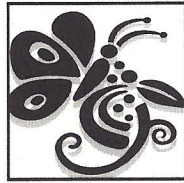


THE HARBORNE SOCIETY

Summer 2013
Number
Seventy Nine



NEWSLETTER

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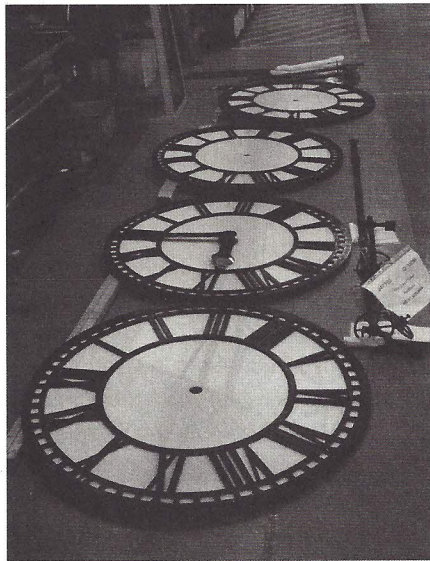
THE CLOCK TOWERS OVER THE VILLAGE ONCE AGAIN! ~ Phil Stokes

As part of the first phase of The School Yard scheme the developer has been working on the restoration and refurbishment of the old school building but the exciting news is that the original clock from Harborne's best-loved landmark has been restored. Huge thanks to Neil Edginton of Edg Property who has demonstrated his commitment to the building's heritage.

Installed in 1881, the clock has been refurbished with ground-breaking horological technology as part of a £30,000 restoration programme. The original clock movement was manufactured and installed by John Smith & Sons of Derby [now Smith of Derby] and the restoration of the clock has amazingly been completed by the same firm. They are the UK's leading church and public clock repairers and restorers and count the clocks at St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Pancras Station amongst their clients.

Whilst the clock movement was made by Smith's, the dials, hand and dial motion works were by a different company although Smith's are uncertain as to how that occurred and it is thought they might even be older than the clock movement. The clock with four separate dials has a flat-bed striking movement that drives the dials through a double three legged gravity escapement [but you probably knew that already]. The clock faces have been restored and will have illuminated backgrounds. Originally wound by hand the clock was converted to automatic winding in 1997 to remove the need for weekly winding. Although the clock is back in situ at the top of the splendidly restored tower it will not be restarted until the launch of the first phase of the development this autumn.

What is totally surprising is that the



clock movement includes the facility to strike the hour and presumably did so back in the 1880s but sadly this has not been restored due to the bell having been removed many years ago, although no date is known of when that was done and what happened to the bell. Who knows, perhaps something might yet be done to restore this feature? I did not know the clock struck the hours and it certainly did not do so when I attended High Street Junior School in the early 1950s. Does anyone know when the sound of the clock bell was last heard? Please let us know if you have the answer.

SCHOOL YARD UPDATE

The £5.5 million School Yard scheme for the development of the Grade II Listed former Clock Tower site is set to create a food hub with the 'Kitchen' community cookery school social enterprise, two restaurants and a coffee shop opening on to a new square and residential accommodation in a new block at the rear of the site.

Midlands based G. F. Tomlinson were

appointed as the main contractor at the end of February. They very quickly started on site and have made good progress ever since on the first phase of the scheme with the roof and high level scaffolding being removed at the end of June. Graphics explaining the scheme are on the site fencing.

The tenants of the commercial units are 'Prezzo', 'Metro Continental' and 'Urban Coffee Company' who along with 'Kitchen' cookery school have continued their interior design work to finalise their respective fit out plans. 'Metro' are spending £500,000 on their restaurant and will be creating 25 new jobs. It is intended that in the autumn there will be a major publicity launch of this first phase of the development all of which will become operational in time for Christmas. 'Kitchen' is planning seasonal events in December with the school programme beginning properly in January.

The second phase will be the residential development at the rear of the site. Originally this was to be apartments over a commercial unit and the residential parking but such was the high level of interest in the residential element that the commercial unit has been omitted and the scheme revised to provide two luxury townhouses and 13 boutique apartments. The building will include private rooftop terraces and Zen gardens! In April pre-registered interested parties were invited to meet with the developer when a quarter of the homes were released ahead of schedule and all were snapped up. Each off-plan purchaser has the opportunity to work with the developer and architect to create their truly bespoke home. Anyone interested must register with Edg Property to have a chance of securing one of the few remaining properties. The original head teacher's house on High Street which is part of the Listed site and subsequently became the caretaker's house has been sold to Bob Ghosh who is the architect for the whole scheme.

Technical Officer's Report ~ Summer 2013



Having been in post for just under a year I am intrigued by the never ending flow of planning applications for Harborne. The area is obviously in demand and appears to be thriving. This, I am sure, is due in no small part to the continuous efforts made by the Society in safeguarding the past, present and future of "the village".

I estimate that in the last year almost 200 planning applications have been submitted. All these have been considered by a small band of residents, members of the Society who comprise the Technical Sub-Committee.

Some applications are for relatively small projects such as extensions or new windows and some are for major ones including The Clock Tower/School Yard, Attwood House and the Martineau Centre redevelopment. Big or small they are all important to Harborne

Even small projects can have a major impact on neighbours and the immediate area. In this connection, the government's proposals for "householder permitted development rights" as part of the Growth and Infrastructure Bill currently being considered by Parliament are, in the opinion of the Society, ill-judged and poorly thought out and could prove to be extremely divisive and to the detriment of an area such as Harborne. Unfortunately these measures came into effect on 1st June and will be in place for three years.

As part of the process Eric Pickles, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, has introduced what he refers to as "a new light-touch neighbours' consultation scheme".

Essentially, homeowners wishing to build extensions under the new powers will notify the Council.

The Council will then inform "adjoining neighbours" (either side and to the rear).

If no objections are made to the Council by the neighbours then development can proceed (extensions up to 8 metres from the back of detached houses and up to 6 metres from all other houses).

If objections are made by the neighbours then the matter is considered by the Council. This consideration is by ward councillors and, if the Council wishes, by the Planning Committee.

Where is the Harborne Society and other interested parties in all this? The Society is concerned that we and many other similar bodies throughout the country will be sidelined in the pursuit of a spurious government policy. There has been a tremendous outcry from (among others) civic societies, MPs and local authorities.

Major issues which have engaged the Technical Sub-Committee during the year include:

High Street shops ~ There has been a number of applications for change of use from retail to non-retail. The Society is concerned about the number of empty premises but in particular about the drift from retail to non-retail. A good mix is essential to the health and well-being of any High Street. A worrying development, again courtesy of Eric Pickles, is that planning regulations are to be relaxed to "reduce restrictive change of use red tape". The implications for our High Street are, as yet, unknown but it would appear that sensible planning considerations that maintain a vibrant mix on High Streets could be swept away.

Good examples of this "drift" are the loss of the 'Clintons' cards shop to 'Costa Coffee' and an application to change 180 High Street, formerly a clothes shop and then a delicatessen, into a hot food takeaway. On the plus side it is heartening to see a greengrocer back on the High Street.

The message is, as always, "use it or lose it".

It now appears that the empty 'Blockbusters' shop is to become a 'Morrison's' although the planning application for a new shop fascia omitted to mention them. It was not until an application for an alcohol licence was published that the new occupants were revealed.

Other positive developments are the

retail development planned to begin in early 2014 at Attwood House and the news that work has begun in earnest on The Clock Tower/School Yard, both of which promise to be exciting additions to the High Street.

The Society submitted objections to the proposal to create a large beer garden at the 'New Inn' on Vivian Road with the consequent loss of the bowling green and what is said to be the oldest crown green bowling club in Birmingham. The proposal was to allow the beer garden to remain open until midnight on weekdays and 1a.m. on Saturday night. Fortunately the application was withdrawn but it remains to be seen whether there will be any further developments.

Perhaps the most significant proposal in recent years is that to redevelop the Martineau Centre site for housing. At the time of writing the outcome of the planning application is awaited but the position of the Harborne Society is in support of the proposal. I know that not all Harborne residents will feel the same way and there are local objections. However in a democracy everyone has the right to their opinion within the law and I urge everyone to exercise that right by becoming involved in local matters.

The Society cannot hope to speak for everyone in Harborne but welcomes all shades of opinion in ensuring the future of "the village" that we all know and love.

Andrew Peet

Technical Officer

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dr.sports@hotmail.co.uk

Chairman's Letter



Dear Harbornite,

Welcome to Harborne if you are reading this Newsletter for the first time. We are an amenity society and seek to keep Harborne as a pleasant place to live. It is still referred to as "the village" by long-standing residents and we aim to maintain its individual character by monitoring planning applications, keeping an eye on the conservation areas and promoting good development and a spirit of community.

Do come along to our programme of evening talks which are listed on the back of this newsletter. Visitors pay

just 50p and can see what we are about. The talk is preceded by short reports from the Secretary and the Chairman of the Technical Sub-Committee to bring members up-to-date with our activities. This is an excellent way to learn more about Harborne, make new friends and have a say in your local community.

Another introduction to Harborne is to join the Heritage Walk on September 15th organized by the Society and guided by Edward Chitham. We look forward to seeing you – dogs welcome!

It has been another busy year for The Harborne Society. The Society has responded to the Council proposals

for regulating traffic in the Old Church Road area, participated in the On-Street Parking Review and also sent in-depth comments on the draft Harborne Ward Development Plan.

Wheelie bin refuse collections started in Harborne in late June. Previously, at our invitation Councillor James McKay, the Cabinet Member responsible for implementing the wheelie bin collections, attended our Committee meeting and responded in detail to a wide range of questions and comments put to him.

We enjoyed an excellent programme of evening talks. The new venue at St Mary's church hall has seen an increase in members attending and the re-introduction of coffee and biscuits after the meeting has proved popular.

The Society received a very generous anonymous donation from a member and we used the money to fund and publish a booklet of five walks round Harborne devised by Edward Chitham who guides our Heritage Walks each year. It is available for purchase at Harborne Library.

Yours sincerely,

Marcia Meyer



HARBORNE POOL AND FITNESS CENTRE

Welcome to my 2nd update on Harborne Pool & Fitness Centre. We have had tremendous support from the local community and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you personally. Having managed the original pool I can see the new building is well on its way to becoming a true local facility. It is great to see so many of our original customers back on site.

In the first 3 months of 2013 we have seen almost 45,000 visits; our swimming instruction programme (Swim Academy) has 1,000 students enrolled. Approximately 4,000 of our visits across the service have been customers that are enrolled on the Birmingham City Council's schemes 'Be Active' and 'Passport to Leisure'. We provide 40 'Be Active' hours every week and are keen to see more participation in our gyms and pools through this scheme. Just register at a local Birmingham City Council Pool for 'Be Active' to get your blue Leisure Card and then we will be able to give a similar card when you visit us to use just at Harborne Pool.

I am keen to support our community so if you are looking for a venue to host a local good cause or need a room to hold a planning a meeting please contact me at site. If your project involves getting people active or is specifically health related I am happy to see what we can do to contribute or help.

Looking toward summer we have some exciting events to share with you so take note ~

July ~ Family activities in Queen's Park to celebrate 12 months on from the Olympics Opening Ceremony.

11th August ~ Oceans of Fun ~ A free morning of activities at Harborne Pool for 8 to 14 year olds in or around the swimming pools.

September ~ Family activities at Harborne Pool to celebrate 12 months on from the Paralympics Opening Ceremony.

Contact the pool directly on **428 6820** for further details.

Please continue your valuable support of Harborne Pool & Fitness Centre as we look towards many years of improved service.

Pete Wallage, General Manager

[Editor's Note: In the calendar year 2012 the Centre had over 263,000 visits.]



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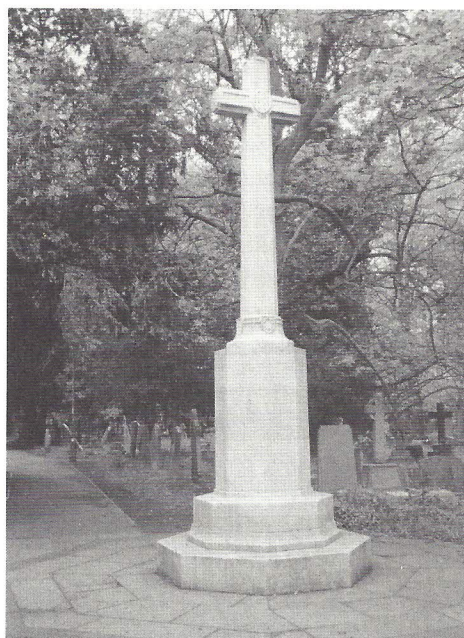
Client car parking on site

HARBORNE WAR MEMORIAL ~ Brenda Durbin

The Harborne War Memorial in St Peter's churchyard was erected by the whole community and dedicated on 20th September 1921. Ever since it has been the focus of the annual Remembrance Sunday observance in Harborne. Some eighteen months ago the church paid for the cleaning of the memorial revealing the need for urgent repairs and restoration, the principal concern being the erosion of the names of the fallen.

At a cost of nearly £8,000 the St Peter's Parochial Church Council has committed itself to the restoration of the memorial which will be undertaken by highly skilled local stonemasons. The Harborne Ward Committee has made a generous grant of £3,750. The Harborne Society itself has agreed a donation of £500. However, this still leaves a considerable sum to be raised and an appeal is being made to the local community.

As we approach the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War in 2014 it seems appropriate to be undertaking what is an essential, almost sacred duty. Unfortunately there is no room to add the names of those killed in the Second World War to the actual memorial. However, the Book of Remembrance, which is kept at the back of the



church, does not include their names either and the church intends to rectify that omission.

With the establishment of the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Birmingham University and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in recent years, the profile of the armed forces has been raised very significantly in our community. Whether it be in the occasional sight of Chinook helicopters flying overhead, military personnel in the High Street, or indeed living on our street, being treated by military medical staff at the QE, or perhaps most humbling, seeing young men with grievous injuries around the hospital, occa-

sionally in The Plough, we are more conscious locally of their presence than any generation in the post war period.

There is surprisingly little information regarding the design, construction and dedication of the memorial and both the church and the Harborne Local History Group would welcome any photographs or newspaper articles which could be copied.

If you wish to make a contribution to the cost of the memorial restoration, donations should be sent to the Parish Office, St Peter's Church, 13 Old Church Road, Harborne, Birmingham B17 0BB, clearly marked 'War Memorial'.

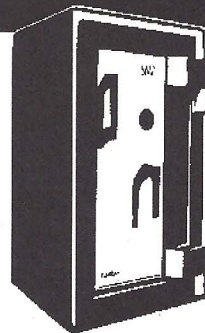
Some months before its erection in 1921 the Vicar of St Peter's spoke of the community's hope of the memorial "being a noble monument in the old churchyard where for centuries the parishioners of Harborne have laid their dead. A dignified and handsome monument will be placed in the best available position and the name of the fallen inserted on its base". There it stands today awaiting its restoration and renewal as a symbol of important and enduring values of the community of Harborne.

CAR CLAMPING OUTLAWED

Since the last Summer Newsletter legislation has been passed by Parliament outlawing car clamping on privately owned land and the towing away of vehicles by private operators. Only the Police and the City Council can lawfully continue clamping and towing. The owners of such land or their agents are rightly entitled to control who is allowed to use the land and, if they wish, can impose a penalty charge and issue parking tickets for unauthorised parking. The parking tickets are legally enforceable and if you don't pay the owner/agent will no doubt take civil court action. However, be warned that the penalty charge could well be as extortionate as the previous clamping/towing fees and charges although that it is not the case at the parking area in front of the 'Laundrette' [sic] in High Street where the notices have been changed. However, notices at other places in Harborne are still threatening [illegal] clamping and/or towing.

F.J. DAWSON

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HARBORNE ON-STREET PARKING REVIEW ~ Phil Stokes

Last year's Summer Newsletter gave the background to possible permit parking being introduced in central Harborne but not just in the vicinity of High Street. The public consultation which the Society had long pressed for had finally been authorised and was carried out in the designated area with a consultation document delivered to over 3,000 households and businesses in July. Consultants [Atkins] had been appointed to develop the proposals and carry out the consultation. The document presented the principles of the initial indicative suggestions for a variety of parking measures for residents, businesses, shoppers and visitors but principally for a mix of permit parking in thirty roads. The Society submitted detailed comments and was strongly of the view that doing nothing should not be an option.

Responses were analysed and the findings presented to our three councillors in November. The outcome was that all three considered there was insufficient support for the proposals to proceed to stage two and at a stroke the principle of permit parking was rejected and the entire scheme abandoned.

The decision was reported to the January Ward Committee. There had been a 25% response to the document which might not sound a lot but in fact was extremely good

as similar consultations often elicited only a 12%-15% response. **It was disclosed that the "do nothing" decision had been based solely on the fact that a purely arbitrary requirement for 60% of responses to be in favour of the proposals had not been reached, the overall support being 58%.** The 60% is in the Council's Parking Policy as a "target" but that figure is not a statutory figure, is not a Council rule and is not binding but is a figure where a degree of flexibility and discretion could be exercised. Despite being such a significant factor in deciding the issue, the consultation document did not mention the 60% requirement. This gross omission was a major flaw in the consultation. Even worse, Atkins' report stated that **60% of the residents/landlords responding to the consultation had actually supported the proposals** and so just a small number of employer/business responses opposed to the proposals had lowered overall support to 58%.

It is the Society's firm opinion that **the views of residents should have been paramount** being the ones most affected on a daily basis and that our councillors should have exercised a degree of discretion and a very large amount of common sense by proceeding to the next stage. That would have enabled definitive, rather than indicative, proposals to be drawn up

taking account of views expressed in the consultation and including the possibility of a reduced area or one or two smaller areas where residents clearly supported permit parking. Stage two would not have committed the Council to anything and there would have been further consultation. The Society urged the Ward Committee to do this but our pleas fell on deaf ears. **In thirty-one roads 50% or more of respondents supported the proposals but their views have been dismissed out of hand.**

The total cost of the whole consultation exercise is unknown. In response to a Freedom of Information request the Council has only been able to identify certain elements of the expenditure totalling to £20,726. To this must be added the cost of carrying out the first street surveys in 2008; plus officers' time on data analysis of all the street surveys and their work during and following the consultation period which has all been charged to general revenue funding and "not specifically recorded". **Being generous I estimate that would take the total to at least £23,000 and that's to "do nothing" ~ what a missed opportunity!**

Despite rejecting residents' support for permit parking our councillors, without a shred of irony, agreed with 78% of respondents that parking was a serious problem! It was agreed that a workshop be held for representatives of residents and businesses etc. to put forward views and potential ideas for resolving issues and aimed at developing a consensus. The workshop on 18th May was in my view a great disappointment but recommendations based on the workshop will be presented to the Ward Committee on 29th July which unfortunately is after the publishing deadline for this Newsletter.

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THE HARBORNE CLUB ~ "The best kept secret in Harborne"

It may come as a surprise to many Harborne Society members that there is a social club situated in the heart of Harborne that has been in existence for over 110 years.

Located at the corner of Albany Road/ Station Road the Harborne Club was originally founded in 1900 by businessmen returning from the City on the 'Harborne Express' and meeting in a local hostelry before returning to their homes. In a newspaper cutting dated 17th November 1900 it was reported that earlier that year the Harborne Conservative Club had ceased to exist and the remaining debenture holders were continuing as a Social Club for the benefit of the remaining members. Thus The Harborne Club was born. Today the Club has no political affiliations and it is where members can enjoy a peaceful drink in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. In keeping with the residential character of the immediate area there is little indication, apart from the cellar doors, that the building is in fact a club.

The Club is recommended by the Campaign for Real Ale for the quality of its beer and also stocks a complete range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages.

Membership is available to both Ladies and Gentlemen and the Club is open every evening, except Sunday, and Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes. It is an ideal venue for both before and after dinner drinks if dining at one of the many Harborne restaurants. For the benefit of members the club possesses a fully-equipped snooker room and a series of social events are held throughout the year. Club talks are held on a monthly basis (which are also open to non-members) covering a diverse range of topics. Full details can be found on the Club website:

www.theharborneclub.co.uk which also contains a more detailed history of the Club.

If you are a member of The Harborne Society then The Harborne Club would be pleased to extend an invitation for you to visit us and enjoy our hospitality. You may meet a neighbour who, unknown to you, is already a member!



TREE PLANTING ETC IN QUEEN'S AND GROVE PARKS



Using the third and final tranche of the Community Chest funding secured by the Society further modest tree planting in Queen's and Grove Parks has taken place with some of the funding also being used for tree maintenance work. Coinciding with the planting in Queen's Park, Birmingham Trees for Life and staff from their sponsors Deutsche Bank planted five 'extra heavy standard' trees. The Council also planted a Jubilee Oak to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. It is good to report that the Acer, *Liquid Gold*, planted by the Society in 2003 to mark the Queen's Golden Jubilee is thriving. The Park itself was purchased by the people of Harborne by public subscription under the auspices of the Harborne Charity Fete Committee and presented to the Council at the official opening on the 5th October 1898 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee

On the weekend of 8th/9th June a children's funfair was in operation at Queen's Park and the very good weather ensured it

went really well. In addition, on similar lines to last year, fun tennis summer coaching sessions have started in the Park funded by the Lawn Tennis Association. Anyone interested should contact Stuart Maidment on 07930404565.

At Grove Park the Council has consulted the Society on the preparation of a scheme of works to

try and improve or resolve a number of issues, including footpaths and footpath repairs, drainage, repair of the car park surface and additional litter bins, benches and picnic tables. There is some funding available but whether it will be sufficient for all of the desired improvements is not known at this stage.

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Presence

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Jean Stokes nee Winspur

September 1950 ~ A very small and timid girl, fair hair in long plaits, begins her 4 years at High Street Junior School in Class 7 with teacher Miss Jukes who had a fearsome reputation for discipline. Classroom 7 was a divided section of the school hall, the middle section had no class but housed the school piano the other section was Class 8. Miss Jukes was the school pianist and music teacher and we spent many happy hours singing folk songs (Early one morning just as the sun was rising I heard a maiden singing in the valley below ...) and hymns. Every morning the dividing screens would be folded back for the whole school to gather for assembly. As I was a very obedient and well behaved girl (or just plain scared) I never fell foul of Miss Jukes.

Moving on to Class 5 with Mrs Dixon I was in my element as she had a system of seating pupils on the results of a Friday morning mental arithmetic test of 10 questions. First we were seated alphabetically starting front row left hand side up and down the rows so, being a 'W', I ended up back row right hand corner. As mental arithmetic was the one thing I was good at I always scored 10 out of 10 and slowly attained the prime seat ~ first desk by the door ~ as others fell by the wayside. I never moved from that seat again but had her system been on spelling things would have been very different!

MEMORIES OF HIGH STREET JUNIOR SCHOOL (LATTERLY THE CLOCK TOWER)

Next to Miss Willetts, a tiny lady with national health spectacles, her hair scrapped back into a small bun and always dressed in a long navy blue costume. This should have been Class 3 but I seem to remember it as 1A as the post-war bulge was beginning to take effect. I was very happy there and she taught us that we would never struggle over the spelling of stationary or stationery if we remembered 'E' for envelopes. Then on to Class 1 and Mr Shuttleworth in the classroom up the stone stairs and overlooking York Street, a large class of 40 pupils. I shared a double desk in front of the York Street window with Christine Daniels, we were selected for that position as it was considered that we were quiet and sensible and would not be distracted and tempted to look out of the window. One afternoon every week the girls would knit in the winter and sew in the summer, while the boys did woodwork using fretsaws with the blades purchased from 'Whistles' in High Street. In my last year the knitting was a pair of socks done on four needles with the heel having to be 'turned' a tricky operation for a ten/eleven year old. The summer sewing was a white cotton blouse which we had to cut out from a paper pattern and then make up totally by hand. The seams had to be French seams, sleeves had to be set in and it fastened with buttons so button holes had to be cut and finished with blanket stitch. I can remember wearing the end product so it must have been presentable.

School hours were very different from today. 9 a.m. to noon with a two hour break for lunch. Only a very few children were allowed to stay for school dinner which was brought in in metal containers and served in the corridor. School resumed at 2 p.m. and ended at 4.20 p.m. in the summer but at 4 p.m. in the winter. I walked to and from

school twice a day, over a mile each way.

Miss McGowan was the Head Mistress the only member of staff who drove a car, a black Austin 7, which she parked in York Street and was usually the only car in the road. She was Scottish and had such a broad accent that she was very hard to understand. We saw very little of her but she would descend on top class from time to time and fire off 10 general knowledge questions often way beyond us. Once (1952) she asked "Who was the newly elected President of the United States? I answered "Ike" (for Eisenhower) but she refused to allow that as being correct and I felt very aggrieved as no one else knew the answer.

For country dancing we walked to South Street Methodist Church Hall carrying our black plimsolls in our pump bag (another summer sewing task, thick white material with our name embroidered in red diagonally across the front in chain stitch). I think we must have been quite good as we went to other schools giving demonstrations; it was very enjoyable and good exercise. P.T. in the girl's playground was very basic, the equipment consisted of bean bags (I still remember that unpleasant smell), wooden hoops and 2 coconut mats for gambols and handstands, which might have eased your landing but they were very rough on your hands.

Our final year saw much emphasis on old 11+ papers as those were the days when over 25% of Birmingham children went on to grammar school and all of Mr Shuttleworth's class were expected to pass and I believe they did. I moved on to George Dixon Grammar School for Girls in City Road, Edgbaston, and the next chapter in my life.

Jean Stokes

WHEELIE BINS ARRIVE [IN PARTS OF] HARBORNE

For electoral purposes the suburb of Harborne is unfortunately not self-contained and a large part of Harborne is bizarrely in Quinton Ward. However, if you live in Harborne Ward then, apart from a small number of properties, you will by now have some first-hand experience of the City Council's new household rubbish and recycling service which uses wheelie bins in place of black bags and the green/blue recycling boxes.

Harborne Ward was chosen to be one of two pilot areas and the new arrangements were implemented with effect from the week commencing 24th June. The city-wide change will be phased in over the next two years. The bulky item collection service is also to be limited to one free collection a year instead of three with any subsequent collections at £25 each. In February/March 2014 changes are to be made to the garden waste recycling collection [a non-statutory service] with residents choosing whether or not to opt in to a fortnightly wheelie bin collection service for an annual fee of £35 for each 240 litre bin.

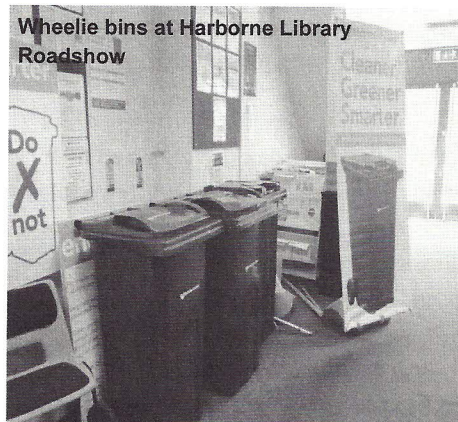
Wheelie bin collection is very far from new and 82% of local authorities in England already operate wheelie bin refuse collection in some form including the majority of the London Boroughs and all major cities i.e. Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Nottingham and Sheffield.

There is an overwhelming requirement on the Council to reduce its total expenditure across all services in the face of the major reduction in Government funding for the current and next few financial years [£102 million in current year]. However, Government grant of £29.785 million spread over three years targeted at enabling councils to retain or to reinstate weekly household refuse collections was secured by the Council to implement its full proposals which, as well as the wheelie bins, include development of the depot infrastructure, replacing the ageing vehicle fleet and a recycling incentive scheme. The Council's proposals are undeniably controversial but false claims put about in the press and elsewhere have confused and misled residents despite the Council initiating a city-wide public consultation exercise on a range of operational as-

pects of its proposals and full page advertising in the 'Birmingham Mail', extensive coverage in the Council's own 'Forward' newspaper and on their website. At the end of May five Wheelie Bin Roadshows were staged at three venues in Harborne Ward to help inform residents.

The Council always accepted that a one-size-fits-all approach was not appropriate and that there were properties with major problems, such as restricted rear access or physical features like steep steps or slopes, where the use of wheelie bins would not be suitable. Where that is the case alternative arrangements will be made by the Council. Examples of such properties easily spring to mind in Harborne such as parts of the Moorpool Estate and some roads with rows of Edwardian terraced houses which is what made Harborne a particularly good choice as a pilot area. If a resident has physical difficulty in moving a wheelie bin the Council will make alternative arrangements by way of the existing, but previously little publicised, 'assisted' service or by a different type of collection. These issues have all been encountered and overcome in the major cities already using wheelie bins. All households in the Harborne pilot area were assessed for wheelie bin collections and 91.9% were deemed suitable.

Residents have had some choice over which size wheelie bins best meet their needs but the standard household has been allocated two dark grey bins with the recycling bin having a blue lid. The household refuse bin for weekly collection is 180 litre capacity [about 2-3 black bags] and the fortnightly recycling bin is 240 litre with a separate 55 litre "insert" box to separate the paper and card from the other mixed items.



An end to all this!

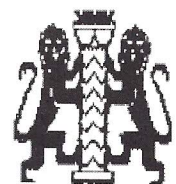
The existing garden waste bag collections are continuing for the time being

We are grateful to Harborne Councillor James KcKay, the Cabinet Member responsible for the project, agreeing to meet the Society Committee in April to discuss the whole issue and to respond to our various concerns. The two pilot schemes will help refine and shape the final plan for the city-wide roll out and will run for a couple of months or so before any conclusions are drawn and whole matter reviewed by the Council Cabinet.

Phil Stokes

Ann Levitt Chartered Architect
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B17 0EF



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CONSULTATIONS UNDERTAKEN
REALISTIC FEES THEREAFTER

A local Harborne Architect

For the last three years the press and television headlines, 'Queen of Shops' Mary Portas and the retail trade organisations have shouted out loud and clear that town high streets across the whole country are in crisis with independent shops facing virtual extinction from the high street. Nationally vacant retail premises have reached a depressingly high level of 14% and will continue to rise. In May the Centre for Retail Research published a report stating that by 2018 more than one in five shops [62,000] will have closed with the loss of up to 316,000 jobs.

Last year's Summer Newsletter noted a slowing down in the loss of shops and businesses from High Street and encouraging signs that new enterprises were still prepared to invest in Harborne but the last twelve months have seen mixed fortunes. Administration or financial collapse has resulted in the loss of 'Clintons', 'Blockbuster', 'Dreams' and 'Big Apple'; 'Taylor' bread and delicatessen closed less than a year after opening and 'Maison Mayci' bread shop and café, 'Firkin' bakery, 'Global Care' charity shop, 'Umberto Giannini' hairdresser, 'Co-Op Travel', 'Feet Retreat' and 'Urban City' letting agents also closed.

On the upside new businesses have opened ~ 'Emporio Maria' Italian restaurant and café, 'Mobile Station', 'Topsy's Pet Boutique', 'Joe Richards' much needed greengrocer, 'Costa Coffee' and 'Belvoir' and 'Alex Clark' lettings agents. At the time of writing [although they might have happened by the time you are reading this] a hot food takeaway is set to open as is a wine shop [at Prince's Corner], a 'Sue Ryder' charity shop and a 'Morrison's Local'. The 'Kings Arms' pub has reopened as 'The Huntsman' with décor inspired by J. R. Tolkien's books. Do pub name changes ever succeed? Two restaurants and a coffee shop will open before Christmas at The School Yard and the Attwood House site and shops are to be redeveloped in 2014 for retail purposes by 'Homebargains' par-

WHAT NOW FOR HARBORNE HIGH STREET?



ent company. The number of vacant business premises on High Street after taking account of the above is at its lowest for some years and well below the national level.

On the face of it High Street is still managing to hold firm but the biggest threat to its retail future is unquestionably the ever increasing retail sales on the internet. Consumer spending on high streets is falling and by next year is predicted to drop to 40% whereas online retail sales continue to grow and are predicted to account for 22% of all retail sales by 2018.

Currently retail premises on High Street as a whole constitute barely 54% of the 167 commercial and other units which has not been helped by the Council Planners granting approvals to the change of use of shop premises to non-retail purposes. This will be made worse in the Society's opinion by the Government's policy announced in May to allow any vacant High Street premises to be used for just about any other purpose, including residential use, for a period of up to two years without the need for planning approval or public consultation.

Experts are saying that the days of high streets as we have known them for generations as mainly retail centres with many independent shops are at an end and that in future high streets have to offer a "high street experience" namely some convenience food stores with specialist retail shops, restaurants, coffee shops, pubs, markets, leisure, enter-

tainment, health and beauty as well as banks and other local services. Well our High Street [as at 14th May survey] had 7 pubs, 16 restaurants/cafes/coffee shops, 17 hairdressers/beauty/nails/health premises and 15 estate/lettings agents [plus 4 more literally yards away off High Street], which ought to satisfy most "experience" seekers. So how many real shops in the usually accepted sense are there where you purchase grown produce or manufactured goods? Just 55 which includes 10 charity shops.

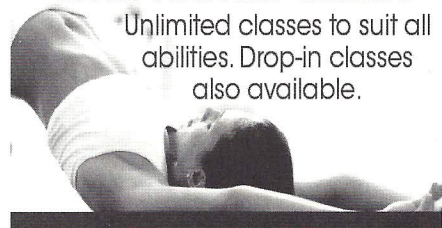
The Society fully accepts that change is inevitable so every effort must be made to ensure that changes are for the better, relevant to customers' and residents' needs, connect with the community and create a strong High Street that people want to visit. This represents a difficult challenge for the newly reconstituted Harborne Business Association which we heartily welcome and are eager to work with. The health and viability of High Street has been an absolute priority for the Society right from our founding in 1960 and it remains so to this day.

Phil Stokes

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REPORT OF THE A.G.M.

The 53rd Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 15th May, 2013, with forty six members in attendance.

As always the reports from the Chairman, Technical Officer and Honorary Treasurer demonstrated the high level of activity during the year on behalf of Society members and the wider local community. For the last few years the overriding issues had been the Society's successful campaigns for the new Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre and securing the long-term future of The Clock Tower. Last year the On-Street Parking Review became the Society's major priority but that was not at the expense of other issues in particular the planning applications for the demolition and retail redevelopment of Attwood House, the residential redevelopment of the Martineau Centre, the pilot scheme for the introduction of wheelie bin refuse/recycling collections and the publication of the 'Harborne Walks' booklet. There were increasing concerns about the High Street in the face of the national economic situation aggravated by the Government removing all planning controls in respect of the change in use of any class of High Street premises to any other different class of use for a period of two years. Other Government planning changes permitting extensions to houses without the need for planning approval were a further concern. Membership had been maintained and the Society continued to be in a sound financial position despite the increased cost of speakers' fees and room hire.

All members of last year's Committee sought re-election and were duly appointed together with Bill Taylor who was nominated by the Committee after having been co-opted to the Committee earlier in the year. This leaves one vacancy. The full list of Committee members and officers for 2013/2014 is on the back of this Newsletter.

Phil Stokes



Lordswood Maternity Home ~ An Appeal!



As many of you already know the Library in Harborne has an excellent collection of Local History materials. We have photographs as well as printed and written information. However, we do not have everything that we would like. Some of Harborne's past is very well documented and photographed. e.g. the railway - but one building about which we have scarcely any information is the Lordswood Maternity Home (now Lordswood Medical Centre). We are often contacted by people doing family tree research or simply wanting to find out more about where they were born themselves and all we can offer are a couple of clippings showing the building in decline taken from local newspapers. If you have any photographs showing Lordswood Maternity Home or any information about its history we would be absolutely delighted to hear from you and to add to our records in the library. Please contact the Library if you can help and ask for either Wendy Carter who runs our thriving Local History Group or me!

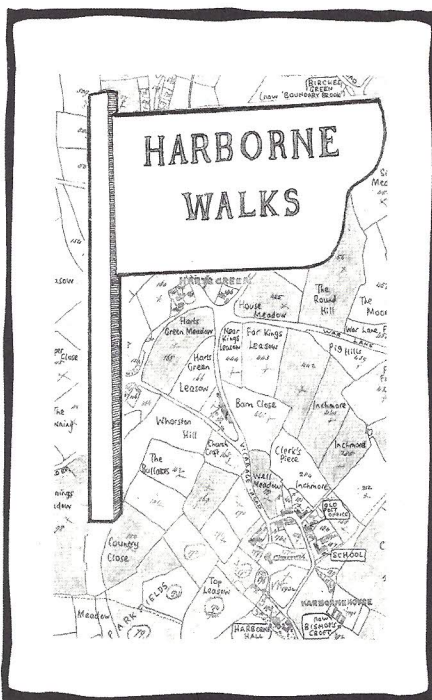
Mary Worrall

HARBORNE WALKS BOOKLET

Last year, by popular demand, the Harborne Society published a booklet of a selection of our Heritage Open Day's Walks round Harborne.

This most informative publication, illustrated with photographs and maps, was put together for The Society by Edward Chitham, historian and writer and our guide on the Heritage Walks.

You may purchase it at any Society Meeting or at Harborne Library. The cost is £2.50. Alternatively if you would like to have a copy posted please contact Phil Stokes Harborne Society Secretary who will arrange postage and packing at £4 20. Cheques payable to 'The Harborne Society'.



HERITAGE DAY GUIDED WALK ~ SUNDAY 15th SEPTEMBER

Once again the Society will be participating in the national Heritage Open Days with another of Edward Chitham's very popular guided walks.

This year's walk will focus on the theme 'Harborne Ponds, Streams and Holloways'.

The leisurely walk will take place on Sunday 15th September starting at 2 p.m. from Grove Park car park, Harborne Park Road and should take about two and a quarter hours. As always, the event will take place whatever the weather so be prepared for the worst!

No charge. Everyone welcome.



GREAT HARBORNE TREASURE FOUND!

A fantastic piece of Harborne's lost heritage has been found but not under a gooseberry bush although perhaps it should have been!

Thanks to the generosity of Margaret and John Simmons a splendid historic cup has been donated to the Society for safe keeping for future generations of Harbornites. The silver plated cup is inscribed "HARBORNE GOOSEBERRY SHOW 1883 PRESENTED BY A. G. SEAL" and this is surrounded by decorative engraving depicting foliage from a gooseberry bush. The cup is 8½" tall with a 3½" diameter bowl and has a small diamond registered design mark. There is no base although it seems likely that it would originally have had one, so there is no record of who won the cup in the ensuing years.



The cup had been passed down to Margaret from her grandfather Alfred Boraston, a plumber, who lived at 10 York Street and it was found in the loft of his house when he died in the 1960s. Margaret has no idea of whether he actually won the cup or how it came to be in his possession.

Margaret now lives in Solihull but has very happy memories of her childhood in Harborne and of High Street Junior School and was very keen that such a truly significant Harborne artefact should "come home". The cup, which has obviously taken quite a few knocks in its time even requiring the bowl to be soldered to the stem, has been looked at by Gwinnett

& Burkill who say that it has no intrinsic value yet it is a priceless piece of Harborne's heritage. The Society has considered how it can ensure that the cup can be

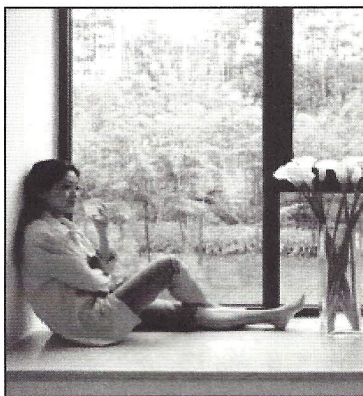
readily viewed by residents, young and old, and has decided that that would best be achieved by the cup being placed on loan from the Society for public display at the Library which it is hoped will be done in the near future.

The Harborne Gooseberry Growers' Society was founded in 1815 by Thomas Baker, the schoolmaster, and a young James Barton, spectacle maker, and met at the Green Man Inn. Unfortunately there does not appear to be any record of the Society until 1875 when the over 80 year old James Barton grew the largest berry in all England that year ~ 'Bobby' was the variety and using

Troy weight it weighed in at 34 pennyweights and 20 grains which is about 1.91 ounces. In 1901 Emmanuel Withers competed at the all England event at Stone, Staffordshire, and won sixteen of the seventeen prizes on offer, including the premier prize which had been held by Stone for the previous forty-one years. It is hoped to have a fuller article on the Gooseberry Growers' Society in next year's Summer Newsletter.

The Society expresses enormous gratitude to Margaret and John for their generous contribution to furthering Harborne's heritage.

Phil Stokes



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427 4356

Vice-Chairman

Roger Miles,
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426 2577

Honorary Secretary

Phil Stokes,
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426 1289

Honorary Treasurer

Brenda Durbin,
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427 3170

Membership Secretary

Jenny Buchan,
50 Margaret Grove, B17 9JL.
426 4854

Social Secretary

Donald Bird,
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429 3588

Technical Officer/Chairman

Technical Sub-Committee

Andrew Peet,
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Publications Officer/Chairman

Publications Sub-Committee

Mary Worrall,
91 Wood Lane, B17 9AY.
426 6467

Committee Members

Mary Abbott
Rupert Conway
Michael Darby
Raymond Le Gallais
Lindsay Smith
Bill Taylor

harbornesociety@hotmail.com

Farmers' Market

9a.m.- 2p.m.

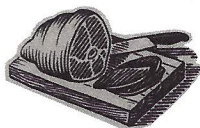
10th August

14th September

12th October

9th November

14th December



Delivering the Newsletter

We are very grateful to the people who deliver our Newsletter and are always in need of an extra pair of hands. If you feel you could help and have a little free time to spare please contact

Jenny Buchan 426 4854

Society Programme of Meetings 2013-2014

All meetings are held on Wednesdays at 7 30 p.m. in the smaller hall at St. Mary's Parish Centre, Vivian Road. The entrance is the second door on the right along the drive to the car park.

2013

Wednesday 11th September

Repair and Restoration of the Back-to-Back Houses

Derek Clarke

Sunday 15th September

Guided Walk - Harborne Ponds, Streams and Holloways

Edward Chitham

Meet at Grove Park Car Park, Harborne Park Road at 2 p.m.

Wednesday 9th October

Birmingham's Historic Buildings

Lewis Braithwaite

Wednesday 6th November

Chedham's Yard ~

(featured on BBC Television 'Restoration')

Charlie Gilbert

Wednesday 4th December

Elgar, the Man and his Music

Geoffrey Duggan

2014

Wednesday 5th February

Quilts for Injured Servicemen (Q4IS)

John and Dee Franks

Wednesday 5th March

History of Moseley Road Swimming Baths

Steve Beauchampé

Wednesday 9th April

Antique Boxes and their History

Andrew Pidduck

Wednesday 14th May

Annual General Meeting

The Harborne Society Speakers' Meetings are free to members but anyone is most welcome to attend.

We charge non-members 50p which includes refreshments.

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Jenny Buchan, 50 Margaret Grove. B17 9JL