut by hand from hard woods they were extremely expensive. However, the invention in the 1870s of the scroll saw, known as the jigsaw, brought a major advance in production methods as well as giving the puzzle its now familiar name. More and more subjects were featured on the puzzles and by the early 1900s they had become hugely popular with adults as the use of plywood and the development of the treadle jigsaw made the puzzles more intricate and slightly more affordable.



Jigsaw box 1930s.

In addition, there were historical scenes such as the Vikings landing at St. Ives, King Arthur on Dartmoor and Sir Francis Drake at Plymouth.

The 1920s and '30s were a golden age for the wooden jigsaw puzzle. The First World War ended the import of games and toys from abroad and as a consequence British toy companies flourished. Chad Valley first started to produce jigsaws in the early 1920s, normally in boxes without any picture to assist the puzzler. The lid of the box usually depicted two men in bow ties and dinner jackets and a woman in evening dress at a table completing a puzzle, which reflected the social status of jigsaws and the fact that they continued to be relatively expensive. The company acquired the Harborne and Edgbaston Institute premises a short distance away in Station Road for the printing and production of the boxes whilst at the factory two dozen men sat at saws in a long row down one side of the Cutting Shop. At its peak the company employed 50 cutters.

The best known of the Chad Valley puzzles are the outstanding series of wooden jigsaws made to promote major national companies. These started in 1924 when Chad Valley produced a puzzle for the Great Western Railway of the locomotive 'Caerphilly Castle' which was on show at the Empire Exhibition at Wembley. The puzzle was sold at the Exhibition with great success but only after the price had been reduced from 5/- to 2/6! Over the next 15 years there were 49 puzzles in the series, not only depicting railway subjects such as 'The Cheltenham Flyer' and the 'Cornish Riviera Express', but cities and attractions which could be visited by travelling on the railway e.g. Bath, Exeter Cathedral, Oxford, Warwick Castle and Stratford-upon-Avon.

The success of the Great Western Railway series rapidly attracted interest from other companies and, ultimately, promotional jigsaws were made for 17 other organisations, most notably Cunard White Star (34 puzzles), Dunlop Tyres (12), British Railways, English Tourist Board, British India Steamship Company and Illustrated Newspapers. Locally, B.S.A. and even Foster Brothers used Chad Valley advertising jigsaws, although the latter were cardboard.

By 1937 Chad Valley was beginning to experience financial difficulties and if the First World War had been a boon to the company the Second World War sowed the seeds of its demise. Almost all production of toys and games, particularly jigsaw puzzles, ceased as plywood and other materials were diverted to support the war effort and male employees were called up. During the war the company made a wide range of items including hospital tables, tent poles, electric starter motors and children's clothing, although the Government did permit some of the older workers to produce a limited number of games and jigsaws for military hospitals and the Forces overseas.

The production of wooden jigsaws never fully recovered from the disruption of the war. Some puzzles continued to be made by Chad Valley in the immediate post-war years but production costs escalated and the company was not in a position to invest in the large presses needed to produce the cheaper cardboard puzzles. Inevitably, by the early 1950s, the company ceased all jigsaw puzzle production - the end of a glorious era.

The company soldiered on and celebrated its centenary in 1960 but a series of take-overs sadly culminated in the closure of the Harborne factory in 1972, ending a 75 year association with Harborne. The Chad Valley brand name lives on, most recently on jigsaw puzzles made for Woolworths but, needless to say, they are cardboard.

I should be extremely happy to hear from any reader who has any Chad Valley jigsaws or games or any information or company literature about them.



1920's box label.

News Round up

Phil Stokes

Blue Plaques

Still no firm news on the Society's nominations for Blue Plaques to commemorate Charles Parker and Edward Freeman. English Heritage's decisions are now not likely to be announced until early July, which is too late for inclusion in this Newsletter.

Marks & Spencer Foodstore

The eagerly awaited opening of the Marks and Spencer food store in High Street is likely to be earlier than expected. It had originally been believed that the store would not open until next year but the latest projected opening date is 26th September.



Sue Howells receiving her prize from the Chairman.



Phil Stokes, Leslie Blennerhassett (in costume), and Jenny Buchan at our stall.

Neighbourhood Office Surgery

Following the closure of the Surgery at South Street Methodist Church the weekly Neighbourhood Office Surgery now alternates between the Lordswood and the York Street Medical Centres on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. As part of the City Council's agreement with the Primary Health Care Group any resident registered with any Harborne G.P. may attend irrespective of the particular venue. Although the Surgery will tend to focus on benefits issues, any appropriate matter can be dealt with but preferably by prior appointment ~ 303 5500.

Inspection of Planning Applications

Don't forget that details of all planning applications for Harborne are now available for public inspection at Harborne Library during normal opening hours ~ just ask at Reception.

Harborne Carnival

The Harborne Carnival on Sunday 25th June was, as promised, even bigger and better than last year. The Society again had a stall with a photograph quiz competition and literature and we were pleased to sign up more than twenty new members. The winner of the competition was Sue Howells, a local watercolour artist.

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Congratulations - Fortieth Anniversaries!

We congratulate Mr Tony Kenny on his O.B.E. and on his forty years in the teaching profession. We wish him well in his retirement from Harborne Junior School at the end of this Summer Term. Congratulations also to Councillor Peter Hollingworth, former Lord Mayor of Birmingham, for forty years on the City Council. Peter is still one of our representatives and always does his best for Harborne.

Harborne Library

Phil Stokes

Your Committee has become increasingly concerned about the physical condition of Harborne Library, the limitations on the facilities for the public and staff, and the totally unacceptable access to the building.

Originally a Masonic Hall, the building is 130 years old and has remained largely unaltered since it was built. The extremely cramped conditions make life difficult for the public and staff alike. For example, anyone wishing to study reference material has just one small table to use, which is crammed into a confined space and restricts access to the shelves by other Library users. Similarly, the Internet computer is squashed in on a minute table without room for any papers.

There are 23 steps on the staircase to the first floor Children's Library, local history collection and Meeting Room. The Library, of course, uses this room but it also used to be available to local community groups, particularly for evening meetings. Unfortunately this has not been

possible for several years because the Library does not have an automated fire alarm system and consequently the room can be used during Library opening hours only.

The worst aspect, however, is the access to the Library. No action has been taken by the City Council to remedy this longstanding problem despite its commitment to equality issues and the duty imposed by the Disabilities Discrimination Act 1995. The difficult access is an issue for every section of the community but particularly for parents with young children, people with disabilities and the elderly.

After 108 years as a public library the building in its present state is not in a position to meet the change in the public's expectations and demand for improved facilities. Whilst a new, purpose built library is unrealistic, a major refurbishment of the current building is not. The adjoining block of properties is Council owned and held for Library purposes. The building next to the Library (191 High Street) is vacant



Harborne Library.

yet again and offers the opportunity to consider a scheme that could bring a long-term solution to the current physical deficiencies of the Library. Briefly, it would be possible to extend the Library into No. 191 and provide a new access and reception, install a lift to serve both floors, generally improve the facilities, and bring the building up to modern health and safety standards. The Society's detailed views have been submitted to the Leisure and Community Services Department including, as one possible alternative, the suggestion of transferring the Library to the ground floor of Techno House a little further up High Street.

It is very gratifying to report that our representations have resulted in an encouraging first response. The Society's suggestions, including the possible use of 191 High Street, have been given genuine consideration and, as an initial step, a feasibility study on the installation of a lift is to be commissioned by the Council. We are optimistic about the outcome and will keep you informed as things develop.

HARBORNE BUILDING SUPPLIES

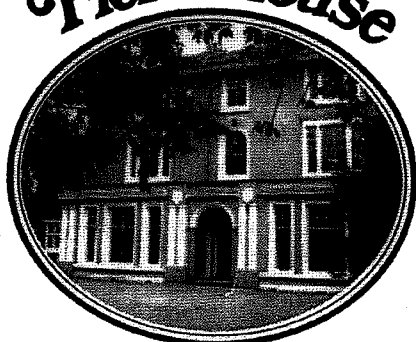
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Harborne Cricket Club - Into the New Millennium

Alan Wild

Chairman: Nigel Hornsby: Club Captain: Andrew James

Harborne Cricket Club has developed from its Victorian village roots into one of the biggest and strongest cricket clubs in the Midlands. No fewer than six county captains and two Test captains have represented the club during its fascinating 132 years of history.

Formed in 1868 by a group of young men from the youth clubs of St. Peter's Parish Church and the Baptist Church the club moved from Richmond Hill Road to its present ground in Old Church Avenue six years later. The ground was originally owned by Captain Walter Jones of Harborne House, later renamed Bishop's Croft, an 18th century manor house home to successive Bishops of Birmingham.

The present wooden pavilion was built in 1908 - 09 by the fine all-rounder Jack Newey, whilst the clubhouse and bar were added in 1971. Meanwhile, the Anglican Church had obtained the ground's

freehold in 1920, and links with the local churches continue today. The vicar of St. Peter's, the Rev. Jo Evans, and the curate at St. John's, the Rev. Geoff Lanham, are active playing members, whilst the ground is home to the clergy cricket team.

Many well-known Midland club players have represented Harborne over the years, from Wilmott Norton, Arthur J. Simpson and Irving Smith to Percy Whitehouse, Richard Mead-Briggs and Peter Cranmer, together with two Warwickshire chairman, Edmund King and Alec Hastilow, and a number of eminent players from King Edwards School after the Second World War; the prolific Bernard Guy, the current president Philip Gough, former chairman Derek Benson, Alan C. Smith and Ossie Wheatley, captains of Warwickshire and Glamorgan respectively, Bryan Lobb, and international captains Freddie Brown and Alvin Kallicharran.

The Crowning Glory



HARBORNE CC approximately 1875

The 1990s have been marked by unparalleled success under the chairmanship of Malcolm Willcox, with the winning of several championship titles by the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th XIs, and the club entered the new millennium with its 1st and 2nd XIs promoted into the Premier Division of the newly formed Birmingham and District Premier League.

Today, with six men who have served the club honourably on the Warwickshire committee, Harborne not only looks back on its past with considerable pride, but also to the future with great anticipation: five Saturday and four Sunday teams regularly take the field, and, with the bar fully staffed, excellent facilities, fine wickets, a flourishing youth section, a nucleus of experienced players and a thriving membership, it offers cricketing opportunities to young players that would have been the envy of cricketers of the past. The membership door is open for both social and playing members to join us, with a new 1st XI captain, the experienced Richard Cox, at the helm, the club enters the new century poised for even further success.

If you would like to read more about the founding and history of the cricket club a book is available by Alan Wild called *The Crowning Glory; Harborne Cricket Club 1868 - 1996*. It is available from local bookshops or the club itself, priced £10.00.

ann levitt
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Report of the A.G.M. ~ 17th May, 2000

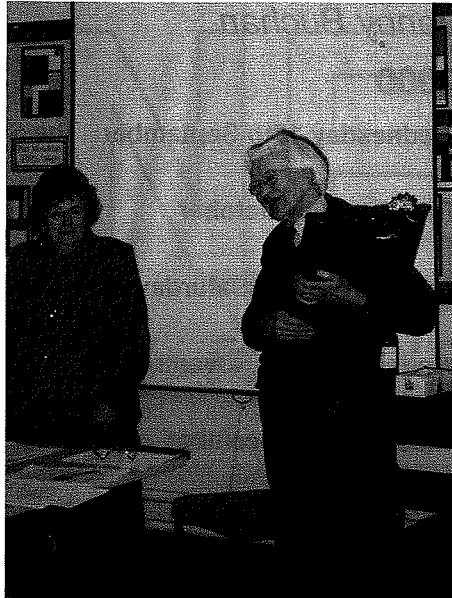
Phil Stokes

The 40th Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 17th May, 2000, at Harborne Junior School. There was a good attendance, even better than last year.

Prior to the formalities we were pleased to hear a short talk by Alex Matthews, Regional Manager of Marks & Spencer, about the company's operations in the West Midlands and the plans for the new food store in Harborne. The company's representatives, including the store manager, returned at the conclusion of the meeting to talk informally to members.

The meeting itself was chaired by Mary Abbott and reports were presented by her, Ann Yorke, the Technical Officer, and, for the final time, by William Curr, Honorary Treasurer. All the reports gave a very clear indication of the hard work done by the Society's officers, the Committee and its Sub-Committees, and highlighted the very wide range of issues and activities pursued during the year.

The Society remains in a sound financial state notwithstanding the "one-off" expenditure incurred in producing the Society's fortieth anniversary print. There was an increase in administrative expenditure, which reflected the



William receiving his two prints from the Chairman.

extremely high degree of activity undertaken on behalf of members, only part of which is covered in the Newsletters.

Ten members of the Committee stood for re-election. Of last year's Committee, Beryl Romano resigned last October and William Curr, stood down after sixteen years service as Honorary Treasurer. William was presented with two framed

prints of Harborne as a token of the Society's appreciation. There was one new nomination, Brenda Durbin, and, together with the ten existing members, she was elected to the Committee for 2000/2001. This is only one more member than the minimum size of Committee required by the Society's Rules. With over 500 members there ought not to be any difficulty in finding people willing to play an active role in the Society and continue the work of the last forty years. Please contact the Chairman if you are now willing to serve. The full list of Committee members and officers is on the back page of this Newsletter.

The more streamlined format for the A.G.M. adopted last year again worked well. Copies of the officers' reports were printed and made available after the meeting to interested members, thereby shortening the formal presentations.

The evening concluded with refreshments, including a special anniversary cake, and a Harborne history quiz compiled by Edward Chitham ~ Jean Curr and Leslie Blennerhassett were the prizewinners. In addition, there was a display of Society ephemera from the local history collection at Harborne Library.

THE HARBORNE SOCIETY ART AND CRAFT EXHIBITION

The year 2000 is an "Art and Craft Exhibition" year for the Society and at half term we will yet again be offering the opportunity to exhibit to those living in and around Harborne. The Clock Tower will be the venue as usual and we hope for an excellent response. The submission date is the **24th Oct.** and the exhibition is on from the **26 - 28th Oct.** This year, due to financial constraints, we will be asking for a hanging/handling fee of £1.00 per item, up to a maximum charge of **£5.00** per exhibitor. I know that those of you who submit regularly to shows will recognise this as a very modest charge. There is still no limit to the number of items you may submit and still no selection procedure, we simply reserve the right not to hang everything if space becomes limited! Fees will be payable on submission evening.

Anyone wishing to display craftwork on tabletops should contact the co-ordinator by telephone.

Please return this slip if you wish to exhibit to: -

Mary Worrall, Exhibition Co-ordinator, 91 Wood Lane, Harborne, B17 9AY. 426 6467

NAME (Please give full name and preferred title e.g. Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss)

.....

ADDRESS AND TEL. NO.

.....

NUMBER AND TITLES OF WORK (Please include medium and price if you wish this to be included in the catalogue)

.....

.....

I WILL/WILL NOT BE DEMONSTRATING DURING THE EXHIBITION

SIGNED

.....

Please include a stamped addressed envelope so we can inform you of submission details etc.

Officers and Committee 2000-2001

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The Lord Bishop of Birmingham

Chairman

Mary Abbott, 'Victoria Lodge',
1 Victoria Road, B17 0AG.
427 1378

Vice-Chairman

Graham Parker,
12 Old Church Road, B17 0BB.
427 3666

Honorary Secretary

Phil Stokes,
4A Queen's Park Road, B32 2LA.
426 1289

Honorary Treasurer

Brenda Durbin,
28 Harts Green Road, B17 9TY.
427 3170

Technical Officer/Chairman

Technical Sub-Committee

Ann Yorke,
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604 7364

Membership Secretary/Chairman

Social Sub-Committee

Jenny Buchan,
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426 4854

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Mary Worrall,
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426 6467

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Eric Abbott
Leslie Blennerhassett
Michael Darby
Roger Miles

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Programme of Meetings 2000 - 2001

Jenny Buchan

2000

Wednesday 13th September The Story of Birmingham Cinemas
Mr Dudley Warner

Tuesday 10th October Spirit of Sculpture -Talk and Demonstration
Mr John Letts

Thursday 26th - Saturday 28th October Art Exhibition in The Clock
Tower

Wednesday 8th November Royal Encounters
Mrs Joy Finder

Tuesday 5th December Middleton Hall - Conservation in Practice
Mrs Beryl Ellerslie

2001

Tuesday 6th February Winter Warmth and Matters.
Talk, video and a chance to ask questions
Kathy Kirby of MEB npower

Wednesday 14th March An Unusual Job for a Lady
Mrs Marion Canning

Tuesday 24th April Orchestral Notes
*Behind the scenes with Maggie Cotton, former
CBSO player.*

Wednesday 23rd May AGM

All meetings begin at 7.30pm. Tuesday meetings are held at Onneley House Day Centre, Court Oak Road; Wednesday meetings are held in The Conference Room, Harborne Primary, entrance in Wentworth Road.

We have a varied and, hopefully, interesting and stimulating programme of meetings. Some, like Birmingham Cinemas and Middleton Hall, are of more local concern while the sculpture demonstration and the "Royal Encounters" are of wide general interest.

In addition to the talks the meetings have a short business section so that members can be kept informed of local news and committee activities and also can raise issues of local concern.

We look forward to seeing you. Non-members are most welcome on payment of 50p.

THE HARBORNE SOCIETY

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