

THE HARBORNE SOCIETY

Number
Forty - Nine
Summer 2003

NEWSLETTER

harbornesociety@hotmail.com



70 YEARS IN THE SWIM AT HARBORNE BATHS



The Society first made representations to the City Council in May last year about the very poor appearance of the Swimming Baths and the frontage to Lordswood Road. The Baths are an extremely well used facility that provide a range of personal fitness activities in addition to swimming and in the Society's view a significant improvement in the appearance could be secured at a relatively modest cost.

Initially the City Council responded positively and agreed to address the issues. Better still, it was looking at a possible major refurbishment of the site and consequently some of the items would be dealt with as part of that scheme. In addition, because of problems arising from use of the car park by non-pool users, the possibility of controlled entry and exit at the car park was also to be explored. Unfortunately, the Council did not live up to its assurances and little was done apart from improved maintenance of the billboards. The Society continued to press the Council and some progress has been achieved with an improvement to some of the signs, the removal of others and new assurances regarding repairs to the boundary wall and the removal of the tree stump eyesore. Furthermore, hopes remain high for the proposed refurbishment scheme although this will not be progressed until repairs to part of the roof have been undertaken, which is not likely to be until the end of the financial year at the earliest.

The 13th December this year marks the seventieth anniversary of the opening of the Baths ~ so what is their history?

In the nineteenth century few houses had bathrooms and Harborne was certainly no exception. After Harborne became part of Birmingham in 1891 there was local agitation for a swimming bath. Residents

eventually formed a Swimming Baths for Harborne Committee and its activities culminated in a petition being presented to the City Council in July 1910. This was considered by the Baths and Parks Committee, which concluded "there can be no doubt that in view of the growth of Harborne in the past few years, the provision of a suite of Baths would be well justified". The acquisition of a site in Lordswood Road was authorised in July 1911 at 4s 7d [23p] a square yard. The site had a total area of 4,376 square yards but about a quarter was allocated to the Electric Supply Department for a Transforming Station [now Goodman Machinery in War Lane]. The residents' committee dissolved itself with mutual congratulations. However, although a bore-hole was sunk, the outbreak of the Great War halted the project before any real progress had been made.

October 1921 saw a further petition to the City Council urging "the early provision of Public Baths and Wash-houses". This was one of several similar requests across the city but fortunately the project qualified for a grant from the Unemployment Grants Committee, a Government body set up to assist local

authorities in carrying out schemes of "useful work" that would help alleviate unemployment, especially amongst ex-servicemen. The scheme was completed at a cost of £23,898 and comprised the swimming bath together with 18 slipper baths for men and 19 for women.

The Baths were formally opened on the 13th December, 1923, but only the slipper baths were actually in use as it was then the Council's practice to close most of its pools in the winter in view of the absence of any demand for winter swimming. Mixed bathing in the pool was not allowed, even though it had been introduced at Kent Street Baths in 1915, which prompted one worthy councillor at the official opening to express the hope that it would be permitted as Harborne "was a suitable district in which to try this experiment"!

Since 1904, the Council had allowed a small number of swimming baths to be used during the winter as recreation centres ["Assembly Halls"] under the auspices of the Birmingham Social Institutes Committee, which paid for the pools to be floored over and organised all the events. After the Great War this was extended to more swimming baths and the new baths constructed in the immediate post-war years, including Harborne, were planned so that they could readily be converted to Assembly Halls. Thus, before a single swimmer had dipped a toe in the pool Harborne Baths had hosted 28 dances, 7 whist



Harborne Baths around 1950

70 YEARS IN THE SWIM - continued.....



drives/socials and 6 boxing events. The end of the Second World War, however, brought unprecedented demand for swimming facilities and the number of premises used in this way was drastically reduced but it was not until well into the 1950s that Harborne Baths finally ceased winter use as an Assembly Hall.

My own memories of Harborne Baths in the early 1950s are of the narrow green painted cubicles around three sides of the pool ~ girls to the left: boys to the right ~ the diving boards, the hair drying machines which cost 1d. and ran out of time before you had barely started, and the café where we bought huge mugs of piping hot Oxo. The cubicles remain but are now metal and your clothes are stored in lockers. The diving boards were removed on safety grounds and the café has long since gone but the smell of the chlorine that took your breath away as soon as you opened the door to the pool will linger forever. **Phil Stokes**

Visit to Rosedene Chartists' Cottage at Dodford and Dodford Church

Further to our most interesting talk about The Chartists and Dodford we have now arranged for a visit to **Rosedene** and to **Dodford Church** on **Sunday 28th September 2003**.

This visit is for members only as numbers are very limited. Places will be offered in order of received requests.

The cost will be £2-00 for National Trust Members and £3-00 for others.

Parking space is very limited at Rosedene so we shall try to take as few cars as possible. Also we have some members without cars and we will try to make arrangements for them.

The visit will start at Dodford at 2-15pm but exact details will be given later depending on the travel arrangements. If you would like to attend please telephone or write to **Jenny Buchan** as soon as possible.

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HERITAGE DAY GUIDED WALK ~ 14th SEPTEMBER

Once again the Society will be celebrating Heritage Open Day, co-ordinated by The Civic Trust, with another of Edward Chitham's hugely popular guided walks. Edward is devising a completely new walk "Harborne ~ People and Characters from its Past". The leisurely walk will take place on Sunday 14th September starting at 2 p.m. from St. Peter's Church car park and should last no more than two hours. This year the walk will return to the starting point. The walk will take place whatever the weather, so be prepared! Everyone is welcome.



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Meeting of Harborne Society held in Harborne Library to introduce new committee members

Letter from the Chairman

The Harborne Society has now been in existence for forty three years. We must be one of the oldest and largest societies in the country and the fact that we are still flourishing is due to the hard work of the various committees and to the support of our members. I should like to give you an insight into how we work. We have a main committee that meets every month and several sub committees, all of which include members of the main committee. We are delighted that we have three new committee members for the coming year.

Ann Yorke chairs the Technical Committee which deals with all planning applications and many other matters that arise in our village. Ann's report is included in this Newsletter.

Jenny Buchan heads the Social Committee who arrange all the talks and outings that we all enjoy and our very successful Annual Dinner. We have had a wonderful series of speakers this year, both informative and extremely funny. Jenny is also the Membership Secretary. The list of members is constantly updated and proves very useful to our officers. We now have some 770 members and if you haven't paid your sub

Jenny will be checking up on you!

Mary Worrall chairs the Newsletter Committee which has produced three excellent Newsletters. The summer one reaches the whole of Harborne. No one now says to us that they don't accept circulars or junk mail but instead are very complimentary and look forward to having the summer issue. Helping this committee are all the members who deliver the letter. Ann and I cover the High Street and are always greeted with enthusiasm. It gives us a chance to chat to people and, no, we don't have a drink in every pub!

Mary also chairs the committee which organises the bi-ennial Art Exhibition at the Clock Tower. A lot of hard work by everyone goes into this event. Last October's Exhibition was a resounding success. We are always surprised at how much talent there is locally. We are very grateful for the other members who help us to erect and take down the screens and exhibits and for all our members who take turns as stewards.

I can hear you all asking "What does the main committee do then?"

We have reports from all the sub-committees and from our very efficient Treasurer, Brenda Durbin. We comment, help and add where relevant. And of course there are many more issues to discuss, act and report on.

We have set up a new corporate image for all our letterheads etc. incorporating 'our' green which we have been unable to do before due to printing costs.

We have planted a tree to commemorate the Queen's Jubilee - appropriately enough in Queen's Park.

We belong to and attend many other meetings - the most important being the Ward Committee. Our Secretary, Phil Stokes, is very vociferous at these meetings championing the community's interests - read his report on Ward Boundaries. When the Councillors see him coming in they know that he will comment on everything where appropriate - sometimes I think Phil says more than the Councillors.

We are also coming into the twenty-first century with our own email address and soon hopefully, our own web site. We also feature on the Birmingham City Council website.

When you have read this Newsletter you will, I hope, realise where perhaps you could help. You don't have to offer your services to main committee, although we are grateful for new volunteers, but you could perhaps offer your services to any sub committee which interests you. You might be able to help with the Newsletter delivery or with organising and stewarding at the 2004 Art Exhibition. Even a small amount of help would be welcome. I look forward to hearing from you.

Mary P Abbott, Chairman

Notice to Non-Members of The Harborne Society

The Harborne Society Newsletter

This Newsletter comes to you as a free edition as we would like the whole community to know something of what we are doing and hope to achieve for Harborne.

The Harborne Society has been in existence for over forty years and is still committed to keeping Harborne a pleasant, safe and attractive place to live in - promoting useful developments, encouraging new initiatives and conserving our historic past.

Members receive two further newsletters at Christmas and in the Spring.

There is also an exchange of information at our monthly meetings.

If you would like to support and encourage us then please consider joining

The Harborne Society and letting us have your views.

Our members are our strength and we are a voice for you, attending meetings and monitoring local news and developments on your behalf.

Membership fees are modest and full details are given on the back page.

We look forward to welcoming you as a Society Member.

Technical Officer's Report - Summer 2003

Ann Yorke

This has been a tiresome year. We seem to have been hitting our heads against any number of brick walls with the normal result of seeing stars and getting nowhere.

There have been a number of issues, which have given rise to this statement.

- * The ongoing matter of two storey side extensions which are gently eroding the ambience of the village.
- * The continual ignoring of the revised retail frontage policy for which we fought so long and so hard.
- * The continual inability of Planning Enforcement to address the flouting of planning decisions.
- * The inability of the Birmingham City Council to follow its own rules regarding the sale and use of land.



There have been 208 planning applications over the last twelve months, I have written 75 letters of objection - and about four of approval in case you think that the Technical Committee is curmudgeonly - perhaps a third being on two storey side extensions, others have been on Change of Use from retail to professional services and backland development.

Of these 75 there have been, perhaps, 12 refusals upheld, 6 were withdrawn but far too many were approved.

I am on the Planning Consultants Forum. About four months ago this was split into Commercial and Householder Forums as 98% of applications received are for domestic works of one kind or another. I am now Chairman of the Householder Forum. You may well think that this should give me an excellent opportunity to get a Design Guide Note produced on the lines of the Forty Five Degree Rule. I have tried my hardest but despite promises, and evidence that other local authorities are coming down hard on such applications, Birmingham City is still dragging its feet. Rest assured we will not give up.

Over the last few months there have been considerable changes in Planning Department procedures which are about to come to fruition, not least being the freedom for the public to speak at Planning Committee meetings - for three minutes on one subject only. I have already been invited to speak on three applications and will be taking up the offer.

There is still no news about the proposed Greenfield Road Conservation Area. The Planning Department have stated that there would not be enough money in the budget to uphold three Conservation areas but unless they do something very soon they will be spared the opportunity as the area is gently eroding with removal of slate roofs and timber windows being the first victims of gentrification.

The 'massage parlour' continues, as we predicted, but they put in an application for a continuance of its licence to operate. This was amazing since it had not got planning permission for Change of Use although this has since been granted. Letters have been written!

Techno House now Harborne West, is progressing but the machinations which are ongoing regarding the piece of land on Harborne Park Road would do well as the basis of a TV drama. I have been the interested recipient of many emails and letters which have passed between Allan Mulquinney, the agent for Tim Horwitch Smith, and numerous officers of the Birmingham City Council involved in the somewhat unorthodox sale of the land to A N Other. Who just happens to be the same Mr Aziz who put in an application for a conveyorised car wash which was withdrawn. Anyone purchasing land from the City Council must, within four months of applying to purchase, produce a viable use for the land. We wait with bated breath for the outcome.

The applications for 98 - 100 High Street have been going in and out with more regularity than the pistons on a high speed car. Whether this is in order to catch us on the hop with our letters of objection or merely their way of passing time we are unsure. But we do believe that the latest refusal should convince them that we really do not want to lose another retail unit.

Eccleston School site has been in much the same state but we believe that the latest proposals are acceptable. Chase Homes did hold an open morning to discuss them in fact - good public relations.

In February I attended, [and pay attention here](#), the 'Public Participation on Development Control Task and Finish Overview and Scrutiny Committee' as a representative of The Harborne Society. With Phil a three page document was prepared setting out our suggestions for the improvement in public participation. This was very well received and many parts of it have now been included in their report.

I have also attended, on your behalf, a meeting with the police about proposals for the improvement of upholding the law with regard to licensed premises and Phil and I went to the Edgbaston Constituency meeting. As always, at least four of us attend the Ward Committee meetings, where Phil is a very positive element in stirring things up at local level. Along with attending these meetings I am in fact Chairman of the Harborne Community Police Consultative Panel, where police matters are discussed, Mary attends the F2 police meetings and I am on the Harborne Carnival Committee which means that we are in constant touch with local matters. A useful position in which to be.



Eric Abbott died last August. His energy, enthusiasm and the influence which he brought to bear on planning matters is still very much with me. It is the work which he did for the Society over the years, both as Chairman and Technical Officer, which is the spirit of what we all do now. I miss him.

Listed buildings - Mary Worrall



I do hope that I am not a person given to aggravated or irritated behaviour. Anyone who knows me will tell you that I am prone to be noisy at times - but it is usually laughter that erupts rather than annoyance. There is one topic however which can easily test my endurance and good temper and this is the notion of Listed Buildings. So often I am told, no instructed, that this or that building in Harborne is 'listed' and no amount of persuasion on my behalf seems to avail to dissuade my informants of their total inaccuracy!

At the Library we hold a photocopied list of all the buildings that are 'listed' in Birmingham. This is called the **Consolidated Cumulative List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest** and is kept at the 'help desk' in our reference section.

If you take the time to study this document you will find that Birmingham has around 1,800 listed buildings of which about 50 are in Harborne. This is not a very great number and to help researchers I have typed a list of these protected properties in Alphabetical Road Order. (This being the sort of thing you do after a number of years working in libraries!) The list is kept with its parent document. Could I draw your attention to the fact that the Library does not feature in this list! In fact the area that has the largest number of buildings listed is our neighbour Edgbaston, unsurprisingly.

So what are the criteria for listing a building? Four definitions are considered in the process - age and rarity, architectural interest, historical interest and group value. In our large cities, such as Birmingham, many of our buildings date from the nineteenth century so it is safe to say that just because a building was completed during Victoria's reign that is categorically not a reason to list it! There are just too many.

Basically the older or more unusual a building is, the more likely it is to be listed. Old means old in this instance - and not nineteenth century. Most buildings pre 1700 are likely to be listed. St Peter's Church Harborne, though largely rebuilt in the late 1880's, was originally pre 1500's so obviously it is listed.

If a building has strong connections with a famous person this is also a listing criteria leading to 'birth places' 'blue plaques' etc. The idea that a group of buildings may be especially significant architecturally has led to the listing of Moorpool Hall and The Tenant's Estate Offices along with key houses in 'The Circle', a good example of listing of fairly modern buildings.

Listed buildings are protected by the law from alteration (inappropriate) and demolition. However this does not render them inviolate for should they become totally unsafe, for example, they may still be knocked down. No regulations can protect anything entirely!

The more important a building is judged to be the higher number Grade it is allocated. Grade 1 is obviously the highest followed by Grade 2* and Grade 2. 94% of listed buildings are Grade 2. In Harborne we have no Grade 1 buildings and only one Grade 2*, Metchley Abbey and Lodge. If you are interested in Birmingham's listed buildings - and please remember this does not include Historic Monuments such as Weoley Castle ruins - do come into Harborne Library and have a look at the 'list'. It is really most interesting - but please don't tell me the Library is listed I just might...



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REPORT OF THE A.G.M. ~ 21st MAY, 2003.

The 43rd Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 21st May, 2003, at Harborne Primary School with nearly fifty members in attendance.

As ever, the reports of the Chairman, Technical Officer and Honorary Treasurer gave a very clear indication of the continuing high level of activity undertaken by the Society on behalf of its members and the wider community. The review of Harborne Ward boundary was undoubtedly the major campaign of the year but many planning issues, traffic management and parking, loss of retail shopping and improvements to the Library had also been to the fore. The biennial Art Exhibition had been hugely successful. Membership had been maintained and consequently the Society remained in a very sound financial position although it is known that there will be significant increases in expenditure on certain items in the new financial year.

All eleven members of the Committee stood for re-election together with three new nominees. All were elected and the full list of Committee members and officers for 2003/2004 is on the back page of this Newsletter.

The evening ended with refreshments, courtesy of members of the Committee, and a quiz based on musicals, all of which was accompanied by music played by members of the Harborne Orchestra. Pam Ready won the raffle and Margery Elliott and Ann Yorke were the winners of the quiz.

Phil Stokes



HARBORNE LIBRARY

The modernisation and refurbishment of Harborne Library, initiated as a result of the Society's representations to the City Council well over three years ago, is progressing albeit at a slower pace than had been hoped for.

The scheme involves major structural works but the proposed improvements outlined in the Spring Newsletter to be achieved by combining phases two and three are not now likely to be possible at this stage on financial grounds. Consequently it seems that the next phase will deal with the ground floor Adult Library only although Council officers are doing everything possible to try and secure funding for both the ground and first floors. It is expected that work will start late in October.

The Library is hoping to try and avoid a complete closure if at all possible and is looking at ways of keeping the "shop" open in order to retain the free access to the internet facilities and to provide limited other services. Whatever happens, we know that it will all be worthwhile in the long run and greatly to the benefit of Harborne.

Phil Stokes



Refreshments at the AGM - Does anyone know the answer to 6?

"MUSICAL HARBORNE?"

How well would you have done in our AGM Quiz?

These are a selection of questions with a Harborne flavour!

1. Name the 'musical' business with connections in Ravenhurst Road. Who does the owner claim to be related to?
2. Which nineteenth and early twentieth century organ manufacturer had premises in Station Road?
3. Which radio personality was associated with Chad Valley Toys?
4. Name the musical instrument and sheet music shop once located at 86 High Street.
5. Which local novelist's first novel was based around the building of Symphony Hall and an orchestra not unlike the CBSO?
6. Which poet said "Music is the best means we have of digesting time."?
7. A road in Harborne named after an archaic musical instrument?
8. What links Harborne Library and 'The Magic Flute'?
9. Name the record shop on High Street.
10. Which BBC broadcaster was renowned for his 'Radio Ballads'?

Answers under the tree!



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REVIEW OF HARBORNE WARD BOUNDARY ~ A VICTORY FOR THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The Spring Newsletter carried an update on the Electoral Commission's review of the ward boundaries in Birmingham and of the Society's action in response to the draft recommendations of the Boundary Committee [acting on behalf of the Commission] published at the end of October 2002.



At that stage the Boundary Committee had basically adhered to the City Council's final recommendations but proposed that all, rather than part, of the area south of Bourn Brook should transfer out of Harborne Ward. There was, however, one totally new proposal for even more of Harborne to be transferred to Quinton Ward, namely the 'triangle' of roads roughly bounded by parts of Court Oak Road, Tennial Lane, Tennial Road and Queen's Park Road. The Committee stated that this was based upon a proposal submitted by the Birmingham Conservative Association, it being contended that the proposed boundary "provides for a better reflection of community identity". Such contention could not be further from the truth. This absurd proposal was vehemently opposed by the Society who immediately alerted all the residents to the matter, many of whom supported the Society with a petition and letters to the Boundary Committee. At the Society's request the City Council also opposed the proposal.

The Boundary Committee published its final recommendations on 13th May. I am very pleased to say that as a result of the combined efforts of the residents and the Society the Committee abandoned its draft proposal and reverted to the City Council's proposed (and current) boundary. The Committee's report stated that it had been persuaded "that the identities and interests of the local community would not be fully reflected" if its draft proposal had been adopted. Make no mistake, this is a major achievement and demonstrates what can be done when the community acts together. The Society has thanked all the residents for their magnificent response and support. Unfortunately the Society was not successful in the opposition to the extension of the Ward north of Hagley Road as far as Portland Road.

The strength of the community's opposition also had a major benefit for other residents. The Boundary Committee's report disclosed that last December the Birmingham Conservative Association submitted a second even more damaging proposal for yet more of Harborne to be surrendered to Quinton, namely all of the southern end of Tennial Road, Hart's Green Road, Battenhall Road etc., part of Fellows Lane, more of Court Oak Road and the whole of Queen's Park Road, including the Park itself. Residents were totally unaware of the proposal and consequently had no opportunity to comment. Fortunately, having been persuaded by the community's arguments for the 'triangle' roads, the Boundary Committee gave this proposal the short shrift it richly deserved.

Phil Stokes

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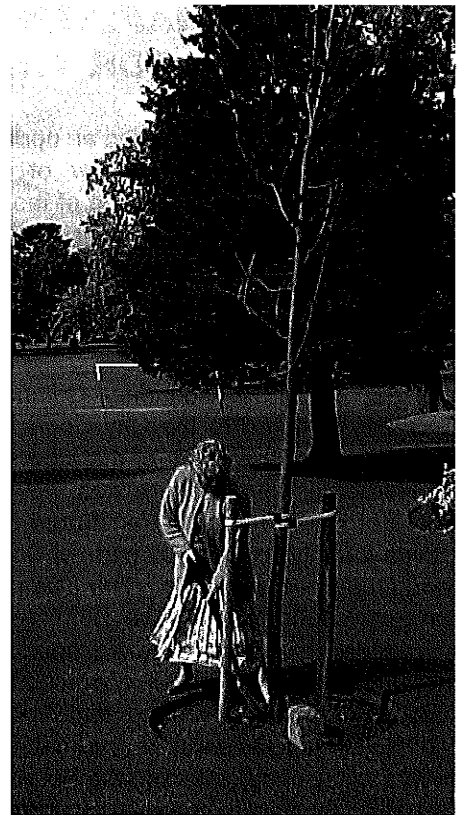
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COMMEMORATIVE TREE

The Harborne Society have marked the occasion of the 50th anniversary of HM Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne, by planting an Acer 'Liquid Gold', in Queen's Park, Court Oak Road. It is situated near the Park Keeper's Lodge, and is marked with a suitable plaque mounted on a small boulder. Graham Parker, Ann Yorke, Mary Worrall, Peter the Park Keeper and I, witnessed our Chairman, (not chairperson!), Mary Abbott, officially 'planting' the tree on the 14 May 2003.

The Society is grateful for the donations sent for this purpose, to Mr Pat Tarry the Area Parks Manager and to Mr Vic Parratt of William Parratt (Masonry). It is of concern to the Society that the tree is not vandalised. If you are in the park and see any damage to it, please notify the Park Keeper or the Society.

Brenda Durbin



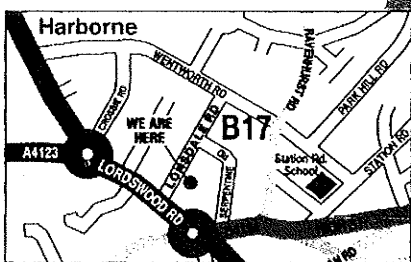
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For more information on **Onneley House** and the services provided by **BCOP** call into **Harborne Library** and pick up a leaflet.

Onneley House is on the corner of Court Oak Road and Wood Lane and has good car parking facilities to the rear - entrance in Wood Lane.

A NEW INITIATIVE AT ONNELEY HOUSE



Have you heard? A new healthy living centre has been opened at Onneley House, Court Oak Road in the ground floor rooms of BCOP. Those of you who remember the day centre held there until 2 years ago will be pleased to hear that this wonderful space is once again being used for the benefit of the older residents of Harborne and the surrounding area - but it now looks completely different! Both rooms have been refurbished with one room set up as a healthy eating café and information point and the other as an activity room.

The Centre has been developed as a place where anyone over 50 can come in for a bite to eat, access a whole range of information (eg pensions advice), join in with existing activities (eg exercise classes, tea dances) and suggest a few more! We want everyone to feel welcome and part of what's going on - you can even give us a couple of hours a week as a volunteer helping in the café or the information point - or why not start up your own group with our help.....Art Classes? Singalong Sessions? Poetry Evenings?

The Centre is open for activities and information from 10am to 3pm Monday to Friday and we serve delicious food in the café from 10.30am to 1.30pm - so why not come down and see us?

You'll be made very welcome.

Belinda Wadsworth



QUIZ ANSWERS!

1. The musical business is 'Sparky'sPianos'. The proprietor, John Sly, claims to be descended from Shakespeare!
2. The firm was **John Holt**, manufacturers of the Holt Organ.
3. **Kenneth Horne** (of 'Round the Horne' fame) was for some time the managing director of Chad Valley Toys.
4. **Midland Music**.
5. **Judith Cutler** - the book is 'Dying Fall'.
6. **W H Auden**, one time resident of Harborne. Commemorated by blue plaque on Harborne Swimming Baths.
7. **Serpentine Road** - a 'serpent' being an archaic wind instrument!
8. The link is **Freemasonry**. The library was built as a Masonic Hall and 'The Magic Flute' is full of Masonic symbolism.
9. **Andy Cash**.
10. **Charles Parker** - a founder member of The Harborne Society

How well did you do?

LAND IN LORDSWOOD ROAD NEAR TO FRANKLEY TERRACE

Three years ago the Society tried without success to get the City Council to consider a number of modest steps to improve the piece of land in Lordswood Road between the bus shelters and Frankley Terrace near to War Lane. The site is under the control of the Housing Department, being the site of 3 unfit cottages demolished in the 1960s. One of the problems is that the foundations to the former cottages were not removed but merely filled in. A fresh approach has been made to the Housing Department and a site meeting was held at the end of February but so far there is nothing positive to report.



Phil Stokes

PRINCE'S CORNER



The Society has become increasingly concerned about the run down appearance of the area around Prince's Corner. The City Council owns shop/commercial premises in Albert Road, Albert Walk and Harborne Park Road but the remainder and majority of the main block is owned by the Harborne Parish Lands Charity with the properties generally let on short leases. This area was once a significant shopping centre but as a result of changing patterns of consumer demand and redevelopment at this end of High Street the area went into fairly rapid decline from the 1960s.

In the last two or three years a number of Planning Applications for residential development near to this location have been approved or are likely to be approved. It is felt that this offers an opportunity for consideration to be given to investigating the possible refurbishment, enhancement or even redevelopment of this block. It is accepted that the area could not revert to a traditional retail shopping centre but Albert Walk in particular has the potential to be developed as "a little Chelsea" or as a specialist shopping area attracting independent owners who have been forced out of Harborne by high rents. The Society approached the City Council over two years ago and received a moderately encouraging response. Some desultory discussions have taken place between the parties involved but inevitably the matter is regarded as a long-term issue ~ however, it is a start.

Phil Stokes

KICKING UP A STINK IN HIGH STREET !



Judged by any standards the public toilets located in the passageway alongside Attwood House in High Street are a stinking blot on the landscape. The City Council claims that the toilets are cleaned twice a day. The Society has raised the matter numerous times at the Ward Committee but the condition of the toilets remains totally unacceptable. It is the Society's view that the problem is so bad that the only effective solution is for the toilets to be completely refurbished. Potentially such action would benefit everyone visiting High Street. The Ward Committee has now agreed to the Society's suggestion that consideration be given to the possibility of using what funds are left in the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Allocation.

Let's hope for the sweet smell of success!

Phil Stokes

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TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES



Despite continuing representations there seems no immediate prospect of implementation of any further phases of the Harborne Traffic Management Study. Even the traffic calming measures in St. Mary's Road, supposedly the final element of Phase 2 with completion promised by last Christmas, have still to be carried out but are now scheduled for "this financial year". It is over six years since the Study was adopted by the City Council but only two phases have [nearly!] been implemented. The Moorpool Estate area was due to be the next phase but this has bitten the dust as the main criteria for any scheme is now solely the number and types of personal injury accidents.

The lack of enforcement of the parking regulations in High Street remains a burning issue but the much trumpeted appointment of a Traffic Attendant exclusively for Harborne has still to be achieved at the time of writing. The Society urged the City Council to do this over a year ago but it declined. However, in January the Ward Committee agreed to use the Council funding available from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund Allocation.

Although the proposed Traffic Attendant should have a real impact, there remains one further step that would make a significant improvement. Originally the Traffic Study proposed widening High Street along the frontage to the shops roughly between the Pelican Crossing at the Clock Tower and 'Iceland' to enable parking bays to be constructed. The City Council owns the forecourt from St. John's Road to 'Iceland' but not the forecourt from 'Birthdays' to 'Manettes', part of which would be required. When the High Street proposals were implemented early in 2001 the Council could not reach agreement with the forecourt owners and consequently this vital element of the proposals was not carried out. This is a fundamental weakness which undermines the effectiveness of the other measures adopted. The Society recently made representations to the agents for the owners and they indicated that, in principle, they were willing to listen to a fresh approach. Accordingly the Council was urged to make a new and concerted effort to try and bring the Study proposal to fruition but, quite astonishingly, the Highways Department is now totally indifferent to the matter as there is no possibility of funding for the scheme as it does not meet the current criteria. What a farce!

It is planned install a Puffin Crossing in High Street in the vicinity of North Road. Despite being funded by Marks & Spencer as part of the Planning Agreement for their foodstore which opened nearly three years ago the Highways Department is quite unable to say when the crossing will be provided.

Rest assured the Society will not give up on any of these issues.

Phil Stokes

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A WORD OR TWO FROM THE EDITOR!



It can sometimes be a rather strange experience being the Editor of the Society Newsletter and also working at Harborne Library. Looking back at last Summer's Newsletter I found I was exhorting everyone to call in to the Library to examine local planning applications. I must say that since then things have really taken off with this scheme and it seems there are now plans afoot for all Community Libraries to hold copies of Local Planning Applications! Due, we like to think, in no small part to the efforts of our Society in getting the plans established in Harborne Library. No doubt some of you noticed a photograph of Phil Stokes, our Secretary, in a recent copy of the Voice examining plans in the new style reception area at the library! As I say, I can be at work and simultaneously promoting the Society and its achievements. Surely a case of wearing more than one hat at a time. I've yet to refer to myself in the third person but sometimes feel the need!

From our upstairs office in the library we have been able to watch the renovation, restoration, and adaptation to residential use, of the old Harborne Institute buildings in Station Road. Even the view of the roofs is immeasurably improved. This is one of Harborne's listed buildings and was placed on the register for Birmingham due to the Society's efforts! It is good to see more use being made of old buildings as opposed to some of the new high density residential schemes that are being thrust upon us from all quarters! The Society was invited by the developer to look round the apartments in May as they neared completion - and very nice they were too!

This site has a very mixed past, only operating as an 'Institute' for a short period before being taken over by Chad Valley as a printing works. A few years ago, some of you might remember, part of it became an architectural antiques business run by Andrew Brooker - Carey. After being in a state of sad decline for years it is really pleasant to see the buildings return to being attractive and useful. A credit to the developers who have sensitively retained and re-used many original features.

Another very positive use of a listed building, mirroring the conversion of the Harborne Fire Station buildings.

Mary Worrall



Partly completed apartments and show home at The Institute, Station Road.

THE HARBORNE ORCHESTRA



The Harborne Orchestra was delighted to present a number of players from the woodwind section at the Harborne Society A.G.M. Surprisingly, many Harborne residents were unaware of the activities of the Harborne Orchestra which has existed for 60 years. We were pleased to make your acquaintance and I believe the feelings were mutual.

Those members who joined the festivities at the Harborne Carnival in June may have heard us play at either of the two short recitals we gave, at each end of the High Street. We enjoyed being involved with the successful presentations and being able to bring our music to so many residents at once, though playing in the open air is a new experience for us and brings many unforeseen complications. We hope you enjoyed our programme and would wish to know more about us.

The Orchestra would welcome new players at our rehearsals and your company is invited on Friday evenings during term at the Marineau Centre, Balden Road, at 7.30 - 9.15. All orchestral instruments are welcome, especially strings and brass. Only good sight reading is required, and 'rusty' players will enjoy themselves as much as regular performers. The accent is on having fun. We give two or three concerts a year, playing classical, traditional and 'show' music.

Join us next Term! Turn up on Friday, 12th September and bring your instruments! Tell your friends! There is no financial commitment as a new comer for the first term. Full members pay a fee of £20 and £10 for concessions.

if you wish to know more about us, visit our web site at www.harborneorchestra.com or phone our Conductor **Jonathan Green, on 07771680497** or our Membership Secretary, **Monica Pirotta, on 440 0574.**

Monica Pirotta

harbornesociety@hotmail.com



The 2003 Harborne Society Summer Newsletter celebrates 43 years of sharing Harborne news with the people of the village! Many of you will have sampled the new facilities at our library, which have brought Harborne well and truly into the 21st Century of communication and information systems.

The Society is keeping up with progress too! To help improve our contact with the people of Harborne, we have already established our own email address at harbornesociety@hotmail.com. Plans are now afoot - even as you read - to create our own webpages, which we hope will enable us to offer information about facilities, contact details etc. Initially the site will be a relatively simple affair but eventually we hope to provide a new support system for our members and the residents of Harborne.

Ray Le Gallais

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE 2003-2004

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THE HARBORNE SOCIETY Programme of Meetings 2003-2004

2003

- Wed 10th September** From Belsen to Buckingham Palace
Paul Oppenheimer
- Sunday 14th September** Heritage Day Guided Walk
Harborne - People and Characters from its past
Starting point - St Peter's Church Car Park at 2-00pm
- Sunday 28th September** Visit to Rosedene, Chartists' cottage & Dodford Church
For details contact Jenny Buchan
- Tues 7th October** Fifty Years Behind the Counter
Mrs Jean Owen
- Wed 5th November** Film Musicals
Dudley Warner
- Tues 2nd December** Whistles All Round the World
Simon Topman

2004

- Tues 3rd February** The Restoration of Warley Woods Park
Kate Slade
- Wed 10th March** Fabulous Florida
Mike Wilkes
- Tues 6th April** Changing Cities and Ancient Gardens of China
Prof Peg Peil
- Wed 19th** **AGM**

All meetings begin at 7-30pm. Tuesday meetings are held at Onneley House, Court Oak Road; Wednesday meetings are held in The Conference Room, Harborne Primary School, entrance in Wentworth Road.

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 to forward to seeing you.

Non-members are most welcome on payment of a fee of 50p.

THE HARBORNE SOCIETY

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